

Section I

The connection Between Fairies, Deities, Humans and the Souls

Whispers in the dark forest, gleeful laughs, and playful songs on moonlit nights; this is what fairies are. They are the moment of awe and comfort we feel when the breeze dances through the trees but they are also the fear we feel on dark nights or in shadowy forests.

A Search for Deeper Understanding

Fairies lend their good names to perhaps the most powerful tales of all, yet these tales are almost never about them. Indeed, fairies are often no more than stock characters that move the story along. Fairy scholar Diane Purkiss points out that fairies are, in and of themselves, more of a story element than actual characters (Purkiss, 2007). As such, fairies are neither the protagonists nor the characters that drive the tales to which they lend their names. Rather, fairies tend to be an element much like a sunny day or diseases that plague a village. Fairies set the stage for the story by manipulating their surroundings. They are the trial to be overcome or the ones who raise heroes to save us from dragons as they did with Saint George, Merlin, Lancelot, and Zeus.

The fairies and magic are hidden beneath the surface of many fairy tales. To find them you must always search for the deeper meaning of the story.





Fairies are hidden everywhere; small, invisible it is the fairies who hear every secret whispered.

The term fairy, however, means those who control fate. Fairies are the ones people believed dictated the fate of everything around them. So despite the fact that fairies appear to be stock characters, it was the fairies who people believed controlled everything. As difficult as it may seem to be to discern the motivation of fairies people believed that they did have a purpose in everything they did. Indeed the fairies were believed by ancient Europeans to have a very human set of emotions and it was on these emotions that humans believed their fate rested. People once believed that they could interact with fairies and because their happiness and safety depended on pleasing the fairies while also taking care not to offend them, humans had strongly held beliefs about the motivations and personality of fairies. Folk religions are based around humans attempting to manipulate the mood of the fairies through dancing and singing songs. People would make sacrifices to please fairies, do things to avoid offending them and if necessary that they could scare them away. So as surely as any religious scholar in the modern day tries to discern the nature of the beings which they believe control our lives, people once tried to discern the nature of fairies and then tried to pass this knowledge along in fairy tales.

What's strange however is that almost all the analysis of fairy tales ignores this important part of these stories focusing instead solely on the psychological or social aspects of the tales as if the religious and superstitious beliefs held about the fairies in fairy tales are not important to understanding their meaning or to understanding life in ancient times. Yet this belief in fairies

surrounded everything people did in the ancient world so even if it's rarely explicitly stated, the fairies' motivation is there just beneath the surface, we just have to look.

This book seeks to uncover the motivation of the fairies in Europe's fairy tales. To understand their nature and emotions as it was understood by the ancient Europeans who first told the fairy tales we all know. This contrasts with modern literature where fairies as characters have been mutilated to the point where they are no longer comparable with the original fairy beliefs.

This is a puzzle whose pieces are scattered widely among stories, superstitions, traditions, and folk beliefs. A maze with no definite end one that always offers something more to see. After all, it is the nature of fairies to be something that occurs beyond our understanding. Despite their seemingly inexplicable quirks, however, there is some underlying connection between humans and fairies. There is always something that draws us toward each other. There is a reason people believed that fairies inflicted disease on us on day and then helped us the next. There is also a reason fairies would trade magical secrets with humans and a reason that they raised the gods as their children just as they did Zeus. The more I probed into their secret world, the more I realized that humans believed that they and fairies were intertwined – perhaps much closer than anyone in the modern age has ever suspected.



What makes something strange isn't necessarily how it looks it's how it acts. What is done is more important than how something looks. So think how to create odd actions.

In the Beginning

To understand European's original fairy faiths we must begin by finding the origin of the European peoples – by tracing their linguistic and mythological beliefs beginning with an examination of ancient Europe's mythology about how the world began. This after all is the beginning of the world in which fairies were such an important part that they were considered to be the spirits of everything within the earth; the rocks, the soil, and mountains.

Germanic, Scandinavian and Indian Mythology states that in the beginning before there were fairies there was chaos. Out of this chaos sprang forth the first creature. But this creature was not a god; instead, he was the grandparent of the gods. For Indians, this being was named Purusha, while in Norse he was called Ymir. In both tales, this first being was eventually killed and in both tales their bodies were then used to make the world. Their bones became the **mountains, their blood became the seas, and their flesh became the earth. From Ymir's flesh** rose the trees and dwarfs of Norse and Germanic mythology. So it is that the fairies of ancient **myth, the spirits of the trees, the mountains, and the oceans, were born from the first being's** body. Furthermore, these trees eventually produced the humans in European Mythology. The **Indians however believe that humans came directly from Purusha's flesh and that each caste** grew out of different parts of his body. Though seemingly different, these two religions on opposite side of the world share a linguistic history and have the same basic creation myth.

When one examines the stories of creation across the globe - from Ireland to India and as far reaching as Japan - we quickly discover that it is almost never the first being to come into existence that rules the universe. Instead, the beings that come to rule the universe came into existence much later and are often generations removed from the first being. In fact, these later deities would often slay their divine ancestor who was the first being to come into existence, in order to replace him.

This set of creation myths shows us two things; first it shows us that the deities of mythology were vulnerable; that just as they had slain the first being - their grandparent - they too could be slain and displaced by their decedents. This danger creates tension between them and humanity as well as between them and the semi-divine fairies who can, in theory, replace them just as they replaced their ancestor.

Secondly the similarities between these creation myths show us that even after thousands of years, Europeans retained much of their ancestral understanding of the world.

It's important to keep in mind that Europeans do not come from Europe. Instead we see two primary linguistic groups of people within Europe who brought with them two cultural and religious ideas which existed before Christianity and which remained in the belief in fairies even after Christianity came. These two peoples are;

The people who share Uralic or Finno-Ugric languages which settled in Finland, Northeastern Europe as the Baltic peoples, parts of Russia, the Sami people of Northern Scandinavia and more recently in Hungary. Their fairy faith still survives among some of the Mari people of Rus-

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What are Fairies?

To further understand why fairies do what they do, we must understand where they came from and what they really are. It was once believed by Europeans that everything in the world; trees, rocks, shadows, and even emotions had a life of its own. The belief that all things have souls was once shared by nearly all people. This view also gave rise to the mystery of what the souls that inhabited everything were. These souls were later understood to be and personified as the fairies.

We are perhaps best served in our understanding of fairies by looking to the Japanese for their understanding of the nature of Kami, which are things that inspire reverence and awe. In the same manner, fairies are the wondrous trees in nature, the tall mountains, and the calm majestic rivers. Fairies are in the poems we tell and the songs we sing. This view is apparent in **people's original belief that the gods needed no temple they lived directly within that which inspired awe.**

The word "temple" itself means wood, implying that the deities lived within groves of trees, on mountain tops and within sacred wells. (Jacob Grimm, 1835) Early Romans also worshipped deities associated with specific localities and even household objects which they needed to survive, such as cupboards and hearths. (Bailey, 1907)

Fairies are not simply those creatures that inspire awe and reverence, just as the Kami was worshipped in Japan, so too were the fairies worshipped by the peoples of ancient Europe. Just as the Kami and Yokai of Japan were often feared so too in Europe did the fairies also plant the seeds of fear and cause sorrow. So in myth, fairies are both the monster and the object of reverence, the illness in the cattle, the things in the dark that cause our flesh to constrict into Goosebumps and make our hearts race.

The ancient Romans would drive diseases away by performing rituals that would show the power of civilization over nature in order to make the nature fairies afraid to come near them as they believed that nature fairies were the cause of illness. Among the Celts it was considered dangerous to harm certain plants because they were inhabited by fairies. In one myth, a man named Caffney cut some of the plants that housed fairies in order to cook his dinner. But the wood would not burn, and soon he pined away until he died. (Wentz, 1911)

Briggs speaks of another fairy, the Lamia, which hid herself in despair and became a monster, jealous of the good fortune of human mothers. This jealousy, coupled with a desire to hold children, moved her to steal children away (Perkiss, 2007). In a Greek fairy tale a young man

is enamored by some beautiful fairies causing his mother to warn, "Beware, my son! The maidens may be fairies. Evil may come. Beware!" (Gianakoulis, 1930) Such warnings show how horrified people were of fairies because of the things which they might do.

Fairies, then, are our hopes and our fears; our dreams and our nightmares. On the one hand, they give the world life, while on the other hand they bring destruction. There is nothing felt and nothing that happens that is not caused by a fairy. In myth, certain fairies were known as **fates, a word that came to mean "unavoidable". However, events caused by fates are unavoidable only because fairies deliberately make it so.**

Again Purkiss points out that Fairies represent the women's domain in that they are both distant from the action of most stories and yet ultimately they are the ones driving it. It is not a coincidence that fairies weave and spin. In Europe, it was believed that there was magic in spinning and weaving. That "fate" could be altered through the act of spinning and weaving. Having an understanding of this provides us with some useful information for telling the fairies' story. To effectively tell the fairies' story, we need to understand why they would do such things, why they make the world the way they do, and why they get so heavily involved in the lives of humans.

What are Humans?

To answer the question of what fairies are, it is perhaps best to begin by coming to an understanding of what humans are. Our knowledge of fairies, after all, springs from our encounters with them as well as the stories we tell about them. So to properly understand fairies, we must become familiar with what was perceived as our relationship with them.

Humans are unique among the European mortal realm because there are clear creation stories that explain where our race came from. These creation stories tend to agree with each other, at least in part. In Greek mythology, humans are the children of the nymphs of the ash trees who, in turn were born from the blood of the grandfather of the deities and so are older than the gods themselves. In Germanic and Scandinavian mythology, humans were created from the ash trees directly by the deity Odin. The Celts have a slightly different take on the origin of humans;

“In Celtic belief men were not so much created by gods as descended from them. (For) All the Gauls assert that they are descended from Dispater, and this, they say, has been handed down to them by the Druids. Dispater was a Celtic underworld god of fertility, and the statement probably presupposes a myth, like that found among many primitive peoples, telling how men once lived underground and thence came to the surface of the earth. But it also points to their descent from the god of the underworld. Thither the dead returned to him who was ancestor of the living as well as lord of the dead” (MacCulloch, 2005)

Ultimately then, we have to conclude that humans in mythology are not a separate species from nature, but that like the fairies and deities we are a direct descendant of these things. In one of the most famous stories of humans encountering fairies, two fairy children - a girl and a boy who were green in color - were taken in by Sir Richard de Caine at Wikes. Scared and saddened at finding himself in the human world, the boy eventually died. However over time, **the girl became human; though she remained “rather loose and wanton in her conduct.” (Keightley, 1870) What this shows us is that it was believed that fairies could become human simply by living among us. One could say than that we are actually a stage of the fairies’ life cycle. In over half of Europe’s myths, humans came from trees whose souls are those of the fairies and deities while the rest of European myths claim that humans are descendants of a deity of the underworld. This is significant because Celtic belief holds that many fairies live within and come from the underworld as well.**

Despite this relationship however, it is also clear that humans are distinctly different from fair-

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ies enjoy sacrifices such as bread, clothes, gold, or even the living beings that are offered to **them**. **Such sacrifices denote humans' respect for the deities and fairies.** In the myths and stories, fairies respond to these acts despite the fact that they seem to serve little purpose for **them**. **This is obviously the case in stories such as "The Three Little Men in the Wood" where** the fairies give a girl great gifts such as an unlimited supply of gold in return for providing them with a small crust of bread. (Grimm and Grimm, 1812) It seems odd that such respect should be the only reason that such rituals are observed, or that the fairies and deities seek these rituals while getting nothing from them. To understand this better, we need to examine the nature of historical beliefs about magic.

At its most basic level, magic is a sympathetic human action, a ritual combined with a thought which causes a desired outcome (Fraizer, 1890). This gives credence to odd rituals such as burning an effigy of someone in order to cause them to suffer, weaving a knot to bind someone, or painting an animal so that we are later in a better position to kill that animal. When we offer something to a fairy, it could then be taken as a sympathetic action directed positively for the fairy. In other words, sacrifices essentially provide the fairy with blessings. Moreover, through these myths, we find that our sacrifices lend the fairies strength. If we understood everything that they did, then we would not have needed them anymore so they **would not have received strength in the form of sacrifices from us.** As we'll see further in the **"What are Deities" and "Fairies are ancient Gods" sections of this book, fairies can become deities or lose their divinity based on human worship.**

What is ultimately clear is that in most Indo-European, Ularic and Tengeri myths, humans are simply another stage of life. Not just in the evolution of fairies but also within the life cycle of fairies themselves. This is also seen in India where reincarnation is a major theme, implying that mortals can become immortal beings and immortal beings can die to become mortals. It is also clear in Central Asia where humans share souls with fairies; human souls can become the spirits of the mountains or the trees and then later be reborn within a human again. Even in Europe, where things have grown murky it is still obvious from some folk tales that fairies are essentially souls and humans are houses for these souls.

What is the Soul?

To begin understanding the ancient European conception of the soul, you must forget everything you think you know about it. Our modern conception does not help in our goal of be-

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Shewglie; a plough or two broke thereafter at the spring-work, always a bad omen. Getting more unwell, he said to his wife the night before his death: "What a beautiful bird I heard singing by my bedside to-night." "I well believe it," she replied. To which he answered: "It was my ghost; I cannot live long." (*Ralston, 1872*)

There were also a number of other animal forms which human souls could take.

"it was generally believed among the Northern nations that the soul escaped from the body in the shape of a mouse, which crept out of a corpse's mouth and ran away, and it was also said to creep in and out of the mouths of people in a trance. While the soul was absent, no effort or remedy could recall the patient to life; but as soon as it had come back animation returned." (*Guerber, 1909*)

It is also clear that along with these ideas, it was believed that humans changed into some other form after death. What we see from examining European mythology surrounding death is that the same people believed that two or even three things happened to a human soul



Nature Fairies whisper secrets.

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Unlike much of the modern perception of the world, in which the duality between destruction and creation exists in separate beings, fairies exhibit this duality inside themselves. An internalized duality makes sense given that fairies were natural phenomena which are, in themselves, dualistic in a way that is neither good nor evil. After all, if fairies helped humans hunt for food, they must also help wolves source their food, which can include humans as there is no moral difference in the wolf's mind between a deer and a human. In addition, we as humans have every right to kill the wolf to defend ourselves, our own food, and those we love. Why is this comparison significant? Because this is the way of fairies – in fact, the way of all feral creatures - and this is a critical insight into what they think and do.

Indeed, when examining fairies, it becomes obvious that humans are not always their closest companions. Fairies often love trees and animals more because these are their friends. When a human chops down a tree they are in fact killing a fairy, which can be the child, mother, or lover of another fairy. To fairies, humans can be the wolves that destroy what they love or the rats that bring disease. In this sense, fairies have every right to return pestilence onto humanity to protect themselves just as we have the right to defend ourselves from predators and illnesses.

Notes on the Soul From:

M. A. Czaplicka's "Shamanism In Siberia"

A man, according to the belief of the Finnic tribes, is composed of three parts: body, shadow (*isi*), and soul (*lili khelmkholas*). *Lili khelmkholas* passes, after the death of a man, to an infant of the same clan, or, if the clan has become extinct, to one of another clan, but never to an animal. The shadow goes to a cold underworld, situated in the icy seas beyond the mouth of the Obi, and ruled over by *Kul Odyr*. Here it lives for as long as the term of the dead man's former life on earth, and follows the same pursuits-reindeer-breeding, fishing, &c. Then the shadow begins to grow smaller and smaller, until it is no larger than a blackbeetle, *ker-khomlakh* (according to some, it actually does turn into a blackbeetle), and finally disappears altogether.

The Buryat believe that man is composed of three parts: *oyeye*, material body; *amin*, lower soul, breath; and *sunyesun*, soul belonging to man only. *Amin* is connected with death; when it leaves the body, death occurs. *Sunyesun* has a similar connexion with sleep, leaving the body when one is sleeping. Batoroff relates the history of the soul after death as follows: When the time comes for a man to die, *erliks* capture one of his souls, and bring it before *Erlik-Nomon-Khan* for judgment. After this soul has been captured, it sometimes happens that a man may live on for as long as nine years, but he never enjoys his former health and strength. The second part of the soul does not leave the earth, but changes at the death of the man into a *bokholdoy*, which continues to live in a dwelling on earth and in a manner exactly similar to that which the man formerly followed. There are different classes of *bokholdoys*.

The third part of the soul is born again in the form of a human being but Batoroff does not tell us when and how this reincarnation takes place.

What are Deities?

Just as humans exist somewhere between fairies and giants, so do fairies lie between mortals and deities in their ability to perform magic. Deities appear to exist physically alongside the giants as massive, awe-inspiring beings. For example, Loki is so large that he caused earthquakes **when he was struggling beneath the ground. At the same time, it's obvious that deities** are able to change their size whenever it suits their interests - often choosing to enter human houses in disguise and Odin is believed to have become the leader of the fairies' wild hunt through the forest in a human form.

The differences between the ancient gods and fairies may be less than many suspect, just as it is with humans and fairies. On one hand, many of the fairies are descendants from deities or created by them. On the other, some fairies seem to come from the same place that deities are from and are even older than the deities themselves. For instance Zeus, the leader of the deities in Greek mythology, was raised by a nymph who kept him hidden from his father. Further Odin would often turn to spirits of the earth for advice and knowledge.

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supposed miraculous powers, to acquire the reputation of being an incarnate deity.

With these explanations and cautions I will now adduce some examples of gods who have been believed by their worshippers to be incarnate in living human beings, whether men or women. The persons in whom a deity is thought to reveal himself are by no means always kings or descendants of kings; the supposed incarnation may take place even in men of the humblest rank. In India, for example, one human god started in life as a cotton-bleacher and another as the son of a carpenter. I shall therefore not draw my examples exclusively from royal personages, as I wish to illustrate the general principle of the deification of living men, in other words, the incarnation of a deity in human form. Such incarnate gods are common in rude society. The incarnation may be temporary or permanent. In the former case, the incarnation—commonly known as inspiration or possession—reveals itself in supernatural knowledge rather than in supernatural power. In other words, its usual manifestations are divination and prophecy rather than miracles. On the other hand, when the incarnation is not merely temporary, when the divine spirit has permanently taken up its abode in a human body, the god-man is usually expected to vindicate his character by working miracles.

The ancient Egyptians, far from restricting their adoration to cats and dogs and such small deer, very liberally extended it to men. One of these human deities resided at the village of Anabis, and burnt sacrifices were offered to him on the altars; after which, says Porphyry, he would eat his dinner just as if he were an ordinary mortal. In classical antiquity the Sicilian philosopher Empedocles gave himself out to be not merely a wizard but a god.

He asserted that he could teach his disciples how to make the wind to blow or be still, the rain to fall and the sun to shine, how to banish sickness and old age and to raise the dead. When Demetrius Poliorcetes restored the Athenian democracy in 307 B.C., the Athenians decreed divine honours to him and his father Antigonus, both of them being then alive, under the title of the Saviour Gods. Altars were set up to the Saviours, and a priest appointed to attend to their worship. The people went forth to meet their deliverer with hymns and dances, with garlands and incense and libations; they lined the streets and sang that he was the only true god, for the other gods slept, or dwelt far away, or were not. In the words of a contemporary poet, which were chanted in public and sung in private:

*“Of all the gods the greatest and the dearest
To the city are come.
For Demeter and Demetrius*

The ancient Germans believed that there was something holy in women, and accordingly consulted them as oracles. Their sacred women, we are told, looked on the eddying rivers and listened to the murmur or the roar of the water, and from the sight and sound foretold what would come to pass. But often the veneration of the men went further, and they worshipped women as true and living goddesses. For example, in the reign of Vespasian a certain Veleda, of the tribe of the Bructeri, was commonly held to be a deity, and in that character reigned over her people, her sway being acknowledged far and wide. She lived in a tower on the river Lippe, a tributary of the Rhine. When the people of Cologne sent to make a treaty with her, the ambassadors were not admitted to her presence; the negotiations were conducted through a minister, who acted as the mouthpiece of her divinity and reported her oracular utterances. The example shows how easily among our rude forefathers the ideas of divinity and royalty coalesced.

Section II

Fairy Classifications

Fairies are the Dead

Every step, every moment, every thought and deed leads us ever onward towards another life, **a life which may perhaps last for eternity. Thus, from an immortal creature's perspective,** death might simply be a form of birth. So while life might seem wonderful to a human, just as any moment in the womb may seem wonderful to a child, it is, at least in mythology, just another step. For fairies, this step can be viewed as necessary to finally bring humans fulfillment. While not all fairies come from the spirits of dead humans, as fairies existed in Iceland even before the first humans set foot in the area (Davidson and Davidson, 1989), it should still come as no surprise that death would bring humans to the immortal possibility of becoming a fairy, of becoming one with nature, with music, and magic.

The fact that some of our ancestors have indeed become fairies gives us a shadowy window into understanding the reasoning of the beings of this strange world. For the dead have an obvious interest in the things they loved in life and in those things they would love if they were still **mortal. In the story of "The Three Spinners," a woman is told to spin a room full of flax in order to be married.** Unable to perform such an impossible feat, she falls into despair when three old women appear to her and tell her that they are her ancestors. At this point, they **proceed to help her in return for being invited to her child's christening. (Grimm and Grimm, 1812)** The fairies' goal in helping the human girl in this story is clear. They seek, as many elders would, to help a grandchild or a great niece in finding love and happiness. That this is their goal becomes all the more clear by the fact that what they ask for in return is to be able to go to an important event for her child just as a doting elder would do.

Certainly, not all fairy motivations are as simple or clear as those of the three spinners as not all fairies are in any way related to humans, or their immortal life existing in nature has al-

tered their perceptions and shrouded their motivations in mystery. However, at the end of the day, these three spinners and those fairies who still clearly love their descendants will return to fairy land when they are through helping their human decedents, where they will dance and speak with the other fairies. So even in cases where an ancestor has forgotten what it was like to be human, even when a fairy has never been human, indeed one could argue that even the oddest of fairies may have their motivations altered by the ancestors of humans who live among them.

It should come as no surprise then that the fairies of any given land reflect the people of that land. That the fairies of any given land seem to care more about the people of their country than those of others is one of the primary reasons humans are likely to encounter fairies because they are either related to us and our kin, or they know another fairy who is. In other words, humans typically encounter fairies because fairies do care about us.

Ancestor worship is a common practice among the animist peoples including the people of Europe's past. The souls of the dead in many religions became gods or spirits which protected their decedents from harm and from their enemies. So many of the beings we would recognize **as fairies are in the spirits of peoples' ancestors that walk the spirit world or remain behind to offer aid.** In Russia there was no doubt—

“That the souls of the families’ patriarchs watched over their children and their children's children; that the departed spirits, especially those of the ancestors, ought always to be regarded with pious veneration. When the family was in need, these ancestors should be solicited or conciliated by prayer and sacrifice (Ralston, 1872).”

These patriarchs were not some distant being for they lived among humans and were closely connected with the fire burning in the domestic hearth. This fact accounts for the following:

“The stove at the turn of the century in Russia, having come to be considered the special haunt of the domovoi, or house spirit, whose position in the esteem of the people is looked upon as a trace of the ancestor worship of olden days.”

A domovoi is a small, old man covered in hair who lives under the hearth or within the threshold of a house. The Slavic peoples were historically so close to him that each family would refer to him as Grandfather. These household fairies exist all over Europe from England to Russia providing protection against evil spirits, divination, blessings, and even in some cases helping directly with the housework. The ancestors who lived in the fireplace were so important to the people of Russia that:

“When a Russian family moves from one house to another, the fire is raked out of the old stove into a jar and solemnly conveyed to the new one, and the words ‘Welcome, Grandfather, to the new home!’ being uttered when it arrived. All new animals are introduced to this ‘Grandfather,’ and food is laid out for them at special occasions.”

Not all ancestor fairies are connected to the household, however. The previously mentioned bannik lives within the bathhouse while others live and aid in the fields and farm. Still others, such as the banshee, appear to live in the moorlands coming out only to watch humans and provide them with gifts or to mourn their passing. (Ralston, 1872)

The spirits of the bathhouse, known as banniks, were also called “grandfather” not simply as a sign of respect as was common among the Russian people but as a sign that they were a protector of the family. In one Russian fairy tale, a girl flees into the bathhouse to escape a vampire-like boy which is chasing her and calls out, “Save me, Grandfather Bannik,” at which

point the fairy jumped out of hiding and wrestled the vampire like creature until dawn when he is forced to flee. The bannik also acted as a soothsayer for the family helping to divine evil and remove curses from them.

Although modern stories have demonized the banshee, they are not, in fact, monsters but deceased family members who wail and cry to mourn the death of a loved family member. They are simply doing their mourning before the death occurs because they can see the future. They are not, however, responsible for the death and, in some instances; their appearance is meant to serve as a warning in order to save a person from death. Further, the banshee often blesses her decedents.

“There is a legend told of the Macleod family: (that) Soon after the heir of the Macleods was born, a beautiful woman in wonderful raiment, who was a fairy woman or banshee, (there were joyous as well as mourning banshees), appeared at the castle and went directly to the babe’s cradle. She took up the babe and chanted over it a series of verses, and each verse had its own melody. The verses foretold the future manhood of the young child and acted as a protective charm over its life. Then she put the babe back into its cradle and, going out, disappeared across the moorlands.”

In another tale, the banshee of Grants Meg Moulach would stand beside the heads of the family and advise them on playing chess. (F.S. Wilde, 1887) Not every family had a banshee, according to (Briggs, 1967). **“Only families of historic lineage or those gifted with music and poetry - which are the fairies’ gifts - are attended by banshees.”** Banshees in these stories most often took the form of a sweet, singing virgin rather than the scary ghost of modern films.

It is clear then that banshees did far more than mourn the passing of their family members but actively engaged in making the lives of their families better. When they had finished, they often returned to the moors where the other fairies lived. That these beautiful poetic and musical beings would have influence over the other beauty and music-loving fairies can only be speculated, but it seems likely that such influences did occur.

The Romans also believed that humans would often become fairies in death:

“M. A. Lefèvre shows that the Roman Lares, so frequently compared to house-haunting fairies, are in reality quite like the Gaelic banshee. Originally, they were nothing more than the unattached souls of the dead, akin to Manes; that time and custom made distinctions between them. In the common language, Lares and Manes had synonymous dwellings; and that, finally, the idea of death was little by little divorced from the worship of the Lares so that they became guardians of the family and protectors of life. On all the tombs of their dead, the Romans inscribed these names: *Manes, inferi, silentes*, the last of which, meaning *the silent ones*, is equivalent to the term ‘People of Peace’ given to the fairy-folk of Scotland. Nor were the Roman Lares always thought of as inhabiting dwellings. Many were supposed to live in the fields, in the streets of cities, at crossroads quite like certain orders of fairies and demons. In each place these ancestral spirits had their chapels and received offerings of fruit, flowers, and foliage. If neglected, they became spiteful and were then known as lemures.” (Wentz, 1911)

One might think that if fairies are dead humans they would be happy when humans died. However, like the banshee, the domovoi could also be heard to wail when a loved one was about to die. (Ralston, 1872) This is interesting not only because it denotes that the fairies were concerned about and loved their decedents, but because it also indicates that not all humans become fairies. Recalling that death itself can be likened in some senses to a birth, when some humans die they will in turn join the banshee and the domovoi. Yet clearly this is not

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fairies the:

“Faces of friends and relatives, long since doomed to the battle trench or the deep sea, have been recognized by those who dared to gaze on the fairy march. The maid has seen her lost lover, and the mother her stolen child, and the courage to plan and achieve their deliverance has been possessed by, at least, one border maiden.”

So not only are the dead among the fairies, but it is possible at times to bring them back to life. **This can also mean that they are not truly dead. That like the fairy in Espeth’s story, they are neither dead nor alive.** Consider changeling stories, for example, stories in which a human child is taken by the fairies. **It’s not just children, however. Many older people are taken to be servants with changelings left in their places.** Often such changelings are made of wood or earth and only appear to be the person’s dead body in order to dissuade anyone from looking for them. In one story, a man rescues his wife just as she is being carried off by a troop of fairies which had **“come through the window, thronging like bees from a hive.”**

Not all fairies abduct people unwillingly, however. There are tales of people entering fairy land on their own. In one tale, a fairy maiden attempts to lure the Prince Connla into fairy land stating that she is the one:

“Whom neither death nor old age awaits. I love Connla, and now I call him away to the Plain of Pleasure, Moy Mell, where Boadag is king for aye, nor has there been complaint or sorrow in that land since he has held the kingship. Oh, come with me, Connla of the Fiery Hair, ruddy as the dawn with thy tawny skin. A fairy crown awaits thee to grace thy comely face and royal form. Come, and never shall thy comeliness fade, nor thy youth, till the last awful day of judgment.”
(Joseph Jacobs, 1892)

Three things should be obvious from this story. First and foremost is that fairies can love humans and can long to be with them. Such love can occur even when, as was the case with Connla the fairy and the human, who have never met because at least some fairies have a huge advantage over humans in selecting their future mates as fairies have some divination powers. After all, at one time when people wanted to know who they should marry, they asked fairies to guide them. So, to a fairy, it can be blatantly obvious who they need to love and marry even when they have never met them.

Second, the story of Connla should tell us that fairies will lure the mortals they love to live with them in the fairy realm and that once such humans enter the fairy realm, they become immortal so long as they continue to live as the fairies do. Third, such mortals, despite being **tempted by a beautiful, magical being and a “Plain of Pleasure,” can still be emotionally attached to the mortal world. So they or the fairies’ who love them, as well as the children of such unions and friends they make within fairyland, will likely take an interest in mortal affairs from then on.** So, here again, we see the world of fairies being directly affected by the world of humans.

The Dead Become Nature Spirits

As previously mentioned in the discussion of the human soul, people can become nature spirits when they die. **Trees, for example, are said to embody the “ghost of the person buried under it.” (Wentz, 1911) For this reason it’s dangerous and even cruel to cut down trees in cemeteries.** The Yew tree is thought to have a root in each person in a cemetery and so contains

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molesters; that those who have been wronged and abused are more likely to wrong and abuse others in the same way. Perhaps fairies that have died are much the same, taking a sick catharsis in the death of others.

The harm fairies cause, however, is not always cathartic. The domovoi is well-known to be just **as harmful to families that they aren't related to as they are helpful to their own. They steal** from other families, engage in poltergeist activities, and even attack and harm the domovoi of these other families. So it is that:

“The Russian peasant draws a clear line between his own domovoi and his neighbor's. The former is a benignant spirit who will do him good even at the expense of others; the latter is a malevolent being who will very likely steal his hay, drive away his poultry, and so forth, for his neighbor's benefit. Therefore, incantations are provided against him some of which the assistance of ‘the bright gods’ is invoked against ‘the terrible devil and the stranger domovoi.’ The domestic spirits of different households often engage in contests with one another, as might be expected, seeing that they are addicted to stealing from each other's possessions. Sometimes one will vanquish another, drive him out of the house he haunts, and take possession of it himself. When a peasant moves into a new house in certain districts, he takes his own domovoi with him, having first, as a measure of precaution, taken care to hang up a bear's head in the stable. This prevents any evil domovoi, whom malicious neighbors may have introduced, from fighting with and perhaps overcoming the good Lar Familiaris.” (Ralston, 1872)

Why should the domovoi act this way to other families and to each other? After all, in life it is unlikely that people stole from their neighbors very often so why should they do so in death? Perhaps the answer lies in simple immunity, immortality, and a more extreme set of emotions as well as the greater connection to their conflicting souls. For unlike humans, the domovoi are essentially immune from the harm they do. They cannot be put in prison for stealing or helping their family get ahead of another family by causing trouble the way a human could be. Thus, they are more likely to act on their negative and greedy impulses than a human would. As importantly, fairies like Kami often seem to have multiple natures. So, in essence, dualism is not between a fairy and a competing being but within each individual fairy as it surely is in all humans. Among fairies, however, this dual nature is often more extreme. This duality is perhaps best seen in the Slavic beliefs about the bathhouse and the spirits that live there.

“Peasants avoid visiting a bath at late hours, for the *bannik* does not like people who bathe at night, and often suffocates them, especially if they have not prefaced their ablutions by a prayer. It is considered dangerous, also, to pass the night in a corn-kiln, for the domovoi may strangle the intruder in his sleep. In the Smolensk government, it is usual for peasants who quit a bath to leave a bucket of water and a whisk for the use of the domovoi who takes their place. In Poland it is believed that the domovoi is so loath to quit a building in which he has once taken up his quarters that even if it is burnt down, he still haunts it, continuing to dwell in the remains of the stove.”

In one story, a woman who interrupts a *bannik* in a bath has her skin flayed from her body as punishment for her interruption. Recall that these are the very same beings that save humans, protect them from harm, remove curses, weep when humans are about to die, and help to sweep the floors yet they kill those who disturb them taking on themselves the most extreme behavior possible.

We see extremeness again played out in the tale of Rumpelstiltskin in which the story's name-

sake throws such a fit that he tears himself in half. In the story of Sleeping Beauty, a fairy curses a baby to death for being overlooked when the invitations to the child's christening went out. It's obvious, then, that it is in the nature of fairies to feel emotions perhaps a little too much, to overreact to everything. Such overreaction is not always a bad thing. However, fairies will also give great gifts for the smallest of kindnesses shown to them, blessing people to find riches, marry princes, and live long, happy lives for a simple crust of dry bread.

Notes On Fairies are the Dead From:

W. Y. Evans-Wentz's **"Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries"**

Who the 'Good People' are.—I now asked John what sort of a race the 'good people' are, and where they came from, and this is his reply:—'People killed and murdered in war stay on earth till their time is up, and they are among the *good people*. The opinion always was that they are a race of spirits, for they can go into different forms, and can appear big as well as little.'

The Fairies are the Dead.—'According to the local belief, fairies are the spirits of the departed. Tradition says that Hugh O'Neil in the sixteenth century, after his march to the south, encamped his army on the *Rath* or *Fort* of Ringlestown, to be assisted by the spirits of the mighty dead who dwelt within this *rath*.

The Spirit World at Carns

A 'Gentry' Medium.—'Ketty Rourk (or Queenan) could tell all that would happen—funerals, weddings, and so forth. Sure some spirits were coming to her. She said they were the *gentry*; that the *gentry* are everywhere; and that my drowned uncles and grandfather and other dead are among them. A drowned man named Pat Nicholson was her adviser. He used to live just a mile from here; and she knew him before he was drowned.'

There is a legend told of the Macleod family:—Soon after the heir of the Macleods was born, a beautiful woman in wonderful raiment, who was a fairy woman or banshee (there were joyous as well as mourning banshees) appeared at the castle, and went directly to the babe's cradle. She took up the babe and chanted over it a series of verses, and each verse had its own melody. The verses foretold the future manhood of the young child, and acted as a protective charm over its life. Then she put the babe back into its cradle, and, going out, disappeared across the moorlands.

Humans Become Fairies

Humans do not have to die to become nature spirits or trooping fairies. Humans are so close to fairies they can, in fact, be transformed into fairies while still living. This should not be so surprising because, as previously mentioned; humans are in essence just another form of fairy.

It has been theorized that many of our fairy stories come from the existence of indigenous peoples in England. People ostracized and driven to the fringes of society or the underdogs who were mysterious to those who rejected them. In Cornwall one man testifies that:

“Pixies were often supposed to be the souls of the prehistoric dwellers of this country. As such, pixies were supposed to be getting smaller and smaller until, finally, they are to vanish entirely.” (Wentz, 1911)

This paints a much more terrifying picture of some of the fairies than we often imagined. According to this account, the pixies who people often think of as cute, little, playful fairies, are **small because they are shrinking into oblivion. What’s more, they have had to live for thousands of years with the knowledge that they will eventually disappear and that those humans who would remain are the decedents of the people who forced them into their horrible fate.** It is no wonder then that such beings are caught between human-like sympathy and incredible bitterness because, while they must retain some human emotion, much of this emotion must be anger at being driven into their current state.

If we accept the presence of many of our ancestors among the fairies, as we surely must given the large amount of evidence to support this, we must also accept that there are other humans, often far angrier humans, occupying the world of fairies. Further, there are very few people who can claim to be the first inhabitants of their lands and perhaps only two such peo-

ple groups in Europe. So it would seem that only some fairies would be the ancestors of any given set of humans especially given that as with the pixies whole kingdoms of humans could become fairies. This might explain why people in Europe were so afraid of the wilderness. After they drove the original inhabitants of Europe into the dark forests and mountains, these peoples and the fairies they came to be had centuries to grow ever bitterer.

In Ireland, many people believed that the Tuatha De Danann were an indigenous people who turned invisible and entered a parallel realm when the Irish people invaded Ireland, as the Tuatha De Danann were unable to defeat the newcomers in a test of arms because of the Irish **peoples' powerful druids and deities. The Tuatha De Danann now reside in the hills and rocks** of Ireland much as fairies do in other parts of the Europe (Wentz, 1911). The Tuatha De Danann are mysterious but also understandable because they still structure themselves much as humans would with kingdoms and fortresses, wars, and a little bit of both enmity and pity for the decedents of those that drove them into the underground realm who are still stuck as **suffering mortals despite their apparent "victory."**

In an Austrian myth, a poor girl freezing to death in the cold comes across a hut of fairies who demand that she sleep with one of them for shelter. The freezing girl, afraid of dying from the cold, ultimately agrees to go to bed with one of them. As she is lying there with him, a woman from a nearby village comes to trade with the fairies and finds the poor girl in bed with them. Disgusted that a human, one of her own, would sleep with such creatures, the woman brings the villagers back to the hut, kills the men, and sends the girl out to die in the elements. (Keightley, 1870) Like the leprechauns, it would seem that fairies in this case were easily taken down by humans. In other words, fairies, at least in these instances, not only have something to fear from humans but are in fact easily overcome by them. This may explain the desire of at least some of the fairies to remain hidden, though this desire is contradicted by the fact that at least in some cases fairies want humans to believe in their existence.

We must also realize that the woman in the aforementioned story felt no qualms about storming into the house of the fairies to discover the girl sleeping with one of them. For if the fairies had had time to hide the girl, they surely would have since they must have known what the **woman's reaction would be. What we have then is a story of beings who are ostracized, considered far less than human to the point that they are dehumanized.**

Lest we think that such myths are confined to Europe, we must consider a more recent case of **this "fairyfication" process which comes from Hawaii, that of the Menehune. The Menehune** are the indigenous people of the Hawaiian Islands. As the current Hawaiian peoples moved into Hawaii, they drove the Menehune deeper into the jungles from which they mythologically emerged at night to build magical temples before fleeing back to the jungles when the sun rose. Yet despite their mythological status, they were a real people whose ancestors were counted in the Hawaiian kingdoms first census and whose ancestors likely still survive today.

It is not simply indigenous people who can enter the realm of folklore and myth, however. Consider the way Western culture has treated the gypsies in its folktales and movies. Imagine what would have happened if gypsies had vanished before Western cultures had gained high literacy rates, before there had been anyone to document the reality rather than the fantasy. Indeed, even with the reality, available people still tend to think of gypsies as magical beings. It seems strange that magical powers and an advisory roll are assigned to a race of little-known people by those who had their own traditions of witchcraft and fortunetelling. There are Romanian witches as well as the cunning folk of England, and yet we still choose to feature the gypsies in their mysterious roll. This, however, seems to be the way of humans— to dehumanize certain peoples as **fairy-like beings. For once again, it's not just Europeans who are** guilty of presuming some nomadic people to be magical. Indeed, the people of Greenland believed that the Vikings were literally descended from dogs. And when the Europeans first

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Fairies are Nature's Spirits

Few things can inspire such awe and fear as nature itself. The volcano which rises majestically into the sky inspires poets, painters, songwriters, and deep sighs of pleasure at its sight. Yet this same volcano destroys and kills; inspiring terror with each loud rumble or plume of smoke. So it is that nature is that which inspires people to pray in both reverence and fear; so it is in nature that fairies are at their greatest. It may be impossible to ever truly understand the mind of a natural phenomenon, for nature inspires awe in humans because it is so vastly different. Even for those natural phenomena that were once human, it will surely have changed greatly, perhaps beyond all recognition after hundreds or even thousands of years as **an object of beauty and, at times, raw power. Yet despite such differences, it is nature's spirits**, it is the fairies of wells, trees, and rocks that people turned to for help most often, and it is these beings that often seem to have the greatest impact on the human world.

Notes On Nature Fairies From:

J. A. MacCulloch's "Religion of the Ancient Celts"

IN early thought everything was a person, in the loose meaning then possessed by personality, and many such "persons" were worshipped--earth, sun, moon, sea, wind, etc. This led later to more complete personification, and the sun or earth divinity or spirit was more or less separated from the sun or earth themselves. Some Celtic divinities were thus evolved, but there still continued a veneration of the objects of nature in themselves, as well as a cult of nature spirits or secondary divinities who peopled every part of nature. "Nor will I call out upon the mountains, fountains, or hills, or upon the rivers, which are now subservient to the use of man, but once were an abomination and destruction to them, and to which the blind people paid divine honours," cries Gildas. This was the true cult of the folk, the "blind people," even

when the greater gods were organized, and it has survived with modifications in out-of-the-way places, in spite of the coming of Christianity.

S. Kentigern rebuked the Cambrians for worshipping the elements, which God made for man's use. The question of the daughters of Loegaire also throws much light on Celtic nature worship. "Has your god sons or daughters? . . . Have many fostered his sons? Are his daughters dear and beautiful to men? Is he in heaven or on earth, in the sea, in the rivers, in the mountains, in the valleys?" The words suggest a belief in divine beings filling heaven, earth, sea, air, hills, glens, lochs, and rivers, and following human customs. A naive faith, full of beauty and poetry, even if it had its dark and grim aspects! These powers or personalities had been invoked from time immemorial, but the invocations were soon stereotyped into definite formula.

It was also customary to take oaths by the elements--heaven, earth, sun, fire, moon, sea, land, **day, night,...**

Even the gods exacted such an oath of each other. Bres swore by sun, moon, sea, and land, to fulfil the engagement imposed on him by Lug.

While the greater objects of nature were worshipped for themselves alone, the Celts also peopled the earth with spirits, benevolent or malevolent, of rocks, hills, dales, forests, lakes, and streams, and while greater divinities of growth had been evolved, they still believed in lesser spirits of vegetation, of the corn, and of fertility, connected, however, with these gods. Some of these still survive as fairies seen in meadows, woodlands, or streams, or as demoniac beings haunting lonely places. And even now, in French folk-belief, sun, moon, winds, etc., are regarded as actual personages. Sun and moon are husband and wife; the winds have wives; they are addressed by personal names and revered.

Perhaps the most important object in nature to the early Celts as to most primitive folk was the moon. The phases of the moon were apparent before men observed the solstices and equinoxes, and they formed an easy method of measuring time. The Celtic year was at first lunar--Pliny speaks of the Celtic method of counting the beginning of months and years by the moon--and night was supposed to precede day. Dr. Johnson noted the fact that the Highlanders sowed their seed with a waxing moon, in the expectation of a better harvest. For similar occult reasons, it is thought in Brittany that conception during a waxing moon produces a male child, during a waning moon a female, while *accouchements* at the latter time are dangerous. Sheep and cows should be killed at the new moon, else their flesh will shrink, but peats should be cut in the last quarter, otherwise they will remain moist and give out "a power of smoke."

The sea had also its beneficent aspects. The shore was "a place of revelation of science," and the sea sympathized with human griefs. At the Battle of Ventry "the sea chattered, telling the losses, and the waves raised a heavy, woeful great moan in wailing them." In other cases in Ireland, by a spell put on the waves, or by the intuitive knowledge of the listener, it was revealed that they were wailing for a death or describing some distant event. In the beautiful song sung by the wife of Cael, "the wave wails against the shore for his death," and in Welsh myth the waves bewailed the death of Dylan, "son of the wave," and were eager to avenge it. The noise of the waves rushing into the vale of Conwy were his dying groans. In Ireland the roaring of the sea was thought to be prophetic of a king's death or the coming of important news; and there, too, certain great waves were celebrated in story--Clidna's, Tuaithe's, and Rudhraidhe's.

The wind was also regarded as a living being whose power was to be dreaded. It punished King Loegaire for breaking his oath. But it was also personified as a god Vintius, equated with Pol-lux and worshipped by Celtic sailors, or with Mars, the war-god who, in his destructive aspect,

was perhaps regarded as the nearest analogue to a god of stormy winds..... Magonia may be the upper air ruled over by a sky god Magounos.... The winds may have been his servants, ruled also by earthly magicians.

Notes On Nature Fairies From **M. A. Czaplicka's "Shamanism in Siberia"**

Ichchi, literally 'owner', signifies an 'owner'-spirit of various objects. Every river, lake, stone, and sometimes even parts of these, has its own *ichchi*, who controls it. Movable objects and those which can produce sounds also have their *ichchi*..... **they are harmful to men. Thus, for example, Kurar-Ichchi, the 'owner' of the wind, is by many writers considered as a 'black' spirit, since the wind is very often dangerous and harmful. In the wanderings of the tribe through difficult country, by dangerous roads, or through trackless regions, accidents may often happen to a cart or some part of its equipment. Such misfortunes are attributed to the local *ichchi*, who must therefore be placated by sacrifices. The Yakut have a special language for use during these journeyings. In this language, implements or other valuable objects are given certain nicknames instead of names proper to them, in order that the *ichchi* may not know that the objects in question are referred to for if they did, they would destroy or harm them. For the same reason the Yakut often employ Russian names for things they value, being certain that he *ichchi* will not understand these.**

Wells, Springs, Pools, and Fountains

In the search for habitable planets, humans will, more than anything else, look for planets which could have running water. Water is that which provides life. No matter how far back in human history we go, this was understood. Clean water not only allows a person to drink, it gives them something to clean with so as to prevent diseases. That same water helps crops to grow, providing food and a livelihood to the people around it. Few things held greater reverence for the Celtic people than pools of water. Indeed, water spirits were perhaps the most **common of all nature's spirits. (Briggs, 1967) The nature of fairies of the many wells and springs were so important to the people in ancient times that long after they stopped worshipping the other fairies, and deities had faded in importance to little more than murderous fairies, the Catholic Church was unable to stop the worship of water and so was forced to dedicate the sacred fountains to Saints in order to make the worship of water legitimate.** (Macculloch, 1911)

Christians were not the first ones to rededicate wells and water to a new religion, however. **Many of the river gods and goddesses within the Celtic lands "seemed to possess pre-Celtic names." In other words, the importance of these gods was so great that the Celts continued to worship them even after they had overcome the original worshipers, a worship which continued even after they were Christianized. (MacCulloch, 1911) It was the spirits of the wells that were the people's guardians and comfort. In one story, a group of horned witches kept invading a woman's home tormenting her and eventually forcing her to flee. After fleeing from her**

home, the woman collapses in tears beside a well and it is here that a voice speaks to her telling her what she must do to be free of the witches. (Joseph Jacobs, 1892)

Well spirits and water spirits often have no personification but are beings represented only as **a simple voice which provides advice to humans in need.** In “**Brother and Sister,**” a witch curses the streams of the forest so that anyone drinking from them will change into an animal in order to curse her two stepchildren. The spring, however, warns the two children of the danger so that they can avoid drinking from the stream of water at first. (Grimm and Grimm, 1812) The voice in this story comes from the water itself. So, as before, the water of the ancient European world appears to be alive, not just in the form of a human but in and of itself. What we see in this story is that just because this living water can be cursed and poisoned by a powerful witch, this does not mean that the water is a willing participant in the problem. Thus Water, like any fairy, appears to have a limited amount of control over what happens to it. So while it can heal others and purify itself to an extent, there are some things it cannot overcome. In the aforementioned story, one of these things was a powerful, human witch.

Even so, Water is a powerful human ally against the other beings that might do them harm. There are many stories in which a person only has to cross water to be safe from a magical being pursuing them. (Wentz, 1911) In one of the most famous American folktales, “**The Legend of Sleepy Hollow**” a headless huntsman can be thwarted in his attempts to take a human’s head if the human simply crosses over a bridge which crosses over water. The simple act of crossing water is significant because the water, as we have seen, is alive and is at least at **times a protector of humanity.** So, just as household fairies won’t allow uninvited evil into a home, the water will protect humans from spiritual dangers.

Water does not, however, always appear to care who it is helping so long as it is helping people **who are alive as this helpfulness extends to those who don’t deserve it.** Criminals are able to cross water for safety just as easily or perhaps more easily than innocent children can, as the latter are more likely to be subject to drowning by the fairies within the water. What’s more, the advice of water fairies is given even to those who not only don’t necessarily deserve it but who would do evil with it. In the “**Story of Gold Tree and Silver Tree,**” a Scottish variation of the “**Snow White**” stories, a trout in a stream takes the place of the mirror in advising the evil stepmother, telling her not only that Gold Tree is more beautiful but also letting the stepmother know that her stepdaughter survived the Queen’s attempted murder as well as where she is located. This information allows the evil stepmother to try to kill her innocent stepdaughter again. (Joseph Jacobs, 1896)

In this story, the trout is the personification of the pool of water as fish are often representative of the fairies within wells and other bodies of water.

“Even now in Brittany the fairy dweller in a spring has the form of an eel, while in the 17th century Highland wells contained fish so sacred that no one dared to catch them.” (MacCulloch, 1911)

“Odin also gained his great wisdom from a fountain known as ‘Mimir’s’ (Memory, memory) ‘Spring, the fountain of all wit and wisdom’ in whose liquid depths even the future was clearly mirrored and besought the old man who guarded it to let him have a draught. But Mimir, who well knew the value of such a favor (for his spring was considered the source or headwater of memory), refused the boon unless Odin would consent to give one of his eyes in exchange.”

(Guerber, 1909)

Even though the Mimir demanded something in return for his gift, he still seems only to care **about what he can get out of his wisdom. Thus, water spirits' goals would seem to be far more** enigmatic than those of beings that were once human or are somehow connected to the mortal world. Yet it is obvious that they care about humanity in some form; otherwise why would they provide aid to those in need? One possible reason that the water seeks to aid humans could be that the water seeks respect above all else.

In one Russian tale, two rivers, the Volga and Vazuza, get into a dispute over which of them is wiser and stronger in order to gain the respect of the other. Eventually, they agree to race to prove which is better. This race takes the form of a race to the sea in the springtime so at least in this case their bodies are the rivers themselves. Russian rivers are well-known in myths to **demand respect of humans; drowning anyone who doesn't provide this respect while providing** easy crossing for those who do. So it is apparent that these rivers greatly desire to be respected. The desire for respect, for sacrifices to it can make water a cruel being at times.

"The malevolent aspect of the spirit of the well is seen in the "cursing wells" of which it was thought that when some article inscribed with an enemy's name was thrown into them with the accompaniment of a curse, the spirit of the well would cause his death. In some cases the curse was inscribed on a leaden tablet thrown into the waters just as, in other cases, a prayer for the offerer's benefit was engraved on it. Or, again, objects over which a charm had been said were placed in a well that the victim who drew water might be injured. An excellent instance of a cursing well is that of Fynnon Elian in Den-



bigh, which must once have had a guardian priestess, for in 1815 an old woman who had charge of it presided at the ceremony. She wrote the name of the victim in a book receiving a gift at the same time. A pin was dropped into the well in the name of the victim, and through it and through knowledge of his name, the spirit of the well acted upon him to his hurt. Obviously, rites like these in which magic and religion mingle are not purely Celtic, but it is of interest to note their existence in Celtic **lands and among Celtic folk.**" – (MacCulloch, 1911)

Rivers themselves are enigmatic creatures; they provide water for humans to clean themselves, to drink from, to aid in the growing of crops, and to travel along. Yet at the same time they are a destructive force which floods the land; destroying the same crops they allow to grow, the cities they allow to exist and which drown the children they keep alive. It is not simply a matter of capricious opportunity, however, as again rivers will travel far out of their way in floods to do these things. In another Russian fairy tale, the spirit of the stream takes the form of a King-Bear who seizes Tsar-**Medved's beard as he's drinking and won't let** go until he manages to trick the king into giving up two babies (a girl and a boy). The King-Bear in this case is a multi-**elemental spirit as it later burns a falcon's tale, finds the children** in a secret underground lair, and carries them off to the mountains.

Water often seeks victims. Peg the Prowler drowns a person once every seven years (Briggs, 1967). In Celtic mythology, fairies appear as horses which then try to lure people to riding

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Trees, Forests, Glens, and Plants

In Northern European mythology the center of our universe was the world's tree, and many of the great trees of our world's forests were believed to be the offshoots of this world tree. Within Central Asia it was believed that one of the souls of the human dead would fly to a giant tree that connected all the worlds together in the form of a bird or some other winged creature where the human's soul would wait to be reincarnated (Tengerism.org).

As previously mentioned, the word "temple" originally meant "wood" because within Europe the first churches of the Indo-European peoples were groves of trees, and the first idols were ancient or unique trees. Knowing simply that trees are of great importance, however, gives us little to understand the nature of the fairies which inhabit them. Luckily, being the center of the Universe is not the only reason why trees are important to humans. As previously mentioned, it was believed by many peoples that humans were born from trees. Among the Huns who invaded Europe, it is likely that humans and trees were considered to share the same souls such that humans were reincarnated trees, and trees were reincarnated humans. Further, trees could be **bound to a person's existing life such that people would plant a tree when their child was born because as it grew strong their child would as well.** (MacCulloch, 1911)

In a Russian version of the Cinderella story a birch tree grows from a mother's grave, and it is this birch tree which provides her daughter with the magical gifts needed to win the prince (Lang, 1890). In the German fairy tale "The Juniper Tree" a boy is murdered and buried underneath a juniper tree. He is able to get his revenge because he is born from the tree in the form of a bird. (Grimm and Grimm, 1912) As previously mentioned, the connection between the human soul and trees stretches as far west as Ireland where people believed the souls would manifest as trees and other plants. So trees, or at least their souls, are similar to human souls such that people believed we shared a connection to each other even if we're not always aware of it.

Recall further that for over half the populations of Europe humans were directly descended from trees. Tree fairies had a major advantage over most humans, however, for they could live for hundreds or even thousands of years longer than any human could. Further, giant trees inspire awe, reverence, and a sense of wonder that must have defined the most important of fairies and deities. Because of this, trees were also more closely connected to the other deities, fairies, and nature than humans typically were. Mistletoe, it was said, came down as a gift from the gods of the sky to crown the oak trees (Frazer, 1922). Such signs let people know which trees to respect and revere in an otherwise confusing world.

Trees, it was believed, helped to control and cause much of the growth of the plants that humans and animals needed to survive. Indeed, nothing grows unless the fairies allow it to. This is why May Day, winter festivals, and harvest festivals all involved the idea of trees which **themselves symbolize fertility and life. So great was the trees' power in making things grow** and providing fertility that in some parts of Bavaria May Day bushes are set up in the houses of newly married people so that they would conceive. Women would also hug trees in hopes of becoming pregnant or hang chemises on fruitful trees. The Wends would cause their cattle to run around the tree as a means of making them thrive. (Frazer, 1922)

There is some evidence to support the idea that the first peoples of Europe relied heavily on

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rriors in the form of luck and success. Trees need additional strength because, like humans, fairies go to war with each other. It is also possible that the humans were seeking to provide the tree with additional strength so the tree would be in a better position to support humans in their endeavors. This only makes sense, however, if it was believed that the tree was committed to helping the humans with the expectation of getting nothing in return. However, while **such benevolence on the part of the trees is possible, it doesn't always appear that people believed trees and fairies were purely benevolent.** For within the sacred groves of the Celtic, Germanic, and Baltic peoples, silence reigned supreme as even the greatest adepts feared to set foot during certain hours of the day lest they interrupt the fairies within them. As with all fairies, people were always careful in paying tree fairies the utmost respect. As Tacitus pointed out:

“No person enters it (the sacred grove) without being bound with a chain as an acknowledgment of his inferior nature and the power of the deity residing there. If he accidentally fall(s), it is not lawful for him to be lifted or to rise up; they roll themselves out along the ground. The whole of their superstition has this import: that from this spot the nation derives its origin; that here is the residence of the Deity, the Governor of all, and that everything else is subject and subordinate to him. These opinions receive additional authority from the power of the Semnones who inhabit a hundred cantons and, from the great body they compose, consider themselves as the head of the Suevi.” (Tacitus, 98)

People were then afraid of trees and forests even as they were awed by them. So the **relationship between humans and fairies wasn't necessarily the purely loving relationship many people think of now** when they think of deity and human relations. It is rather a relationship in which the trees are extremely dangerous even to those who respect them. Yet, at the same time, it is a relationship in which humans need trees to survive. Further, the trees are also vulnerable to the whims of humans. This mutual vulnerability then is the reason laws were actually needed to protect the bond between humans and trees.

“The old German laws for such as dared to peel the bark of a standing tree. The culprit's navel was to be cut out and nailed to the part of the tree which he had peeled, and he was to be driven round and round the tree till all his guts were wound about its trunk. The intention of the punishment clearly was to replace the dead bark by a living substitute taken from the culprit; it was a life for a life, the life of a man for the life of a tree.” (Frazer, 1922)

This type of punishment is interesting because it shows more than simply the brutality with which ancient groves were defended. It shows us that living animals could be used to heal the tree and potentially provide them with power.

Symbiotic Relationship

Because humans provided sacrifices, worship, and care, which the trees appear to have craved, and the trees in return offered food, protection, and success in war, we must ultimately conclude that the relationship between humans and tree fairies was much more symbiotic than simply worshiper and giver with both sides providing support to the other. What we see then is- as is the case with most relationships between fairies and humans- **part of a tree fairy's motivation was related to mutual interest and protection.**

This need for forest fairies to turn to humans for protection becomes clearer in the stories of

the little wood wives of Germany who would flee into stumps and trees, and people would mark to protect them from the Wild Huntsman, a fairy which sought to kill them. (Grimm, 1935) So cutting either humans or fairies out of the relationship could lead to disastrous effects on the other.

Charlemagne realized this. So when he made war against the Saxons, he didn't go after cities or towns so much after he went after trees. Felling ancient groves and giant oaks which the Saxons believed were connected to the world's tree and the gods.

The great trees would provide people with protection during times of war; help them obtain food and perform the many other tasks of a local deity. Great trees then were often the fore-runners to the ancient deities. **It is no coincidence that Zeus's tree was the oak or that the Germanic people would pray to their gods under trees.** This is not to say, of course, that all trees were given the role of deities as people believed in a whole host of lesser fairies which could also be extremely helpful to humans.

The Russian people believed that the elder tree would drive away evil spirits out of compassion for humanity. The red-capped Niagriusar in Norway would dwell in high trees planted around houses, **bring luck to those who lived there and respected the fairies' tree homes.** Also, the Waldgeister of the forest would share its secrets of medicinal plants with humans helping to heal the sick and injured. (Porteous, 2001) People would plant elder, rowan, and thorn trees around their houses to keep witches away from the places they lived showing that the fairies of these trees supported humanity as well. Further sprigs of rowan placed over the doorway





were meant to keep harmful fairies and evil spirits out.

Living on After Death

It is interesting to note that the Druids and Celts would use a sprig of rowan to keep away harm since this shows that the fairies, or at least their power, remained even after a branch was plucked from a tree. This idea becomes even clearer as we think about the possible reasons for knocking on wood for luck. The idea that fairies live on in wood is not limited to the Druids, however. Swedish peasants would stick leafy branches into their grain fields in order to ensure an abundant crop. Further, large branches were placed on the roofs of houses at the end of the harvest season decked out with grain in order to embody the tree spirit which **helped to improve the next year's harvest.** (Frazer, 1922)

“Circassians regard the pear tree as the protector of cattle. They would cut down a young, pear tree in the

forest, branch it, and carry it home where it was adored as a divinity. Almost every house had one such pear tree. In autumn, on the day of the festival, the tree was carried into the house with great ceremony to the sound of music amid the joyous cries of all the inmates who compliment it on its fortunate arrival. It is covered with candles, and a cheese is fastened to its top. Round about it they eat, drink, and sing. Then they bid the tree good-bye and take it back to the courtyard where it remains for the rest of **the year, set up against the wall, without receiving any mark of respect (Frazer, 1922).”**

Perhaps the most interesting case of tree fairies living on in the wood comes from Scandinavia where it is said that the fairies of the elder tree will continue to attack people from the furniture. In one disturbing story, the fairy of the elder tree, which appeared as an old man, came out of the floor which was made of elder wood and sucked the breasts of three people causing them to swell painfully. (Keightley, 1870) The Celts believed that the coppices which spring from the trunks of felled oaks are haunted by angry spirits of trees. In one story, a moorland spirit with a white hand sprang from the coppices of birch trees. She would rise up at twilight **and chase travelers her clothes rustling like dead leaves. When she touched a man's head,** they went mad. When she touched their heart, they died. This went on until at last one man finally banished her with salt. (Briggs, 1967)

These last stories show even more clearly than the others that the fairies do not necessarily

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the principality of Minden, on Easter Sunday, the young people of both sexes used with loud cries of joy to dance a reigen (rig. circular dance) round an old oak. In a thicket near the village of Wormeln, Paderborn, stands a holy oak, to which the inhabitants of Wormeln and Calenberg still make a solemn procession every year.

I see a fruit hanging,
That it has hair or bristles;
In any holy forest
Of Thuringia or of Saxony
There could not grow
Better fruit on bough

(This) assultion is surely to sacrificed animals, or first fruits of the chase, hung up on the trees of a sacred wood?....

And in other poems of the Mid. Ages the sacredness of the ancient forests still exerts an after-**influence**.....

We have inklings now and again, if not of sacrifices offered to sacred trees, yet of a lasting indestructible awe, and the fancy that ghostly beings haunt particular trees. Thus, misfortune like a demon, sat on a tree.

It is said of a hollow tree:
There are saints in there,
That hear all the peoples prayers.

To the Old Prussians, Romove was the most sacred spot in the land, and a seat of the gods; there stood their images on a holy oak hung with clothes. No unconsecrated person was allowed to set foot in the forest, no tree to be felled, not a bough to be ignored, not a beast to be slain. There were many such sacred groves in other parts of Prussia and Lithuania.

Trees

There can be no doubt that for some time after the conversion the people continued to light candles and offer small sacrifices under particular holy trees, as even to this day they hang wreaths upon them, and lead the ring dance **under them**... **The Ossetes and Circassians** hung the hides of animals on poles in honour of divine beings, the Goths of Jornandes trunci suspendebant exuvias to Mars, that as a gernal thing animals were hung on sacrificial



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for holzueible (wood-wives)

The little wood-wives come up to wood-cutters and beg for something to eat, or to take it themselves out of their pots; but whatever they have taken or borrowed they make it good in some way, not seldom by good advice. At times they help people with their kitchen work and at washing but always express great fear of the wild huntsman that pursues them. ON the Sale they tell you of a bush-grandmother and moss-maidens; this sounds like a queen of elves, if not the weird lady of the woods. The little wood-wives are glad to come when people are baking, and ask them, while they are about it, to bake them a loaf too, as big as half a millstone and it must be left for them at a specified place; they pay for it afterwards, or perhaps bring some of their own baking, and lay it in the furrow for the ploughmen or the plough, being mightily offended if you refuse it. At other times the wood-wife makes her appearance with a broken wheelbarrow, and begs you to mend the wheel; then like Berhta she pays you with fallen chips, which turn into gold; or if you are knitting, she gives you a ball of thread which you will never have done unwinding. Every time a man twists the stem of a young tree till the bark flies off, a wood-wife has to die. When a peasant women, out of pity gave the breast to a crying wood-child the mother came and made her a present of the bark in which the child was cradled; the women broak a splinter off threw it in her load of wood, but when she got home she found it was of gold.

Wood-wives like dwarfs are by no means satisfied with the ways of the modern world...

Their maxim (is);

No tree ever shell,

No dream ever tell,

Bake in thy bread no cumin seed,

And God will help thee in all they need.

A wood-wife, after tasting some newly-baked bread, ran off to the forest, screaming loud,

They've baked me caraway-bread, it will bring that house great trouble....

Some wood-mannikins, who had long done good service at a mill, were scared away by the **miller's men leaving out clothes and shoes for them. It is as though by accepting clothes, the spirits were afraid of suddenly breaking off the relation that subsisted between themselves and mankind.** We shall see presently that the home-sprites proper acted on different principles, and even bargained for clothes.

In the Romance fairy-tales an old Roman god has assumed altogether the nature of a wood-sprite an old Roman god; out of Orcus has been made an Italian orco, Meapol. Huorco, Fr. Ogre: is is pictured as black, hairy, bristly, but of great stature rather than small, almost gigantic; children losing their way in the woods come upon his dwelling, and he sometimes shews himself good natured and bestows gifts oftener his wife (orca, ogresse) protects and saves.

Notes On Tree Fairies From:

Sir James George Frazer's "The Golden Bough"

Amongst the Celts the oak-worship of the Druids is familiar to every one, and their old word for sanctuary seems to be identical in origin and meaning with the Latin *nemus*, a grove or woodland glade, which still survives in the name of Nemi. Sacred groves were common among

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side a tree or bough; so that together the person or puppet, and the tree or bough, form a sort of bilingual inscription, the one being, so to speak, a translation of the other. Here, therefore, there is no room left for doubt that the spirit of the tree is actually represented in human form. Thus in Bohemia, on the fourth Sunday in Lent, young people throw a puppet called Death into the water; then the girls go into the wood, cut down a young tree, and fasten to it a puppet dressed in white clothes to look like a woman; with this tree and puppet they go from house to house collecting gratuities and singing songs with the refrain:

*“We carry Death out of the village,
We bring Summer into the village.”.....*

In England children are sometimes passed through a cleft ash-tree as a cure for rupture or rickets, and thenceforward a sympathetic connexion is supposed to exist between them and the tree. An ash-tree which had been used for this purpose grew at the edge of Shirley Heath, **on the road from Hockly House to Birmingham.** “**Thomas Chillingworth, son of the owner of an adjoining farm, now about thirty-four, was, when an infant of a year old, passed through a similar tree, now perfectly sound, which he preserves with so much care that he will not suffer a single branch to be touched, for it is believed the life of the patient depends on the life of the tree, and the moment that is cut down, be the patient ever so distant, the rupture returns, and a mortification ensues, and terminates in death, as was the case in a man driving a wagon on the very road in question.**” “It is not uncommon, however,” adds the writer, “for persons to survive for a time the felling of the tree.” The ordinary mode of effecting the cure is to



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However, both of these challenges to the eel theory are made mute if the creature is in fact an ancient fairy/deity of the Celtic people. One of the first written sightings of Nessy would seem to support this idea as it was by a missionary which Nessy was trying to stop from crossing the loch. A missionary who then rebuked Nessy in a story that fits the common tale themes invented by missionaries and saints who would claim to have been able to rebuke the gods and fairies of the Celtic people in order to prove they were greater than the beings the people originally worshiped. Given that the first written account of the creature is in essence an attempt at making it appear to be a demon, we can presume that further attempts were made to do the same to convince people to forget about it which is why our understanding of it is so meager but for a few sighting stories scattered through history.

Nessy isn't the only large creature water fairies manifest as. The Kelpie is another example of a large, water fairy taking the form of an animal, a horse. The Kelpie attempts to lure people into trying to ride or catch it so that it can drag them into the water where it will drown them.

There are a number of possible reasons why water fairies might have killed humans. It's possible that the water fairies were attempting to gain the energy from sacrifices which no longer were being given to them. It's also possible that after people stopped respecting these fairies, they became cruel. Just as with any deity of ancient times, they began to punish people after the people stopped worshiping them. Another possibility is that to these immortal beings drowning a human was, in essence, a mischievous prank much like a Greek nymph would play. It's also conceivable that fairies would kill people in order to help them enter the spirit world at just the right time to benefit themselves or the human which they had killed. For a being living in the afterlife, death can be considered a form of birth. Finally, it is conceivable that the stories of Kelpie attacks were simply fabricated in order to discredit the water fairies or, as with everything else, some combination of all these motives are possible so that different fairies would have different reasons for acting the way they do.

Moccus, one of the many deities of vegetation and agricultural fertility, was said to manifest himself as a boar. Among the Irish, the boars were so important that their swineherds were given otherworldly knowledge in many folk tales. In Saxon mythology, the symbol of the boar was believed to protect people from harm when it was worn on their helmets. (Davidson and Davidson, 1989) Tacitus makes note of this as well. In his observation, the boar and the protection it provided represented their worship of the Mother of the gods.

“They worship the Mother of the gods and, as the symbol of their superstition, they carry about them the figures of wild boars. This serves them in place of armor and every other defence: it renders the votary of the goddess safe even in the midst of foes.” (Tacitus, 98)

In Ireland, cats are regarded as fairies in their own right. In one story, a man tells a fairy tale about how he encountered a procession of cats in much the same way one would encounter a procession of fairies. The cats in the procession seemed to be mourning the death of the king of the cats. When the storyteller had finished his tale, a cat which was resting in the room with him said **“By Jove, old Peter's dead. I'm the King of the cats.” The cat then fled up the chimney in a flash and was never seen again.** (Briggs, 1967)

Jacob Grimm asserts that Puss in Boots is actually the tale of a house fairy who has taken the form of a cat. In Scotland the Cait Sidhe is a fairy that manifests itself as a black cat with a white spot on its chest. In addition to cats acting as fairies, otters are also considered to be a form of fairy with a master otter waited upon by many other otters. (Briggs, 1967)

In addition to manifesting as animals, fairies and deities have used various animals as mes-

sengers such as using the white stag which was the messenger from the other world. Within Scandinavian and Germanic mythology, Odin used ravens as messengers and Thor used robbins.

Fearful Animals

People had a natural fear of animals because, while the spirits of trees were rarely seen, animals were something people encountered daily. This mixed with the fact that people feared encountering fairies meant that fairies which manifested as animals were especially fearful. People harvesting in the fields often feared the manifestation of the grain as a wolf that would attempt to devour them or make them ill. Animals were often believed to be the most primal of fairies. People, after all, greatly fear predatory animals which are the reasons that there are **“Little Red Riding Hood” stories about nearly every predatory animal from bears to tigers to wolves** across nearly every land from the Celtic world to China. I would argue that people tend to miss the original idea behind Little Red because unfortunately the two, best known stories were written by people with ulterior motives. People who wanted to give Little Red a more **“modern” morality and who perhaps never understood what its original moral could be as they** were city dwellers in a time when wolves had long since learned to fear man, and fairies were less important to human society.

In one of the more original versions of the story from France, Red follows her mother’s instructions perfectly. We see this same perfect following of instructions occurring in China as well so **it isn’t an isolated incident but a world-wide phenomenon.** Yet despite her obedience, she still nearly falls into the trap of a wolf or the bear which is trying to eat her. In both tales, however, **she outsmarts the beast and escapes. Yet she doesn’t get off scot free. In the French version,** the girl is tricked into eating her grandmother, burning her clothes, and then getting into bed **naked with the wolf. Yet she did nothing wrong; nothing to deserve what happened to her. It’s** no wonder that the Grimm Brothers among others have edited this story so greatly in order to give it meaning. What could be the moral to such a dark story when the character did nothing wrong?

To understand the meaning behind Little Red, we can’t view it from our world; a world without fairies, without dangerous animals, without any primal fears of the forest. We have to consider what this story would mean given the much more feral world in which people used to live. **A world inhabited by fairies and dangerous predators which hadn’t yet learned to fear humans.** In such a world, the moral to beware of wolves and, of course, evil fairies that look like wolves would be of the utmost importance. Just as a Christian story might have the moral of to beware of the devil. In a Christian story we would expect the hero to avoid temptation and **wouldn’t ponder what the moral was when they did so. In a fairy story, however, the hero** would be expected to outsmart the evil fairy, and no one at the time would have wondered what the moral was. Indeed, in the more original version of Little Red, the girl deceives the wolf in much the same way one might deceive a fairy or an ogre in other fairy tales. Thus, the moral may simply be that when you are faced with these evil spirits, you need to be clever as cleverness is one of the highest forms of morality in a world where survival is a constant struggle.

Mountains, Rocks, and Lands

When Cnoc Aine, a goddess of Celtic lore, showed a group of girls a hill through a hole in a stone, they were able to see that it was teeming with invisible beings. In some cases such beings are simply fairies which make their homes in hills and mountains; however, many of them are their own class of beings. Unlike most of the fairy relationships examined so far, the spirits of the mountains and rocks seem to have no solid connection with humans, for unlike tree or ancestral fairies, they are not related to humans. Yet despite this they often are some of the most caring and helpful of the fairies. The Bjergfolk, for example, actively involved themselves in human affairs, helping with farming and fortune telling. Because they are not related to humans the way trees or deceased humans are, the reasons why such fairies take an interest in humans are often hard to ascertain.

It is true of course that occasionally some earth spirits are related to the human dead, this is not always the case. When people first landed in Iceland, there had never been humans there before yet there were rock fairies that began to help the human settlers almost immediately. One man named Bjorn made an agreement with one such rock fairy called a bergbui which appeared to him in a dream. The rock fairy provided him with a goat which helped to grow his herd rapidly and who also sent the land spirits to assist his brothers in their fishing and hunting endeavors. (Davidson and Davidson, 1989)

In another tale, a woman was searching for her husband which had been taken by a nix. She too had a dream that led her to a mountain where an old woman told her how to get her husband back and gave her the magical gifts which she needed free him. (Grimm and Grimm, 1912) This tale is similar to those of Japan in which someone has a dream on or near a mountain in which the Kami of the mountain gives them advice or magical support. In another tale, the Spirit of the Steppes caused that a queen and her handmaidens should all become pregnant. **Ultimately, the queen's daughter was banished by her jealous husband to a distant land** where she was raised by the trees and the breezes. (Ralston, 2004)

Fairies of the stones were so active in mortal affairs, in fact, that their name in Iceland means both “harvest” and “seer” as they would provide council to humans in their dreams and even actively guard peoples' cattle. While this explains why humans worshiped these beings, it gives

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us little understanding of why the fairies would provide aid to the humans. Looking at our positive relationship with stone and earth fairies only seems to tell us that they are interested in a positive relationship with humans. In order to understand why they want to build a **positive relationship, we perhaps are best served by examining human's negative relationships** with these fairies. There is ample evidence which shows that stone fairies are extremely sensitive.

In the 19th century, an Icelandic clergyman wrote that certain rocks and stones were called the stones of Landdisir (land goddesses). It was said to be unwise to make loud noises near them, and children were forbidden to play around them as bad luck would come to those who did not treat them with respect. (Davidson and Davidson, 1989) We see these beliefs mirrored in the Celtic world of that time as well where it was thought to be bad luck to disturb certain stones as they were the homes to the fairies. (Wentz, 1911) In other words, humans can impact rock spirits which are sensitive both to noise and being built upon. It may be that part of **the rock spirits' relationships with humans existed in order to avoid these things. Such sensitivity is problematic when humans are able to be so destructive. The vaetter of Iceland grew angry when they saw one human murder another, and for a long time ships with dragon's heads were banned in the country for fear that they would disturb the stone spirits or give them the wrong impression of the human's intentions. (Davidson and Davidson, 1911)**

Because of their sensitivity, rock fairies do more than offer rewards to humans who keep the peace with them; they punish those who fail to do so. When humans do damage rocks or otherwise disturb them, the spirits of the land would haunt the humans acting much as we'd expect a poltergeist to act sometimes for thousands of years at a time. (Wentz, 1911) Rock and earth spirits then grow angry when they are disturbed or when they witness a human murder and begin to damage crops, haunt houses making it extremely difficult to find a safe place to build or farm. Children playing near a group of rocks could, for example, be cursed. A farmer who moves a boulder could have his farm and house become haunted, etc. And when someone dies violently, the rock spirits feel intense sympathy for the person. So tales of poltergeist activity from the human dead may, in fact, have originally been tales of poltergeist activity from stone spirits.

Beyond simply being sensitive to noises, stone and earth spirits appear to be very emotionally sensitive. These spirits are most often referred to in the plural because they live in family groups. (Davidson and Davidson, 1989) So it would appear that the typical stone or earth fairy prefers to live a sedentary lifestyle with strong family ties. Further, their hatred of violence **shows a love of living creatures or at least those of human intelligence (they didn't appear to mind humans butchering goats or cattle or hunting for animals and even helped humans in these tasks).** From this we can presume that they cared about humans in much the same way that a motherly or fatherly figure might care about children in their neighborhood or the way a human might care about a stray kitten.

Humans then threaten the fairies' lifestyle so it is perhaps for this reason which they come to humans in order to make a deal with them such that the humans will leave them alone. Unlike trees or other types of fairies which simply came to people when they needed something, stone and earth fairies often appeared to people in their dreams rather than approaching them directly. This shows a certain amount of anxiety about having direct contact with humans just as it shows a desire to help them.

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and Frost's cold so that neither can hurt the man proving that Wind is the most important of the three. (Ralston, 1872) Such stories of choosing which fairy or spirit to pay the most respect to are common within Russian folk tales because by choosing which fairy to pay the most respect to, one could gain special favors from them. Of course, the person making the choice had to be careful to choose the most important fairy or at least the one that could protect them from the wrath of the others.



House, Hearth, and Field

Long after humans had left the wilderness, they were still intimately intertwined with fairies. So intertwined in fact that humans built their farms and cities around the desires and actions of the fairy. Or perhaps it might be more accurate to say that humans learned farming, the arts, and how to build cities from the fairies and deities they prayed to for help in these endeavors.

For fairies are not strictly creatures of the forests. They help humans with domestic chores, medicinal tasks, the arts, and agriculture. Certainly, some of these fairies provide this aid because they are ancestors of the people they are helping as is the case with banshees and domovoi. This is not the case with all fairies which help humans, however. Many appear to be as feral as any wilderness fairy and others which truly are wilderness fairies.

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ples' houses to steal beer and other items including stoves, wheat, and more. (Knightly) Such thefts could have led to the humans' first relationships with what would later become many of the household fairies of legend which are otherwise unrelated to humans. The Nis of the Scandinavian nations, for example, would aid young boys in stealing from neighboring households and would often get into prank wars with them. Although in the aforementioned stories, the nis often appears to be angered by the boys' actions; their revenge is yet more pranks indicating that the nis is not truly furious as when a fairy is really angry, they tend to kill or curse humans severely. The nis then can be presumed to like the banter they have with these children, enjoying being teased as much as they enjoy teasing, or at least accepting that they have to be teased as part of their opportunity to do so. (Knightly)

Another household fairy by the name of Hinzelmann came out of the Bohemian forest because, as he said, "consequence obliged (him) to retire and take refuge with good people till his affairs should be in a better condition." He was extremely loyal and kind to those who provided him with shelter during his time away from the other fairies. Fairies tend in general to repay kindness many fold so it shouldn't be surprising that they would work, provide divinations, and other forms of aid to those people whose houses they chose to stay in to gain respite. Further, many fairies are friendly and kind anyways. So when they live with another intelligent being for a long period of time, they begin to care about their adopted families as a matter of course. Hinzelmann is described as "quite friendly and intimate: he sang, laughed, and went on with every kind of sport so long as no one vexed him, and his voice was on these occasions soft and tender like that of a boy or maiden."



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means mischief to those who have brought him into trouble and difficulty, he utters a scornful laugh at the top of his voice.

As henchman true, he abides by his master he once takes up with come weal or woe. But his attachment is often found irksome, and one cannot be rid of him again. A farmer set fire to his barn, to burn the goblin that haunted it; when it is all ablaze, there sits the sprite at the **back of the cart in which they were removing the contents. In mone's Anzeiger we read of a** little black man that was bought with a chest, and when this was opened, he hopped out and slipped behind the oven, whence all efforts to rout him out were fruitless; but he lived on excellent terms with the household, and occasionally shewed himself to them though never to strangers.

There are also goblins who, like nix and watersprite, are engaged in no **man's service, but live independently;** when such a wone is caught, he will offer you gifts or or tell your fortune, to be set at liberty again.

The unfriendly, racketing and tormenting spirits who take possession of a house, are distinguished from the friendly and good natured by their **commonly forming a whole gang...**



Spectres

The Roman expression for peaceful happy spirits of the dead was manes, for uncanny disquieting apparitions lemurs or larvae; though the terms fluctuate, for manes can denote spectral beings too and lemures can have a general meaning. Larva betrays its affinity to lar and the good kindly lares were often held to be manes or souls of departed ancestors. So in or German superstition we find instances of souls becoming home sprites or kobolds, and still oftener there a connexion between unquiet spirits and specters.

Another class of specters will prove more fruitful for our investigation: they, like the ingues fatui, include unchristened babes, but instead of straggling singly on the earth as fires they sweep through the forest and air in whole companies with a horrible din. This is the widely spread legend of the furious host, the furious hunt, which is of high antiquity, and interweaves itself, now with gods, and now with heroes.

Notes On House Hold Fairies From: The Religion of Ancient Rome by Cyril Bailey, M. A.

House hold Fairies

The worship of the household seems to have originated, as has been suggested, in the sense of the sacredness of certain objects closely bound up with the family life—the door, the protection against the external world, by which the household went out to work in the morning and returned at evening, the hearth, the giver of warmth and nourishment, and the store-cupboard, where was preserved the food for future use. At first, in all probability, the worship

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Fairies are Gods of the Past

Just as there are deities grown out of tales of fairies, trees, and other natural forces, so to did the deities eventually return to being such beings as people thought less and less about them. Even as lessened beings, however, the deities of old:

“To a considerable degree retain their hold on the faith of the peasant and, at least in outlying districts, maintain a vigorous existence. The Church has waged war against them for centuries and has degraded and disfigured many of them. Although their expression has in many cases become greatly altered, yet their original features may easily be recognized by a careful observer.” (Ralston, 1872)

These deity/fairies manifested themselves as both friendly and unfriendly beings while retaining their close relationship with humans or growing bitter and cruel over time. Byelobog, one of the divinities of the Russians which retained his kind nature, became Bylun, an old man which assists travelers in finding their way out of dark forests and also assists reapers within corn fields. (Ralston, 1872)

In Great Britain there was a former deity who dressed in leaves and would help children lost in the mountains. (Briggs, 1967) Danu, a goddess of the Celtic peoples, became not one but many fairy beings one of which is a hag known as Black Annis which haunts caverns and hills from which she seeks to devour humans. Hills in general it would seem have become the resting places of the gods which had passed on into their fairy forms.

“In a prayer of S. Columba's, (he) begs God to dispel "this host (i.e. the old gods) around the cairns that reigneth.”

In Ireland, the divinity of the Tuatha Dé Danann is still recalled. Eochaid O'Flynn (tenth century), doubtful whether they are men or demons concludes, "Though I have treated of these deities in order, yet have I not adored them." Even in later times they were still thought of as gods in exile, a view which appears in the romantic tales and sagas existing side by side with the notices of the annalists. They were also regarded as fairy kings and queens, and yet fairies of a different order from those of ordinary tradition. (Macculloch, 1911)

Many of these deities returned to being simple natural phenomena. The Blue Hag of the highlands, for example, appears to be the personification of winter. She herds deer and fights spring with her staff which freezes the ground. When spring wins, she hides her staff under holly where the grass never grows. (Briggs 1967)

The Tiddy Mun was a fen spirit which caused pestilence and controlled the waters and the mists. Although the people still held affection for him, like all fairies and ancient deities he could be dangerous if he was insulted. Once when parts of the fens were drained, the people had to pacify him with prayers. (Briggs, 1967) That they pacified him with prayers is telling about his general role in the world. In essence, Tiddy Mun brought all the things that the fens were said to bring from the fog to the diseases. Even with all of these problems, people still ultimately love the landscape around them especially when such a landscape makes them unique from their neighbors.

The ocean deities too remained behind continuing to manifest the sea. “Bucca” or “Bucca-Boo” seemed originally to have been a sea god. Fishermen left fish on the sands for Bucca and/or a piece of bread at harvest time along with a few drops of beer.” (Briggs, 1967) As time passed, his role did shift, however, to that of a being which torments children. As we’ve seen, internal duality, that is making the same being good and bad, was common among the old religions of Europe. As time went on the deities’ abilities to do either of these grew less and less until they were left tormenting children.

The lessening of deities became so extreme that Dirra, one of the gods of old, was captured by the Earl of Desmond as a fairy bride after she’d become a simple water nymph. It was not, however, just the Christians who lessened the deities of the peoples they’d conquered or converted. The Romans on conquering Gaul turned many of the local gods into nymphs and naiads when their sacred pools, trees, valleys, etc. were taken over by Apollo. Then as Briton was once more conquered by another religion, these beings were once again lessened to fees, fairies which stand no larger than a child.

Charles Squire maintains that many of the fairy beings of Ireland are the divinities of the pre-Celtic peoples who inhabited that kingdom who were lessened when the Celts invaded. Specifically he states that:

“The leprechaun, who makes shoes for the fairies and knows where hidden treasures are, the Gan Ceanach, or "love-talker" who fills the ears of idle girls with pleasant fancies when to merely mortal ideas they should be busy with their work; the pooka, who leads travellers astray, or taking the shape of an ass or mule, beguiles them to mount upon his back to their discomfiture; the Dulachan, who rides without a head, and other friendly or malicious spirits. Whence come they? A possible answer suggests itself. Preceding the Aryans and surviving the Aryan conquest all over Europe was a large, non-Aryan population which must have had its own gods who would retain their worship, be

revered by successive generations, and remain rooted to the soil.” (Macculloch, 1911)

It would seem strange to think that a divine being, a god, could be captured the way a leprechaun is. Forced to become some man’s bride through a simple trick the way many fairies are in legend, or that they should be as feebly petty as to try to “beguile” people to ride them as a means to cause people discomfiture. So if as Charles and MacCulloch maintain these beings as previous gods then would indicate that such beings have been greatly weakened to the point where they become fairies.

Notes On Fairies as Gods From: **Jacob Grimm’s “Teutonic Mythology”**

White Ladies

But as Holda is spell-bound in the mountain, so it is preeminently to white women, white-robed maidens that this notion of mountain banishment becomes applicable: divine or semi-divine beings of heathenism, who still at appointed times grow visible to mortal sight; they love best to appear in warm sunlight tSo poor shepherds and herd-boys. German legend everywhere is full of graceful stories on the subject, which are all substantially alike, and betray great depth of root.

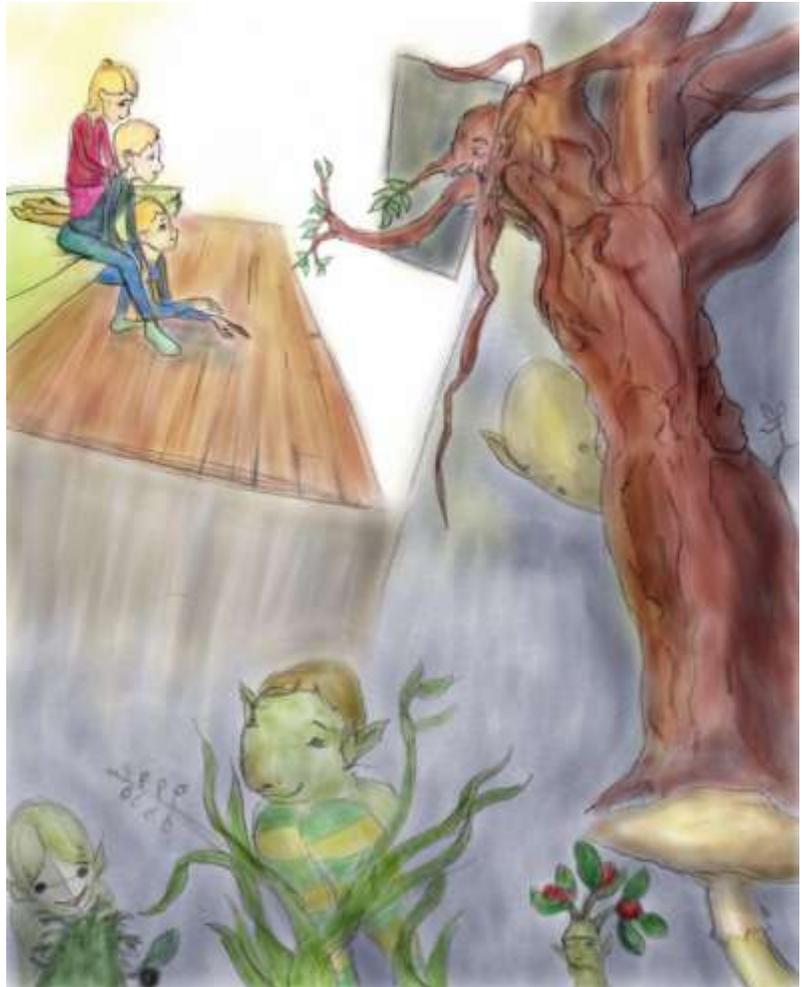
On the Lahnberg in Up. Hesse sat a white maiden at sunrise; she had whete spread out on sheets to dry in the suan and was spinning. A backer of Marburg was passing that way and took a handful of grans with him; at home he found nothing but grains of gold in his pocket. And the like is told of a peasant near Friedigerode.

A poor shepherded was tending to his flock at the boyneberg, when he saw a snow-white maiden sit in the sunshine by the castle-door; on a white clothe before her lay

Pods of flax ready to crack open. In astonishment he steps up, says ‘oh what fine pods!’ takes up a handful to examine then lays them down again. The maiden looks at him kindly, but mournfully, without a word of reply. He drives his flock home, but a few pods that had fallen into his shoe, gall his foot; he sits down to pull of his shoe, when there roll into his hand give or six grains of gold.

In Otomannsberg near Geismar village, a fire is said to burn at night. Every seven years there comes out a maiden in snowy garments, holding a bunch of keys in her hand. Another white women with a bunch of keys appears on the castle-rock at Baden at the hour of noon.

In the castle-vault by Wolfartswweiler lies hidden treasure, on account of which, every seventh year when may-lilies are in bloom, a white maiden appears; her black hair is plaited in long tails, she wears a golden girdle round her white gown, a bundle of keys at her side or in her hand, and a bunch of may-lilies in the other. She likes best to shew herself to innocent chil-



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As Their Own Class of Spirits

Despite the obvious connections between humans and fairies or nature and fairies, one **shouldn't presume that all fairies are connected to these things.** Fairies are a complex set of beings, and the reality is that there are many types of fairies, and each type has its own confusing set of quirks. So there are many individual or groups of fairies that are confusing. They are unique creatures which often have no understandable connection to anything else. **Certainly, some of these fairies might think nature is beautiful, but that doesn't make them a nature fairy** as they are no more a part of it than any human who thinks nature is beautiful. One could argue that some of the beings we would classify as fairies are more distant from nature in fact than humans are.

It is from some of these separate societies of fairies which humans mirrored in order to develop their civilizations. While humans started out living in the wild as a part of nature, fairies were born ancient and wise. So it was that they built their societies. Mythologically, humans then have been trained in the arts, society, farming, and fire making by a long array of gods and fairies in a variety of different myths. One perhaps could make the argument that humans are attempting to immolate fairy societies. Such imitation does give us some bases for understanding these societies; however, we do not imitate all fairy societies nor every aspect of every society.

Dwarves, for example, appear to be at best only mildly related to humanity and have no more connection to nature than do humans yet they do appear to be socially understandable. That they would care for a lost princess in the woods as they did Snow White certainly shows some connection. Their love of mining and smithies are also understandable traits. Like humans, dwarves are the only beings which Scandinavian sagas specifically state were created by the deities. Their better connection to the deities and to the forces of nature, however, comes from the fact that they are naturally wiser and stronger than humans. (Grimm, 1935)

The Huldra or Vitra hollow women with no backs from Scandinavia live in an underground world of cities most of the time, yet they do come up to graze their own cattle much as humans would. Although seemingly very distinct from humans, these beings do seem to take an odd interest in us, always trying to lure humans underground with them. (Keightley, 1870) **When a human male fails to satisfy them, the Huldra kill him. Outside of the excess violence exhibited by the Huldra, this interest is likely similar to a human's interest in beautiful fairies in many cases. Yet in other cases, the fairies' interest seems to be simply a desire for diversion, power, or a slave. To the immortal fairy humans can be simply a potential draft animal to**

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Perhaps this is why nymphs and other fairies fear us because we are trying to achieve some **confusing goal, a goal that doesn't actually matter in the long run. Humans are like the person** who runs away and suffers many hardships to become famous only to discover that this fame makes them all the more depressed. Perhaps fairies then are humans that have truly grown up; humans who have managed to live for hundreds of years and have gained true wisdom.

Notes On Fairy Folk From: **Jacob Grimm's Teutonic Mythology**

Apart from deified and semi-divine natures there stands a whole order of other beings distinguished mainly by the fact that, while those have issued from men or seek human fellowship, these form a separate community, one might say a kingdom of their own, and are only induced by accident or stress of circumstances to have dealings with men. They have in them some admixture of super-human, which approximates them to the gods; they have power to hurt man and to help him, at the same time they stand in awe of him, being no match for him in bodily strength. Their figure is much below the stature of man, or else mis-shapen. They almost all have the faculty of making themselves invisible. And here again the females are of a broader and nobler cast, with attributes resembling those of goddesses and wise-women; the male spirits are more distinctly marked off, both from the gods and from heroes.

Two most general designations for them form the title of this chapter; they are what should call spirits nowadays. But the word spirit (**geist, ghost**)... is too comprehensive; it would include for instance, the half-goddesses discussed in the preceding chapter. The Lat. Genius would more nearly hit the **mark....**

If the diminutive form be added, which intensifies the notion of littleness, it can only be used of spirits: **wihlein, wichtelmann.....** In

lower Saxony wicht is said, quite in a good sense of little children: in Munster country 'dat wicht' holds especially of girls, about Osnabriick the sing. wicht only of girls, the pl. wichter of girls and boys; 'innocent wichte are spokne of in Sastrow.



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ing up from hades, and devils.' No such warelike part is ever played by the Norse alfar, not they, but the valkyrs have to do with battles; but the traditions may long have become tangled together, and the offices confounded. The liosalfar and svartalfar are in themselves sufficiently like the christain angels and devils.

German folk-tales everywhere speak of the dwarfs as forging in the mountains... whereas elves and elfins have rather the business of weaving attributed to them. Thus while dwarfs boarder on the smith-heros and smith-gods, the functions of elves approach those of the fays and good-wives.

Worship of the Elves

At the bottom all elves, even the light ones, have some devil-like qualities, e.g. their loving to tease men; but they are not therefore devils, not even the black ones, but often good-natured beings. It appears even that to these black elves in particular, i.e. mountain spirits, who in various ways came into contact with man, a distinct reverence was paid, was species of worship, traces of which lasted down to recent times. The clearest evidence of this is found in the Kormaksaga. The hill of elves, like the alter of a god is to be reddened with the blood of a **slaughtered bull, and of the animal's flesh a fest prepared for the elves.... With this I can connect the superstitious custom of cooking food for angels, and setting it for them. So there is a table covered and a pot of food placed for home-smiths and kobolds; meat and drink for domina Abundia; money or bread deposited in the caves of subterraneans, in going past. There are plants named after elves as well as after gods....**

Features of the Elves

Whereas man grows but slowly, not attaining his full stature till after his fifteenth year, and than living seventy years, and a giant can be as old as the hills; the dwarf is already grown up in the third year of his life, and a greybeard in the seventh; the Elf-king is commonly described as old and white-bearded.

The leading features of elvish nature seem to be the following:

Man's body holds a medium between those of giants and the elf; an elf comes as much short of human's size as a giant towers above it. All elves are imagined as small and tiny, but light ones as well formed and symmetrical, the black as ugly and misshapen. The former are radiant and exquisite beauty, and wear shining garments. The dwarf adds to his repulsive hue and ill-shaped body, a humped back, and course clothing, when elves and dwarfs come to me mixed up together, the graceful figure of one was transferred to the other, yet sometimes dwarfs **expressly retain the black or grey complexion....**

Their height is very occasionally specified: now they attain the stature of a four years child, now they appear a great deal smaller, to be measured by the thumb.

There are curious tales told about the deformity of **dwarfs' feet which are said to be like those of gees or ducks....**

The Mid. Nethl. Poem of Brandaen, but no other versions of the same legend, contains a very remarkable feature. Brandan meta man on the sea, who was a thumb long, and floating on a leaf, hold-



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mischievous to men and tease them. It was a very old belief, that dangerous arrows were shot down from the air by elves; this evidently means light elves, it is never mentioned in stories of **dwarfs,...**

These elves being apparently armed with weapons like those of the gods themselves the divine thunderbolt is even called an *albshoss*, and in Scotland the elf-arrow, elf-flint, elf-bolt is a hard pointed wedge believed to have been discharged by spirits; the turf cut out of the ground by lightning is supposed to have been thrown up by them. I have already inferred, that there must have been some closer connexion, now lost to us between elves and the Thundergod: if it be that this bolts were forged for him by elves, that points rather to black elves.

Their touch, their breath may bring sickness or death on man and beast; one whom their stroke has fallen on, is lost or incapable: lamed cattle, bewitched by them, are said in Norway to be *dverg-slagen*; **the term.... For silly half-witted men, whom their avenging hand has touche4d... Beside the breathing, the mere look of an elf has magic power....**

The knot-holes in wood are popularly ascribed to elves. In Smaland a tale is told about the ancestress of a family whose name is given, that she was an elfmaid, that she came into the house through a knot-hole in the wall with the sunbeams; she was married to the son, bore him four children, then vanished the same way as she had come. And not only is it believed that they themselves can creep through, but that whoever looks through can see things otherwise hidden from him; the same thing happens if you look through the hole made in the skin **of a beast by an elf's arrow. In Scotland a knot-hole is called elfbore, says Jamison: 'a hole in a piece of wood, out of which a knot has dropped or been driven: viewed as the operation of the fairies.'**...

In name, and still more in idea, the elf is connected with the ghostlike butterfly, the product of **repeated changes of form.... The alp is supposed to often assume the shape of a butterfly, and in which trials the name of elb is given by turns to the caterpillar, to the chrysalis, and to the insect that issues from it. And these share even the names of Gute holden and bese dinger (evil things) with the spirits themselves.**

These light airy sprites have an advantage over slow unwieldy man in their godlike power of vanishing or making themselves invisible. No sooner do they appear, than they are snatched **away from our eyes. Only he that wears the ring can get a sight of Elberich.... With the light** elves it is a matter of course, but neither have the black ones forfeited the privilege. The invisibility of dwarfs is usually lodged in a particular part of their dress, a hat or a cloak, and when that is accidentally dropt or cast aside, they suddenly become visible. The dwarf-tales tell of **nebelkappen, of gray coats and red caps.... Beside invisibility this cloak imparts superior** strength, and likewise control over the dwarf nation and their hoard. In other instances the **cap alone is meant....**

From such ability to conceal their form, and from their teasing character in general, there will arise all manner of deception and disappointment, to which man is exposed in dealing with elves and dwarfs.

All dwarf and elves are thievish..... In our Low German legends they lay their plans especially against pea-fields. Other thefts of dwarfs are collected in Elfenm, and their longing for children and blooming maids is treated. The Swed folk-lay 'Den bergtagna' tells of a virgin who spends eight years with a mountain-king, and brings him seven sons and a daughter, before she sees her home again.

They abstract well-shaped children from the cradle, and substitute their own ugly ones, or **even themselves..... The motive of the exchange seems to be that elves are anxious to improve** their breed by means of a human child, which they design to keep among them, and for which they give one of their own. A safeguard against substitution is, to place a key, or one of the **fathers clothes, or steal and needles in the cradle.....**

All elves have an irresistible fondness for music and dancing. By night you see them tread **their round on the moonlit meadows, and at dawn perceive their track in the dew.... The sight of mountain sprites dancing on the meadows betokens to men a fruitful year..... Songs of elf-**

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point the story takes a turn, which is less within the province of the swan-wife myth; but it is worth noting, that one of the maidens offers her lover a drink of water out of a golden pitcher, exactly as elfins and wish-wives do elsewhere.

Connection between the Gods

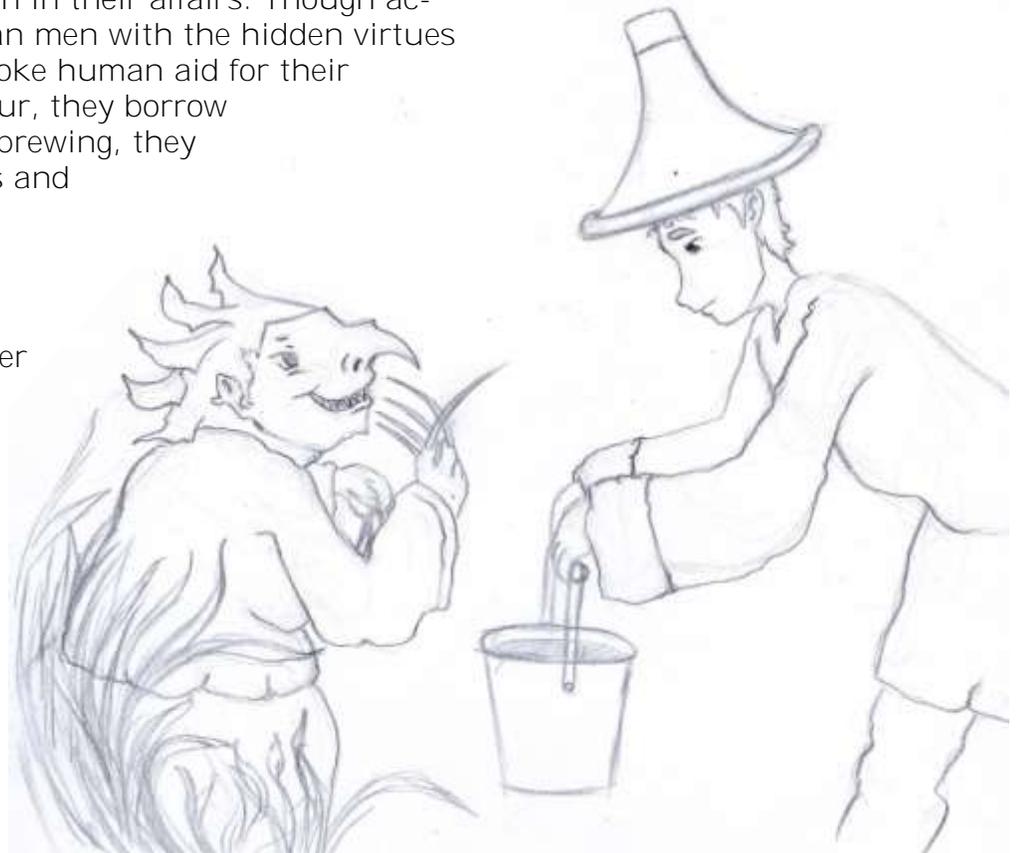
There is yet another way in which a former connation between gods, wise-women and these genii now and then comes to light. The elf who showers his darts is servant or assistant to the high god of thunder, the cunning dwarf has forged his thunderbolts for him; like gods, they wear divine helmets of invisibility, and the home-sprite has his feet miraculously shod as well; water sprites can assume the shape of fishes and sea-horses, and home sprites those of cats. The weeping nix, the laughing goblin are alike initiated into the mystery of magic tones, and will even unveil it to men that sacrifice. An ancient worship of genii and daemons is proved by sacrifices offered to sprites of the mountain, the wood, the lake, the house. Goblins we may presume, accompanied the manifestation of certain deities among men, as Wuotan and Holda, and both of these deities are also connected with water sprites and swan-maids. Fore-knowledge of the future, the gift of prophecy, was proper to most genii; there inexhaustible cheerfulness stands between the sublime serenity of gods and the solemn fates of mortals. They feel themselves drawn to men, and repelled by them. The downfall of heathenism must have wrought great changes in the old-**established relationship...**

Through the whole existence of elves, nixes, and goblins there runs a low under-current of unsatisfied, disconsolate: they do not rightly know how to turn their glorious gifts to account, they always require to lean upon men. Not only do they seek to renovate their race by intermarriage with mankind, they also need the counsel and assistance of men in their affairs. Though acquainted in higher degree than men with the hidden virtues of stones and herbs, they invoke human aid for their sick and their women in labour, they borrow mens vessels for baking and brewing, they even celebrate their weddings and hightides in the halls of men.

Personifications

The freest personality is proper to gods and spirits, who can suddenly reveal or conceal their shape, appear and disappear. To man this faculty is wanting, he can but slowly come and go, and in his body he must bide, unless magic intervene; hence he is {not} in the strictest sense a person, his veriest self being emphasized in our olders speech by the term pip (life).. Than poetry and fables set themselves to personify, i.e.

to extend personality, the prerogative of gods, spirits and men, to animals, plants, things or states to which language has lent gender...



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Gentry' Control Over Human Affairs.—**The gentry** take a great interest in the affairs of men, and they always stand for justice and right. Any side they favour in our wars, that side wins. They favoured the Boers, and the Boers did get their rights. They told me they favoured the Japanese and not the Russians, because the Russians are tyrants. Sometimes they fight among themselves. One of them once said, "I'd fight for a friend, or I'd fight for Ireland."

The folk are the grandest I have ever seen. They are far superior to us, and that is why they are called the *gentry*. They are not a working class, but a military-aristocratic class, tall and noble-appearing. They are a distinct race between our own and that of spirits, as they have told me. Their qualifications are tremendous. "We could cut off half the human race, but would not," they said, "for we are expecting salvation." And I knew a man three or four years ago whom they struck down with paralysis. Their sight is so penetrating that I think they could see through the earth. They have a silvery voice, quick and sweet. The music they play is most beautiful. They *take* the whole body and soul of young and intellectual people who are interesting, transmuting the body to a body like their own. I asked them once if they ever died, and they said, "No; we are always kept young." Once they take you and you taste food in their palace you cannot come back. You are changed to one of them, and live with them for ever. They are able to appear in different forms. One once appeared to me, and seemed only four feet high, and stoutly built. He said, "I am bigger than I appear to you now. We can make the old young, the big small, the small big." One of their women told all the secrets of my family. She said that my brother in Australia would travel much and suffer hardships, all of which came true; and foretold that my nephew, then about two years old, would become a great clergyman in America, and that is what he is now. Besides the *gentry*, who are a distinct class, there are bad spirits and ghosts, which are nothing like them. My mother once saw a leprechaun beside a bush hammering. He disappeared before she could get to him, but he also was unlike one of the *gentry*.

The mother, who lay in bed gazing dreamily, was astonished to see three strange little women enter the dwelling. They approached the unconscious child, and she who seemed to be their leader was on the point of lifting it off the nurse's lap, when the third exclaimed:—"Oh! let us leave this one with her as we have already taken so many!" "So be it," replied the senior of the party in a tone of displeasure, "but when that peat now burning on the hearth shall be consumed, her life will surely come to an end." Then the three little figures passed out. The good wife, recognizing them to be fairies, sprang from her bed and poured over the fire all the water she could find, and extinguished the half-burnt ember. This she wrapped carefully in a piece of cloth and deposited at the very bottom of a large chest, which afterwards she always kept locked.

At the bottom of the chest the girl found a curious packet containing nothing but a morsel of peat, and this apparently useless thing she tossed away into the fire. When the peat was well kindled the young girl began to feel very ill, and when her mother returned was dying. The open chest and the blazing peat explained the cause of the calamity. The fairy's prediction was fulfilled.

The Testimony of John Campbell, Ninety-four Years Old

Nature of Fairies.—At this point, Michael turned the trend of John's thoughts to the nature of fairies, with the following result:—"The general belief of the people here during my father's lifetime was that the fairies were more of the nature of spirits than of men made of flesh and blood, but that they so appeared to the naked eye that no difference could be marked in their forms from that of any human being, except that they were more diminutive.

I have heard my father say it was the case that fairy women used to take away children from their cradles and leave different children in their places, and that these children who were left would turn out to be old men.

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Section III

Fairies' Motivations and Nature



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What makes this task challenging is that while humans sought to understand the world **around them, they found nature to be confusing and bewildering as it often is. Further, it's** likely that humans have always known that to be sentient, to have intelligence, is to be multi-natured and confusing. The tales of mythology and folklore are filled with tales of fairy and human misunderstanding in which fairies can be just as confused by the strange, seemingly arbitrary actions of humanity as any human could be of theirs.

In a Saami tale, Akanidi, the daughter of the sun, was flying through the heavens one day looking down on the Earth below. As she flew overhead, she warmed the reindeer in the tundra, the creatures in the forest and hills, the fish in the seas and lakes. She understood all the animals that lived and brought them all happiness for they enjoyed the warmth that she brought.

“Only people were beyond her comprehension. Sometimes they rejoiced at her warm gaze; sometimes they scowled behind their tent flaps. By what laws did people live? What made them laugh? What made them cry? And why were they sometimes cruel to one another?” To Warmth and her father the Sun, humans appeared to be inexplicable, arbitrary beings who loved the warmth at some points and hated it at others. We as humans know, of course, that human personality, mood, timing, and the amount of **“warmth” applied all play a role in determining how people will react to a sunny day.** It is easy to see, however, how in someone examining our behavior our actions might be deemed arbitrary.

It's no wonder then that the Sun grew upset when his daughter wanted to descend to Earth to understand humans better. As he warned her ‘People are strange creatures; it takes little to offend them.’” (Riordan, 1998)

When considering the motivations of the fairies of legend, we must understand that it is not simply arbitrariness that causes them to react differently to seemingly the same stimulus. **Just as with a humans' personality, mood, timing and the amount of stimulus can all alter** their reaction to something. We must understand that these things can all alter the actions and reactions of fairies.

Ultimately, we must understand that our relationship with fairies is a two-way street, for fairies are often confused by our erratic and bizarre behavior. So for each of us the other can at times appear to be confusing.

When studying character, it is this difference in nature, these different reactions to the same stimulus that give our characters, human or fairy, their three-dimensionality and can help us to better understand each other. Take, for example, how fairies react to being given clothing by **humans. In the story “The Shoemaker and the Elves,” the fairies when presented with the gift** of clothes become excited by the present of clothing and so dress up happily before running off. Yet in other stories, the fairies are offended by the gift of clothing and then leave. Still, there are other stories where fairies bargain for clothing. So it is that fairies have three very **different reactions to seemingly the same event, a human they've helped presenting them with** clothes.

In order to understand why these different reactions exist, there are two things that we need to recall; first, we must remember that people often gave nature spirits clothes and cloth as **offerings, second, it's important to recall that some household fairies are nature spirits who** have been driven from their homes who are seeking to earn respect or power so they can return home. This means that there are two types of household fairies which might be given **clothes by a human, nature and ancestral. It's also important to understand that clothing can**

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as they continued to force the human to play this way for as long as it took for them to perfect in his art and play so well that the trees will dance. (Jacob Grimm)

It should be clear from the amount of brutality in the way the Fossegrim teaches music that fairies are demanding artists, that they do not accept weakness or pain when it comes to their art. They are beauty and art lovers to an extreme degree. However, beauty in and of itself is a complex issue. It is more than simply in the eye of the beholder. The same artist who admired sculptures of neoclassicism can become Picasso who himself created more than just frilly art. He created works of both love and sorrow. Picasso painted scenes of war and pain, of sadness and depression alongside his works of happiness and joy. The same writers who carefully craft jokes and allow the boy to get the girl in their stories, will also kill major characters in horrible ways in another tale just as Shakespeare did.

Creation is an enigmatic, often confusing process, not simply because beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but because sometimes beauty is not what artists seek to create. Even those appreciating the arts are not always after beauty. They instead can be after tragedy or horror. Fairies, like human partakers of beauty and creators of art, seek fulfillment through the arts. As Briggs, (1967) points out, it is from them that the gifts of song and poetry spring. In Germanic mythology, Wotan is the provider of the gift of poetry and song. Unlike human artists and poets, however, fairies are not limited to writing about the beauty of nature; they create it. In the same way they are not limited to trying to understand the nature of life, love, or pain by writing on these subjects. They are able to create the events that further the understanding of these things.

In other words, because of their powers and their nature, fairies manipulate humanity and nature to create the ultimate art. To some fairies then, the entire world really is a stage, and they are the scriptwriters and directors. It should be telling, for example, that the god of poetry in Germanic and Norse mythology (Wotan) is also the god who determines who will be victorious and who will lose a battle. It is just as telling that among the Celts:

“Smiths have everywhere been regarded as uncanny--a tradition surviving from the first introduction of metal among those hitherto accustomed to stone weapons and tools. St. Patrick prayed against the ‘spells of women, smiths, and Druids,’ and it is thus not surprising to find that Goibniu had a reputation for magic even among Christians.” (MacCulloch, 1911)

What we see then is that the act of creation, the act of art, is magical. The difficulty and danger is that much like human artists and geniuses, fairies appear strange in their actions. They **create, destroy, and manipulate for ends that don't seem to make sense to anyone but themselves.** Like humans, it may simply be that they are acting in strange and seemingly arbitrary ways to create an interesting poem or painting. If it were only the works of fairies that were difficult to comprehend, things would be challenging enough. However, fairies, like human artists, **are quirky and odd. Artists are prone to violent bouts of rage. When Michelangelo didn't like his work on the Sistine Chapel, he tore down a painting he'd been creating for years. Mozart was often reported to be half mad and would grow angry at his band for not hearing music that wasn't actually playing. Van Gogh cut off his own ear in a fit of rage.**

Genius and an extreme, intense interest in one subject create bizarre quirks among humans so we should anticipate that the people who gave human traits to fairies would believe that this situation would be the same among fairies.

When separating fairies from purely human artists, there are a few additional factors we must

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to be essentially souls. The astral world itself is both less solid and more stable than water for it always changes, always flows, but the beings within it can choose to be solid or **can choose their form.** **“The fairy world is always described as an immaterial place.”** (Wentz, 1911)

Further testimonies gathered from Celtic peasants go on to attest that:

“Spirits and fairies exist all round us, invisible. Fairies have no solid bodily substance. Their forms are of matter like ghostly bodies, and on this account they cannot be caught. In the twilight they are often seen, and on moonlit nights in summer.” (Ibid)

Many fairies are always changing form appearing as a cup, an animal, or a tree. It’s impossible because of such changes to know for certain if fairies even naturally appear as humans, or if they simply take human form to put us at ease. Jacob Grimm believed that:

“The freest personality is proper to gods and spirits who can suddenly reveal or conceal their shape, appear and disappear. To man this faculty is wanting. He can but slowly come and go, and in his body he must abide.” (Grimm, 1935)

What would it be like to not have to have any form? To be able to change and adjust at will; to be anywhere one wanted to be? There are two possibilities we must consider. The first is that fairies truly are free; that they are the artists that alter everything, even their forms, to get that which they seek. Or perhaps fairies are themselves a reflection of the world around them. **A reflection that shows us what we want to see.** In **“Religion of the Ancient Celts”** (MacCulloch, 1911) attests that:

“With the growth of religion, the vaguer spirits tended to become gods and goddesses, and worshipful animals to become anthropomorphic divinities with the animals as their symbols, attendants, or victims. And as the cult of vegetation spirits centered in the ritual of planting and sowing, so the cult of the divinities of growth centered in great, seasonal and agricultural festivals which were the key to the growth of the Celtic religion to be found. Yet the migrating Celts, conquering new lands, evolved divinities of war. Here the old, female influence was still at work since many of these were female.

“Most of the Celtic divinities were local in character; each tribe possessing its own group, each god having functions similar to those of other groups. Some, however, had or gained a more universal character absorbing divinities with similar functions. Still, this local character must be borne in mind. The numerous divinities of Gaul, with differing names—but judging by their assimilation to the same Roman divinity, with similar functions are best understood as gods of local groups. Thus the primitive nature spirits gave place to greater or lesser gods, each with his separate department and functions. Though growing civilization tended to separate them from the soil, they never quite lost touch with it. In return for man’s worship and sacrifices, they gave life and increased victory, strength, and skill. However, these sacrifices had been and still often were rites in which the representative of a god was slain.”

What we see then is that these fairies may not have been so free. They may have been, at least in part, defined by the thoughts of the people who surrounded them. So in this sense when humans wished for fairies to be beautiful, powerful beings that would make their crops grow, it was so. Later, as humans wanted them to be devils or faded souls, it again became so. Finally, when humans stopped caring about fairies, they ultimately vanished altogether. We see **this idea repeated in modern fairy tales. For example, in the tale of “Peter Pan,” every time**

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can and do try their best to please and predict fairies' responses, but they weren't always successful as explained by diseases, famine, and other natural disasters.

In Ireland it was asserted, for example, that the famine which killed tens of thousands and drove most of the country to immigrate to the United States was caused by fairies at war with each other. (Wentz, 1911)

Immortality and Immunity

Diplomatic immunity which allows people to park anywhere they wish, drive how they wish, etc., encourages people to act differently from how one might normally behave. **Diplomatic immunity itself, however, is not true immunity as the diplomat's job is to make the citizens of the country they are in like them or their employer.** Fairies have no such needs, however, so they are oftentimes truly immune from the punishments that haunt the mortal world, even from death itself. Such immunity alters their perception of things. Nixes, nymphs, and satyrs need not fear reprisals for their actions, and so their desires are rarely ever tempered by anything. In such cases then, a fairy becomes pure desire, mating and dancing, living for the moment because there is no need to worry about anything else. Not even the freest of humans can do this for long because eventually mortality will crash down on them, or eventually other humans will tire of their actions and they'll be restrained.

Immortality itself will greatly alter a fairy's perceptions of the world. Mountains rise and fall, trees grow and die, and even the stars shift their courses over time. Even for humans, growing older means that little things seem to matter less and less. After a while, the latest fashions, brands, and other such crazes are just other events that will pass. Imagine what it would be like to live for thousands of years and you will come to a closer understanding of the emotions of fairies. After thousands of years of life, very little would seem to matter. Any kingdom might simply be just another kingdom; any mortal is just another life in an infinite string of meaningless and temporary lives.

Immortality can also cause fairies to hate the new just as elderly people are stereotyped to. In German mythology, wood wives demanded that humans not bake cumin in their bread. **Water wives didn't like the touch of new clay pots in Welsh mythology. Dwarfs called humans fickle creatures (Grimm 1835).** To an immortal being it must seem that humans are the ones who are truly always changing not only in mood but in the very ways which they choose to function. A fairy, for example, might be loyal to a household or kingdom for thousands of years while the people within the household could change their loyalties dozens of times. Being immortal then alters not only what fairies care about but what they understand to be fickleness.

Fairies Never Mature

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Because fairies are the souls of nearly every thing they as a general rule tend to ignore humans. Further because they have never lived as a humans they often can't understand or help with basic human concerns. This means that as helpful as they can be, even humans who can see fairies can't simply ask every fairy around them for help.

Below

Imagine what it must be like simply coming into being as some fairies were said to do, such as the dark "elves" of Germanic lore. Such beings lack any experience and so are very childlike, yet they have no one to love or care for them. They come into being on their own and must learn to live on their own. Thanks to their powers and intelligence they never actually have to mature, not in an emotional sense, and are basically unable to. Yet despite their inexperience's these fairies are born knowing nearly everything they need to survive and physically mature. Often such fairies become bitter, angry.



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Fairies are strange creatures. They often torment people and each other thus people and other fairies can come to hate them.



Fairies or spirits are in everything. This is an important aspect of nearly every culture. So if someone can see the fairies, if fairies are being represented you should think how this impacts the world and how this impacts the way the world look.





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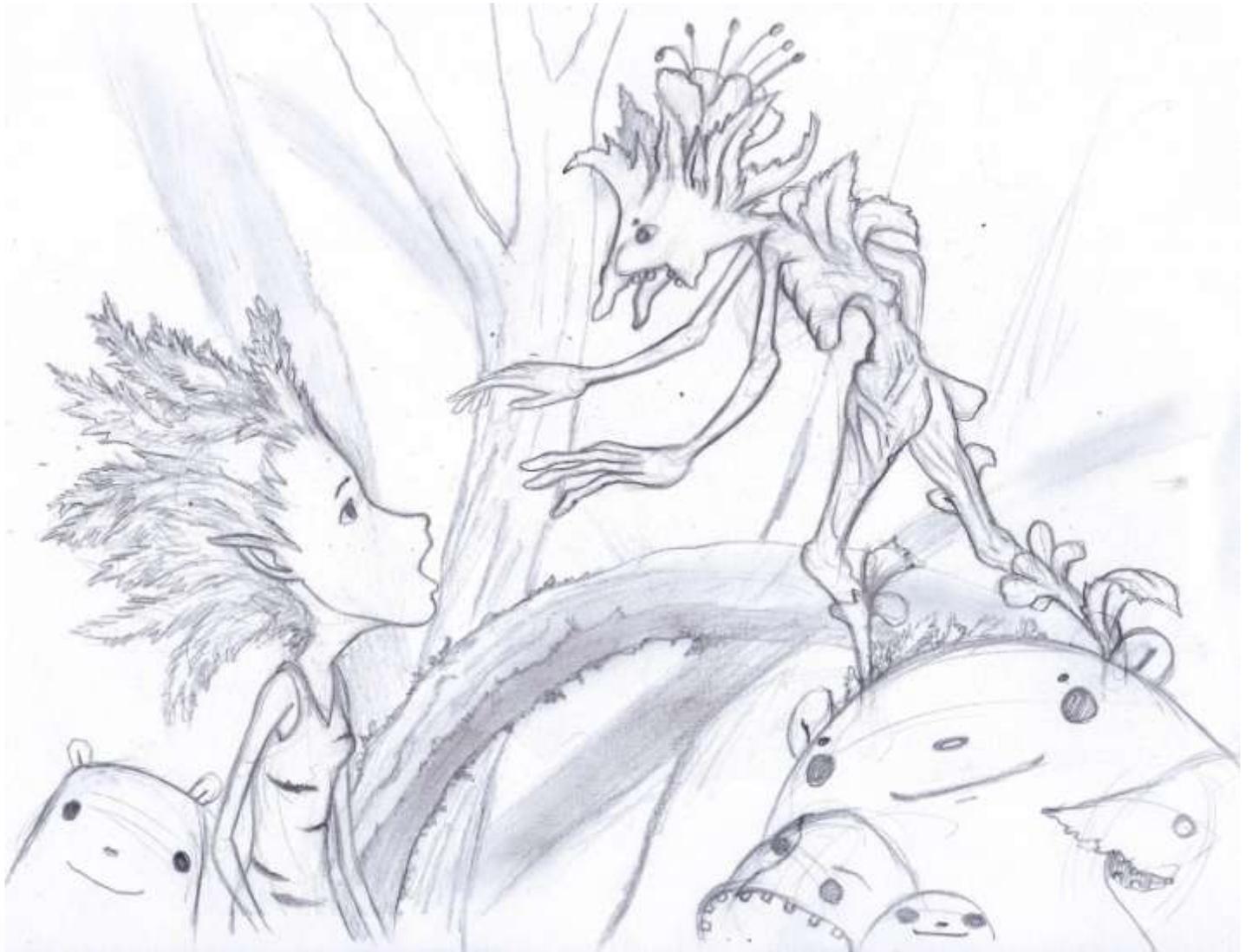
Because fairies are intelligent they can adapt. Thus fairies would inhabit cities and the suburbs as much as they would the woodlands.



How would fairies impact people's every day life? After all fairies alter people's state of mind—often to cause mischief. What mischief could they cause in a city?



INCA



Think about fishing flies. They are a lot like bugs but made of furs and feathers so not exactly the same, not natural but natural. Fairies are much the same way, they are natural creatures made from magic. So they would look natural, but a little crafted.

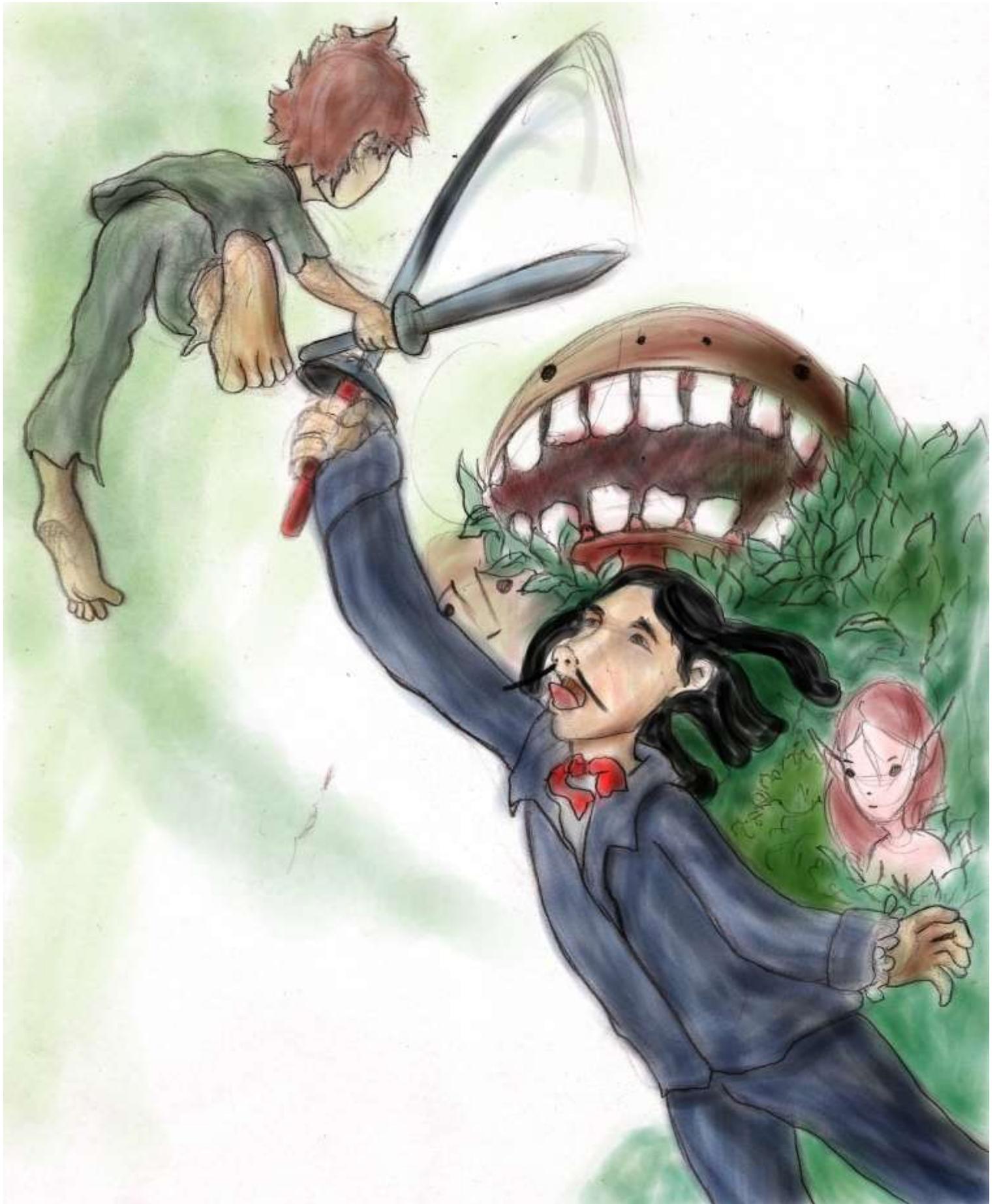




Use indigenous art for inspiration when drawing fairies. Having been trained in Yupik art as a child I often use Yupik masks to help depict otherworldly beings. Flowing Tlingit art, graphic masks and sculptures all were designed to represent the otherworld and perfected over the course of thousands of years. For this reason they can help to inspire someone who is just starting to get a feel for depicting the magical world.



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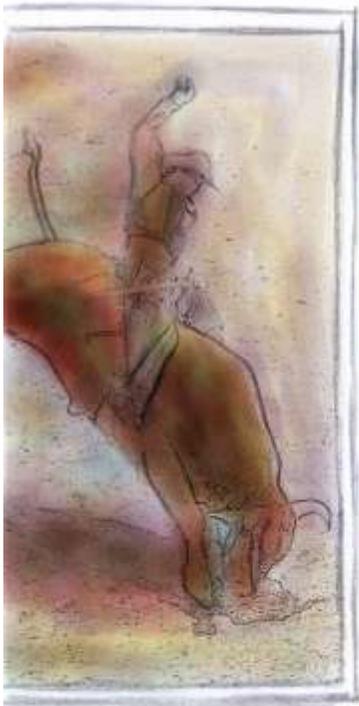
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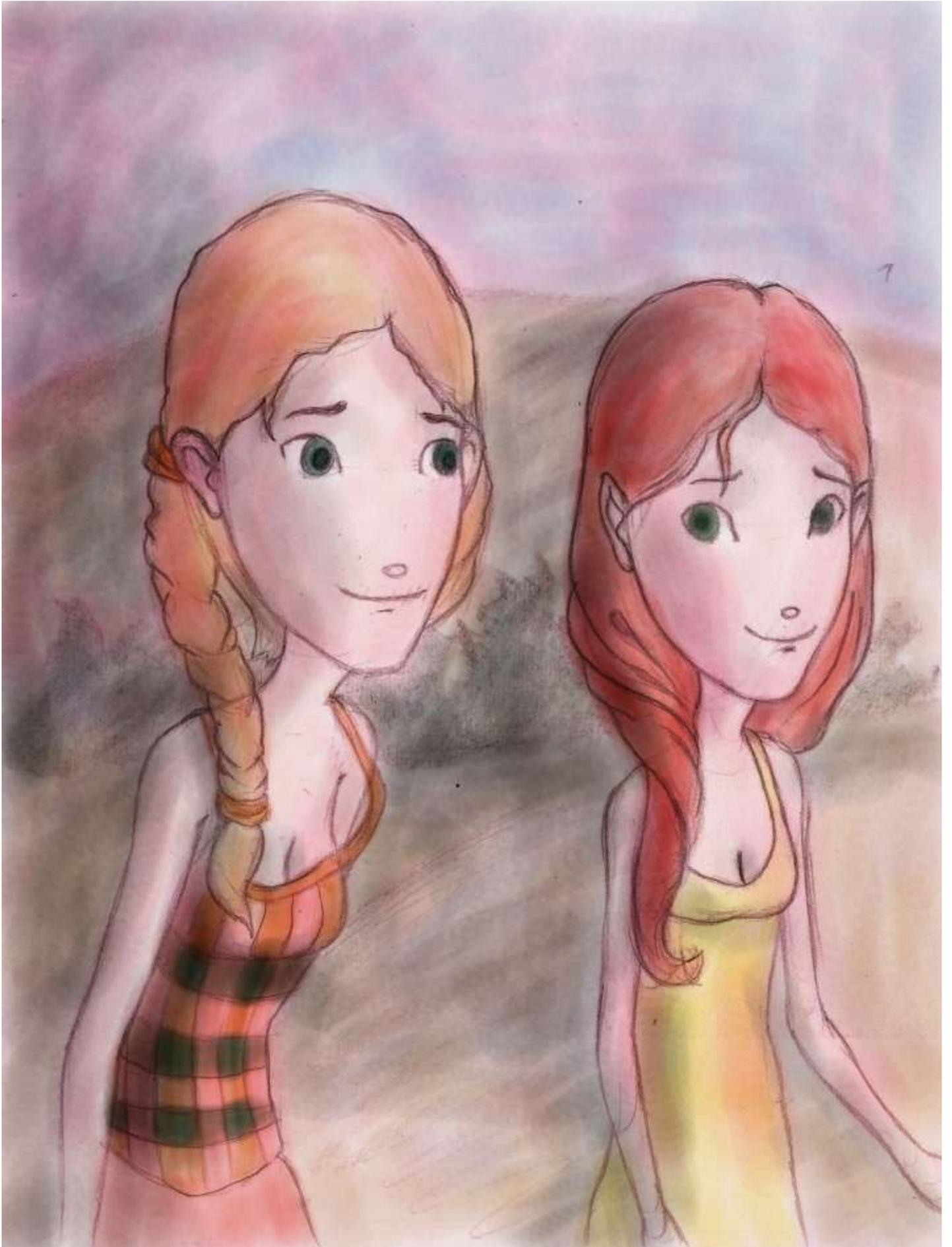






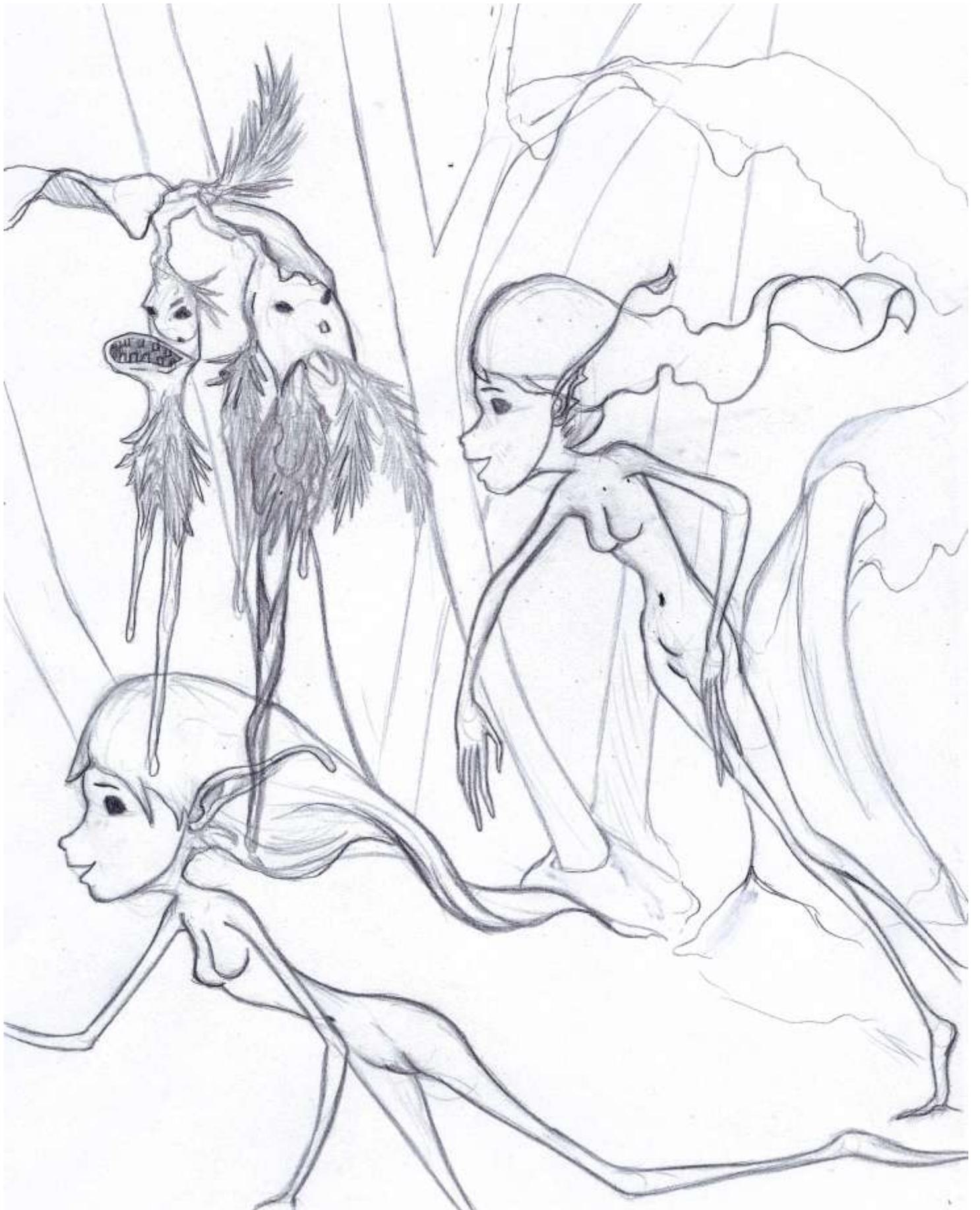
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but are Always Ancient

Many fairies never truly mature. At the same time, however, they grow up within a few years or are born ancient from the very beginning (Grimm, 1835). Further, because of their immortal nature, they would eventually only have the slightest inkling that they were ever young at all. This situation can lead them to desire that which they cannot have, a childhood. Consider that when fairies kidnap adults, the fairies most often replace them with objects which are made of dirt or wood but are enchanted to appear to be corpses. Yet when a fairy takes a human baby, they replace the child with old fairies in disguise. So when a fairy takes an adult, it is clear that what they are after is the adult because they leave the humans very little recourse to discover the deception or to force the fairies to return the person who was taken.

When fairies take human children, however, they are after something else, something more. By leaving an elderly fairy, the fairies risk being found out because of the actions of the elderly fairy. Further, they risk having the fairy abused by the humans as often happened. If all the fairies wanted was the child, then they would simply replace them with clay or wood magically disguised to appear as a dead child as they do adults. By replacing children with older fairies, the fairies are actively seeking to take the place of the child.

In history and our own society, we can see many child actors who grew up to seek after their **childhood later. They sought to create a “Neverland” for themselves. Even beyond this, however,** there are many people who seek to go back to or to find a childhood again. Movies are ripe with stories of people who wish to regain their youth, or to find the happiness they never had as a child. For such people, however, the rules of society, age, mortality, as well as the fact that no matter what they do they cannot look like children prevents them from achieving childhood later in life.

Fairies, however, can change their form at will, and they don't have the same social rules as humans. Perkiss points out that when the nymphs would kidnap heroes, it seemed that they did so in order to essentially play house with the hero the way a girl might seek to pull a father, brother, or neighbor boy into a game of tea. Thus, while even human children must **follow certain rules, (they can't force the neighbor boy to play tea without adult intervention or a lot of badgering),** fairies with their supernatural powers do not have very many rules at all. Further, because of their immortal nature, they have forever to gain a greater longing for a childhood and can act childlike forever. There is never a moment when they start to wither and get injured more easily or must worry about finding a job. So they can dance on the hillsides every night for eternity and so they often do.

Dangerous, Quirky, Playful, and Unpredictable

Beautiful and seductive, she moves through the trees, lithely jumping branch to branch like a squirrel. Intrigued, the boy approaches her eliciting a welcoming smile. She whispers gently in **his ear before tickling him. At first he laughs, enjoying the attention, but she doesn't stop. She** keeps tickling and tickling; harder and harder he laughs. He wants to stop laughing, but he **can't. It's hard to breathe, his lungs hurt. He starts to cough from laughing for so long and so hard,** and eventually she tickles him to death.

What are we to take from the strange behavior of the rusalka, a fairy of the water and forest which performs the bizarre act of seducing men so that it may tickle them to death? No matter how seemingly dangerous the fairy, they always seem to have some element of playfulness

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Section IV

Analysis of the Fairies in Fairy Tales

Thus far this book has concerned itself with the development of tools; tools to understand and analyze the fairies and the ancient beliefs present in fairy tales. These are the things which are most often ignored by other scholars. For the analysis of fairies tends to end only with an understanding of fairy tales while focusing solely on human morals and history. As strange as it sounds, writers and researchers both seem to forget that fairy tales are oftentimes about fairies, and that fairies were the focus of religion and or superstition when they were first told. So an analysis of fairy tales without trying to understand what people believed about the fairies is a little like an analysis of the Bible without understanding what people believed about God. We turn our attention then to using the tools developed in this book to correct this oversight, to begin to understand the fairies as characters within the stories to which they lend their names.

Rumpelstiltskin

Once there was a miller who was poor, but who had a beautiful daughter. Now it happened that he had to go and speak to the king, and in order to make himself appear important he said to him, I have a daughter who can spin straw into gold. The king said to the miller, that is an art which pleases me well, if your daughter is as clever as you say, bring her to-morrow to my palace, and I will put her to the test.

And when the girl was brought to him he took her into a room which was quite full of straw, gave her a spinning-wheel and a reel, and said, now set to work, and if by to-morrow morning early you have not spun this straw into gold during the night, you must die. Thereupon he himself locked up the room, and left her in it alone. So there sat the poor miller's daughter, and for the life of her could not tell what to do, she had no idea how straw could be spun into gold, and she grew more and more frightened, until at last she began to weep.

But all at once the door opened, and in came a little man, and said, good evening, mistress miller, why are you crying so. Alas, answered the girl, I have to spin straw into gold, and I do not know how to do it. What will you give me, said the manikin, if I do it for you. My necklace, said the girl. The little man took the necklace, seated himself in front of the wheel, and whirr, whirr, whirr, three turns, and the reel was full, then he put another on, and whirr, whirr, whirr, three times round, and the second was full too. And so it went on until the morning, when all the straw was spun, and all the reels were full of gold.



By daybreak the king was already there, and when he saw the gold he was astonished and delighted, but his heart became only more greedy. He had the miller's daughter taken into another room full of straw, which was much larger, and commanded her to spin that also in one night if she valued her life. The girl knew not how to help herself, and was crying, when the door opened again, and the little man appeared, and said, what will you give me if I spin that straw into gold for you. The ring on my finger, answered the girl. The little man took the ring, again began to turn the wheel, and by morning had spun all the straw into glittering gold.

The king rejoiced beyond measure at the sight, but still he had not gold enough, and he had the miller's daughter taken into a still larger room full of straw, and said, you must spin this, too, in the course of this night, but if you succeed, you shall be my wife. Even if she be a miller's daughter,

thought he, I could not find a richer wife in the whole world.

When the girl was alone the manikin came again for the third time, and said, what will you give me if I spin the straw for you this time also. I have nothing left that I could give, answered the girl. Then promise me, if you should become queen, to give me your first child. Who knows whether that will ever happen, thought the miller's daughter, and, not knowing how else to help herself in this strait, she promised the manikin what he wanted, and for that he once more spun the straw into gold.

And when the king came in the morning, and found all as he had wished, he took her in marriage, and the pretty miller's daughter became a queen.

A year after, she brought a beautiful child into the world, and she never gave a thought to the manikin. But suddenly he came into her room, and said, now give me what you promised.

The queen was horror-struck, and offered the manikin all the riches of the kingdom if he would leave her the child. But the manikin said, no, something alive is dearer to me than all the treasures in the world. Then the queen began to lament and cry, so that the manikin pitied her. I will give you three days, time, said he, if by that time you find out my name, then shall you keep your child.

So the queen thought the whole night of all the names that she had ever heard, and she sent a messenger over the country to inquire, far and wide, for any other names that there might be. When the manikin came the next day, she began with caspar, melchior, balthazar, and said all the names she knew, one after another, but to every one the little man said, that is not my name. On the second day she had inquiries made in the neighborhood as to the names of the people there, and she repeated to the manikin the most uncommon and curious. Perhaps your name is shortribs, or sheepshanks, or laceleg, but he always answered, that is not my name.

On the third day the messenger came back again, and said, I have not been able to find a single new name, but as I came to a high mountain at the end of the forest, where the fox and the hare bid each other good night, there I saw a little house, and before the house a fire was burning, and round about the fire quite a ridiculous little man was jumping, he hopped upon one leg, and shouted -

to-day I bake, to-morrow brew,
the next I'll have the young queen's child.
Ha, glad am I that no one knew
that Rumpelstiltskin I am styled.

You may imagine how glad the queen was when she heard the name. And when soon afterwards the little man came in, and asked, now, mistress queen, what is my name, at first she said, is your name Conrad? No. Is your name Harry? No. Perhaps your name is Rumpelstiltskin?

The devil has told you that! The devil has told you that, cried the little man, and in his anger he plunged his right foot so deep into the earth that his whole leg went in, and then in rage he pulled at his left leg so hard with both hands that he tore himself in two.

Analysis of “Rumpelstiltskin”

Like many fairy tales, “Rumpelstiltskin” is a story which lacks a character which we can define as pure or innocent. Rather, it’s a story of two obviously wicked characters in the form of the father who lies to the king and so ends up getting his daughter in a lot of trouble with the king. The King is also a greedy man who cares about nothing but the gold he can get out of the miller’s daughter. **Not all the characters are wicked, of course. The miller’s daughter clearly isn’t evil when she agrees to give a baby to a strange man, just desperate. She has been forced into an inescapable predicament by the two men in her life that she should be able to trust above anyone else, her father and her future husband. Clearly this situation puts her in a space between. She is not yet a fiancé, yet she is no longer free in that regard. She is trapped in a prison but an ‘honored’ guest.’ She is between being a member of her father’s house, the executioner, and the king’s household. It is at this moment when she is trapped; pulled by so many worlds that the fairy appears.**

In many ways Rumpelstiltskin is the most confusing and intriguing part of this story. For this particular “**männlein,**” as the German text designates, **Rumpelstiltskin, despite outward appearances, is neither clear in his goal nor his motivation. On the cusp of it, it would seem that he wants the girl’s first-born baby. However, most fairies in stories don’t ask for the child they want, instead they simply take it. Rumpelstiltskin, however, despite being clearly able to sneak into a prison, being able to weave magic powerful enough to turn straw into gold doesn’t just take the child as he obviously could. Instead he tries to get the girl to accept giving the baby to him. What’s more, even after he comes to collect the child, he decides to give her another chance to escape her agreement with him.**

Considering that during the time this story takes place children were left in the forests in droves or orphaned on the streets, Rumpelstiltskin could have taken hundreds of children easily, and taking them would have been an act of kindness as Rumpelstiltskin would have **been rescuing them from starvation. He doesn’t just want any baby then. What he wants is this particular baby. Indeed, by his own words, this baby is more precious to him than all the treasures in the world.**

We are left then with two questions, the first being, why doesn’t Rumpelstiltskin simply take the baby? Secondly, why does Rumpelstiltskin want the baby in the first place? To answer these questions, we must examine what fairies are as well as a few other fairy tales. Let us begin by placing Rumpelstiltskin into the possible categories of fairy to see where he might fit, or if he even has a place as all fairies don’t necessarily seem to.

Possibility 1 - Rumpelstiltskin is an ancestor spirit or a forgotten god.

At first glance this idea may seem preposterous; however, consider that Merlin was raised by a

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the Zwerge are essentially subject to fate as much as anyone else. Their home simply seems to be a safe place to hide out. In the other story, the Zwerge is the villain though he is not that impressive in his abilities as he keeps getting his beard caught in bushes and stumps which means that he requires a young girl to rescue him.

Männleins, on the other hand, tend to appear as knowledgeable. They are the creators of fate. Rumpelstiltskin himself is so good at spinning he can spin straw into gold, spinning ultimately being the activity used to help control fate. Rumpelstiltskin was also showed up just when the girl needed him and is also capable of doing the impossible to help her. So he clearly is able to manipulate the future. What we must presume then is that, at least to an extent, Rumpelstiltskin is attempting to create fate. However, neither his ability to tell when someone needs his help nor his ability to do the impossible prevents him from giving the girl the chance to get **out of having her baby taken from her. So obviously he's conflicted about what he's doing. So it's likely that like the other Männlein he is kind and is essentially attempting to make the** world a better place. However, in doing so he has stepped outside of his usual role of helping damsels in distress and princes on quests and is now trying to steal a prince from a damsel in distress.

Rumpelstiltskin then is most likely some form of deity or ancestor spirit seeking to help his people by raising a king who will actually be good and a child which he loves. Unfortunately, in order to do this properly he must play the role of a villain, a role at least half of his dual nature **is not comfortable with. This is why he tries at first to give the miller's daughter a chance** to keep her baby.



Briar Rose

A Long time ago there were a King and Queen who said every day, "Ah, if only we had a child!" but they never had one. But it happened that once when the Queen was bathing, a frog crept out of the water on to the land, and said to her, "Your wish shall be fulfilled; before a year has gone by, you shall have a daughter."

What the frog had said came true, and the Queen had a little girl who was so pretty that the King could not contain himself for joy, and ordered a great feast. He invited not only his kindred, friends and acquaintance, but also the Wise Women, in order that they might be kind and well-disposed towards the child. There were thirteen of them in his kingdom, but, as he had only twelve golden

plates for them to eat out of, one of them had to be left at home.

The feast was held with all manner of splendour and when it came to an end the Wise Women bestowed their magic gifts upon the baby: one gave virtue, another beauty, a third riches, and so on with everything in the world that one can wish for.

When eleven of them had made their promises, suddenly the thirteenth came in. She wished to avenge herself for not having been invited, and without greeting, or even looking at any one, she cried with a loud voice, "The King's daughter shall in her fifteenth year prick herself with a spindle, and fall down dead." And, without saying a word more, she turned round and left the room.

They were all shocked; but the twelfth, whose good wish still remained unspoken, came forward, and as she could not undo the evil sentence, but only soften it, she said, "It shall not be death, but a deep sleep of a hundred years, into which the princess shall fall."

The King, who would fain keep his dear child from the misfortune, gave orders that every spindle in the whole kingdom should be burnt. Meanwhile the gifts of the Wise Women were plentifully fulfilled on the young girl, for she was so beautiful, modest, good-natured, and wise,

that everyone who saw her was bound to love her.

It happened that on the very day when she was fifteen years old, the King and Queen were not at home, and the maiden was left in the palace quite alone. So she went round into all sorts of places, looked into rooms and bed-chambers just as she liked, and at last came to an old tower. She climbed up the narrow winding-staircase, and reached a little door. A rusty key was in the lock, and when she turned it the door sprang open, and there in a little room sat an old woman with a spindle, busily spinning her flax.

"Good day, old dame," said the King's daughter; "what are you doing there?" "I am spinning," said the old woman, and nodded her head. "What sort of thing is that, that rattles round so merrily?" said the girl, and she took the spindle and wanted to spin too. But scarcely had she touched the spindle when the magic decree was fulfilled, and she pricked her finger with it. And, in the very moment when she felt the prick, she fell down upon the bed that stood there, and lay in a deep sleep. And this sleep extended over the whole palace; the King and Queen who had just come home, and had entered the great hall, began to go to sleep, and the whole of the court with them. The horses, too, went to sleep in the stable, the dogs in the yard, the pigeons upon the roof, the flies on the wall; even the fire that was flaming on the hearth became quiet and slept, the roast meat left off frizzling, and the cook, who was just going to pull the hair of the scullery boy, because he had forgotten something, let him go, and went to sleep. And the wind fell, and on the trees before the castle not a leaf moved again. But round about the castle there began to grow a hedge of thorns, which every year became higher, and at last grew close up round the castle and all over it, so that there was nothing of it to be seen, not even the flag upon the roof. But the story of the beautiful sleeping "Briar-rose," for so the princess was named, went about the country, so that from time to time kings' sons came and tried to get through the thorny hedge into the castle.

But they found it impossible, for the thorns held fast together, as if they had hands, and the youths were caught in them, could not get loose again, and died a miserable death.

After long, long years a King's son came again to that country, and heard an old man talking about the thorn-hedge, and that a castle was said to stand behind it in which a wonderfully beautiful princess, named Briar-rose, had been asleep for a hundred years; and that the King and Queen and the whole court were asleep likewise. He had heard, too, from his grandfather, that many kings' sons had already come, and had tried to get through the thorny hedge, but they had remained sticking fast in it, and had died a pitiful death. Then the youth said, "I am not afraid, I will go and see the beautiful Briar-rose." The good old man might dissuade him as he would, he did not listen to his words.

But by this time the hundred years had just passed, and the day had come when Briar-rose was to awake again. When the King's son came near to the thorn-hedge, it was nothing but large and beautiful flowers, which parted from each other of



their own accord, and let him pass unhurt, then they closed again behind him like a hedge. In the castle-yard he saw the horses and the spotted hounds lying asleep; on the roof sat the pigeons with their heads under their wings. And



when he entered the house, the flies were asleep upon the wall, the cook in the kitchen was still holding out his hand to seize the boy, and the maid was sitting by the black hen which she was going to pluck.

He went on farther, and in the great hall he saw the whole of the court lying asleep, and up by the throne lay the King and Queen.

Then he went on still farther, and all was so quiet that a breath could be heard, and at last he came to the tower, and opened the door into the little room where Briar-rose was sleeping. There she lay, so beautiful that he could not turn his eyes away; and he stooped down and gave her a kiss. But as soon as he kissed her, Briar-rose opened her eyes and awoke, and looked at him quite sweetly.

Then they went down together, and the King awoke, and the Queen, and the whole court, and looked at each other in great astonishment. And the horses in the court-yard stood up and shook themselves; the hounds jumped up and wagged

their tails; the pigeons upon the roof pulled out their heads from under their wings, looked round, and flew into the open country; the flies on the wall crept again; the fire in the kitchen burned up and flickered and cooked the meat; the joint began to turn and frizzle again, and the cook gave the boy such a box on the ear that he screamed, and the maid plucked the fowl ready for the spit.

And then the marriage of the King's son with Briar-rose was celebrated with all splendour, and they lived contented to the end of their days.

Analysis of “Briar Rose”

What’s interesting about the two best-known “Sleeping Beauty” stories is that the first fairy character and perhaps the one driving the action of the story is ignored by later readers, writers, and analysts of this tale. The story opens with a water fairy providing the king and queen with a child. In “Briar Rose,” the water fairy appears in the personified form of a frog to tell of the child that will be born. In “Sleeping Beauty in the Wood,” the version collected by Perrault,

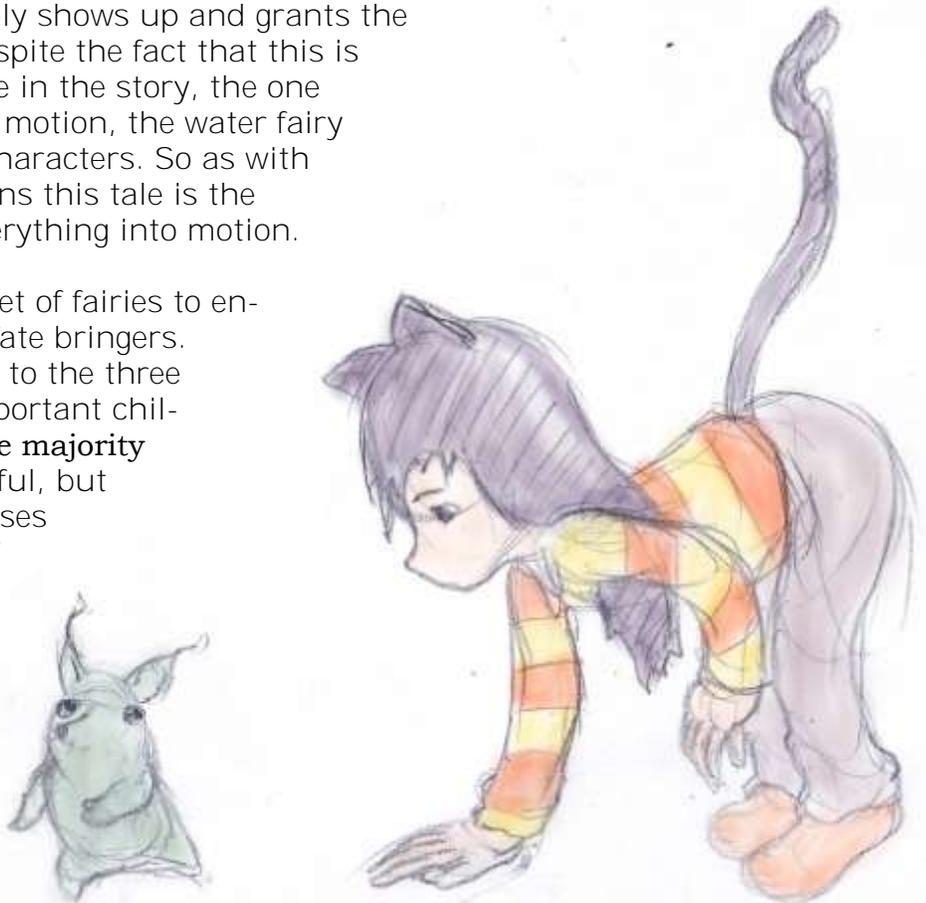
the king and queen take a much more active role in seeking help from the water fairy with the opening lines; “They went to all the waters in the world; vows, pilgrimages, all ways were tried.”

By the time the story was collected, of course, churches had long since rededicated fountains and waters to saints. However, such a rededication is merely a change of form rather than of function. **What we see in the king and queen’s search is that despite the fact that the kingdom in which they lived had 13 fairies (or 7 in Perrault’s version) the king and queen chose to seek help in having a child or ultimately received it from the spirit of the water.** Water fairies have a unique ability to see the future so this spirit of the wells would have foreseen much of the epic tale that was about to unfold because of its action of helping the king and queen to have a child. Certainly, the story that resulted has been with us for hundreds of years and is now one of the most popular stories in the world.

The well fairy then is creating a form of art by setting this story up, and so one could argue that all the other characters are simply bystanders in what happens next. The fairy who lays the curse on Briar Rose/Aurora has no real choice but to be spiteful given her nature. The king and queen are simply humans prone to stupid mistakes. The good fairy is limited in her capacity to help and so had few options open to her. The prince does very little but get curious **about what’s in the palace. When he walks up to it, the way is made for him, presumably by the fairy, who said that Briar Rose would be awakened after a hundred years.** The princess is blessed and cursed from birth so she has no choice in anything that happens to her.

The only character with a choice in this story then is that of what could be called its writer, **the water fairy. The water fairy did not need to grant the king and queen’s wish in either version of the tale.** In one story, most wells refused the king and queen showing that it could have done so easily as well. In the other the frog simply shows up and grants the wish of its own accord. Yet despite the fact that this is the one character with a choice in the story, the one character who sets things into motion, the water fairy is the most ignored of all the characters. So as with many fairies, the one who begins this tale is the anonymous artist who sets everything into motion.

Let us consider now the next set of fairies to enter the stories, the norns, the fate bringers. They are in many ways similar to the three norns which come to make important children heroes. **In “The Edda,” the majority of the norns are kind and helpful, but one of them is spiteful and curses the child to die. In “The Edda,” this occurred because the norn tripped and hurt herself as she approached the child whereas in “Sleeping Beauty” the fairy cursed the child with death because she felt slighted by the king and queen.** This difference is important because while the



norn in “The Edda” only curses the child with death, the fairy in “Sleeping Beauty” is angry at the king and queen so she does much more than this by cursing the child and the kingdom’s source of power over its fate. A spindle, the item the fairy says will ultimately kill the princess, is more than just a way to make clothes in folklore; it’s a way to make fate. Fate is spun, and magic is woven by women.



Jacob Grimm’s “Teutonic Mythology” notes, “Women gain their power, their heroic respect at this time from the magic that comes from the spindle.” In “The Golden Bough” it’s stated that “Women become very nearly or perhaps in some ways more than gods from the power over fate that they have, a power which comes from spinning.” By saying that Briar Rose will die from the spindle that provides power, the fairy has effectively denied Briar Rose this power. So while she may grow up to be rich and beautiful, she is powerless; she is meaningless. Further, for fifteen years after this the whole kingdom must suffer the same fate because the king and queen outlawed all spindles. The insulted fairy/spinner of fate then curses the kingdom to not have fate spun for their children for fifteen years. She curses the women to lose much of the magical power they might have. She has

curled the men to do without these powers as they go to war. Finally, she has cursed these women and the princess to live meaningless lives unable to affect the world around them the way the women in other kingdoms can. Cursing someone to die because of a spindle, cursing a kingdom to live without their spindles for over a decade then is perhaps one of the worst curses imaginable.

“Puss in Boots”

There was a miller whose only inheritance to his three sons was his mill, his donkey, and his cat. The division was soon made. They hired neither a clerk nor an attorney, for they would have eaten up all the poor patrimony. The eldest took the mill, the second the donkey, and the youngest nothing but the cat.

The poor young fellow was quite comfortless for having received so little. "My brothers," said he, "may make a handsome living by joining their shares together; but, for my part, after I have eaten up my cat, and made myself a muff from his skin, I must then die of hunger."

The cat, who heard all this, but pretended, otherwise, said to him with a grave and serious air, "Do not be so concerned, my good master. If you will but give me a bag, and have a pair of boots made for me, that I may scamper through the dirt and the brambles, then you shall see that you are not so poorly off with me as you imagine."

The cat's master did not build very much upon what he said. However, he had often seen him play a great many cunning tricks to catch rats and mice, such as hanging by his heels, or hiding himself in the meal, and pretending to be dead; so he did take some hope that he might give him some help in his miserable condition.

After receiving what he had asked for, the cat gallantly pulled on the boots and slung the bag about his neck. Holding its drawstrings in his forepaws, he went to a place where there was a great abundance of rabbits. He put some bran and greens into his bag, then stretched himself out as if he were dead. He thus waited for some young rabbits, not yet acquainted with the de-

ceits of the world, to come and look into his bag.

He had scarcely lain down before he had what he wanted. A rash and foolish young rabbit jumped into his bag, and the master cat, immediately closed the strings, then took and killed him without pity.

Proud of his prey, he went with it to the palace, and asked to speak with his majesty. He was shown upstairs into the king's apartment, and, making a low bow, said to him, "Sir, I have brought you a rabbit from my noble lord, the Master of Carabas" (for that was the title which the cat was pleased to give his master).

"Tell your master," said the king, "that I thank him, and that I am very pleased with his gift." Another time he went and hid himself in a grain field. He again held his bag open, and when a brace of partridges ran into it, he drew the strings, and caught them both. He presented these to the king, as he had done before with the rabbit. The king, in like manner, received the partridges with great pleasure, and gave him a tip. The cat continued, from time to time for two or three months, to take game to his majesty from his master.

One day, when he knew for certain that the king would be taking a drive along the riverside with his daughter, the most beautiful princess in the world, he said to his master, "If you will follow my advice your fortune is made. All you must do is to go and bathe yourself in the river at the place I show you, then leave the rest to me."

The Marquis of Carabas did what the cat advised him to, without knowing why. While he was bathing the king passed by, and the cat began to cry out, "Help! Help! My Lord Marquis of Carabas is going to be drowned."

At this noise the king put his head out of the coach window, and, finding it was the cat who had so often brought him such good game, he commanded his guards to run immediately to the assistance of his lordship the Marquis of Carabas. While they were drawing the poor Marquis out of the river, the cat came up to the coach and told the king that, while his master was bathing, some rogues had come by and stolen his clothes, even though he had cried out, "Thieves! Thieves!" several times, as loud as he could. In truth, the cunning cat had hidden the clothes under a large stone.

The king immediately commanded the officers of his wardrobe to run and fetch one of his best suits for the Lord Marquis of Carabas.

The king received him very courteously. And, because the king's fine clothes gave him a striking appearance (for he was very handsome and well proportioned), the king's daughter took a secret inclination to him. The Marquis of Carabas had only to cast two or three respectful and somewhat tender glances at her but she fell head over heels in love with him. The king asked him to enter the coach and join them on their drive.

The cat, quite overjoyed to see how his project was succeeding, ran on ahead. Meeting some countrymen who were mowing a meadow, he said to them, "My good fellows, if you do not tell the king that the meadow you are mowing belongs to my Lord Marquis of Carabas, you shall be chopped up like mincemeat."

The king did not fail to ask the mowers whose meadow it was that they were mowing.

"It belongs to my Lord Marquis of Carabas," they answered altogether, for the cat's threats had frightened them.

"You see, sir," said the Marquis, "this is a meadow which never fails to yield a plentiful harvest every year."

The master cat, still running on ahead, met with some reapers, and said to them, "My good fellows, if you do not tell the king that all this grain belongs to the Marquis of Carabas, you shall be chopped up like mincemeat."

The king, who passed by a moment later, asked them whose grain it was that they were reaping.

"It belongs to my Lord Marquis of Carabas," replied the reapers, which pleased both the king and the marquis. The king congratulated him for his fine harvest. The master cat continued to run ahead and said the same words to all he met. The king was astonished at the vast estates of the Lord Marquis of Carabas.

The master cat came at last to a stately castle, the lord of which was an ogre, the richest that had ever been known. All the lands which the king had just passed by belonged to this castle. The cat, who had taken care to inform himself who this ogre was and what he could do, asked to speak with him, saying he could not pass so near his castle without having the honor of paying his respects to him.

The ogre received him as civilly as an ogre could do, and invited him to sit down. "I have heard," said the cat, "that you are able to change yourself into any kind of creature that you have a mind to. You can, for example, transform yourself into a lion, an elephant, or the like."

"That is true," answered the ogre very briskly; "and to convince you, I shall now become a lion."

The cat was so terrified at the sight of a lion so near him that he leaped onto the roof, which caused him even more difficulty, because his boots were of no use at all to him in walking on the tiles. However, the ogre resumed his natural form, and the cat came down, saying that he had been very frightened indeed.

"I have further been told," said the cat, "that you can also transform yourself into the smallest of animals, for example, a rat or a mouse. But I can scarcely believe that. I must admit to you that I think that that would be quite impossible."

"Impossible!" cried the ogre. "You shall see!"

He immediately changed himself into a mouse and began to run about the floor. As soon as the cat saw this, he fell upon him and ate him up.

Meanwhile the king, who saw this fine castle of the ogre's as he passed, decided to go inside. The cat, who heard the noise of his majesty's coach running over the drawbridge, ran out and said to the king, "Your majesty is welcome to this castle of my Lord Marquis of Carabas."

"What! my Lord Marquis," cried the king, "and does this castle also belong to you? There can be nothing finer than this court and all the stately buildings which surround it. Let us go inside, if you don't mind."

The marquis gave his hand to the princess, and followed the king, who went first. They passed into a spacious hall, where they found a magnificent feast, which the ogre had prepared for his friends, who were coming to visit him that very day, but dared not to enter, knowing the king was there.

His majesty was perfectly charmed with the good qualities of my Lord Marquis of Carabas, as was his daughter, who had fallen violently in love with him, and, seeing the vast estate he pos-

sessed, said to him, after having drunk five or six glasses, "It will be your own fault, my Lord Marquis, if you do not become my son-in-law."

The marquis, making several low bows, accepted the honor which his majesty conferred upon him, and forthwith, that very same day, married the princess. The cat became a great lord, and never again ran after mice, except for entertainment.

Analysis of "Puss in Boots"

Of all the tales of fairies collected by the brothers Grimm, none shows such a close relationship between a human and a fairy-like creature as **"Puss in Boots" does. It is clear from the story that Puss is no ordinary cat, although Briggs does assert that cats were a form of fairy in their own right having a fairy court and their own set of magical powers. Still, it is rare for a cat to be so closely involved with human affairs. According to Jacob Grimm, Puss shares many of the features that a household fairy would have. He asks for boots, a symbol of his status as a fairy creature. Grimm asserts that it is often such boots that separate ordinary beings from fairies. What's interesting in this as it relates to the story, however, is that these are not special boots. They were not given to Puss by some fairy princess or ancient god. Instead, they were given to him by a poor boy. So if it is as Grimm asserts that these boots are, in fact, boots that provide Puss with his status and with power, we must conclude that humans can in fact give gifts to fairies which in turn become powerful because of the act of offering.**

In return for the gift of the boots, and because of the love he held for the father of the poor boy **in this story, Puss develops a complex plot to make "his master" wealthy. Puss plans and works towards putting his master in good favor with the king over the course of months. This is not just an effort to make his master wealthy, for he could have tricked and killed the ogre at any point in order to provide his master with treasure. Puss is working to have his master marry the princess knowing the two would like each other. Puss then is more than simply a bystander; he is a true weaver of fate. We must wonder why? Why does he offer to help a boy who at the beginning of this story has threatened to eat him and wear his fur? Is Puss truly owned despite his apparently being some form of fairy who is able to speak? Does this ownership in turn mean that he can't escape, or does his loyalty go deeper than this?**

Generally, household fairies come in two forms; those who are related to those they help, and those who are forced from their home in the wilderness because of a poor relationship with the other fairies or who choose to live among humans for some other reason. The latter tend to leave homes quickly at the slightest insult so it seems unlikely that Puss could be one of these because Puss stayed even after the boy threatened to eat him - unless he took some oath to **the boy's parents. Further the boy does not know that Puss is magical or he wouldn't have threatened to eat him. If Puss had given an oath, he would have known what he was unless his parents chose to keep their arrangement from the boy, or unless Puss swore his loyalty in secret because he was taken in by the boy's parents; in which case they, like the boy, may never have known the "cat's" nature. Still, it seems more likely that Puss's concern comes from the fact that he is an ancestral spirit, a family deity.**

Turning our attention now to the ogre, we must first recall Jacob Grimm's assertion that ogres were remnants of Medieval and Roman beliefs in Orcus, a deity or at times also the dark and cruel aspect of the ruler of the afterlife who was lowered to the status of a shape-changing monster. It's interesting to note

that this ancient deity could live in a palace among humans and with human servants as though he were nothing more than another noble. Even more interesting to realize is that this same deity could fall prey to the deceit of a house fairy. Such ogres and hags were, of course, common in folklore as ancient deities peppered the land, terrifying and or ruling the remnants of the people who had once worshiped them. Such beings, while clearly magically and physically superior to humans, were more susceptible to arrogance much like we might imagine a faded sports star or some other person who has long since passed their prime would be. The fact that so many fairies who are supposed to be ancient and powerful fall prey to stupid tricks in fairy tales may not be a result of people believing that these creatures were stupid. Rather, it may simply be that people believed that they are unable to admit that they had truly faded. In this sense, then, these ancient deities had grown senile in their old age by the time fairy tales were told to the Brothers Grimm.

The Spindle, The Shuttle, and the Needle

There was once a girl whose father and mother died while she was still a little child. All alone, in a small house at the end of the village, dwelt her godmother, who supported herself by spinning, weaving, and sewing. The old woman took the forlorn child to live with her, kept her to her work, and educated her in all that is good. When the girl was fifteen years old, the old woman became ill, called the child to her bedside, and said, "Dear daughter, I feel my end drawing near. I leave thee the little house, which will protect thee from wind and weather, and my spindle, shuttle, and needle, with which thou canst earn thy bread." Then she laid her hands on the girl's head, blessed her, and said, "Only preserve the love of God in thy heart, and all will go well with thee." Thereupon she closed her eyes, and when she was laid in the earth, the maiden followed the coffin, weeping bitterly, and paid her the last mark of respect. And now the maiden lived quite alone in the little house, and was industrious, and spun, wove, and sewed, and the blessing of the good old woman was on all that she did. It seemed as if the flax in the room increased of its own accord, and whenever she wove a piece of cloth or carpet, or had made a shirt, she at once found a buyer who paid her amply for it, so that she was in want of nothing, and even had something to share with others.

About this time, the son of the King was travelling about the country looking for a bride. He was not to choose a poor one, and did not want to have a rich one. So he said, "She shall be my wife who is the poorest, and at the same time the richest." When he came to the village where the maiden dwelt, he inquired, as he did wherever he went, who was the richest and also the poorest girl in the place? They first named the richest; the poorest, they said, was the

girl who lived in the small house quite at the end of the village. The rich girl was sitting in all her splendour before the door of her house, and when the prince approached her, she got up, went to meet him, and made him a low curtsy. He looked at her, said nothing, and rode on. When he came to the house of the poor girl, she was not standing at the door, but sitting in her little room. He stopped his horse, and saw through the window, on which the bright sun was shining, the girl sitting at her spinning-wheel, busily spinning. She looked up, and when she saw that the prince was looking in, she blushed all over her face, let her eyes fall, and went on spinning. I do not know whether, just at that moment, the thread was quite even; but she went on spinning until the King's son had ridden away again. Then she went to the window, opened it, and said, "It is so warm in this room!" but she still looked after him as long as she could distinguish the white feathers in his hat. Then she sat down to work again in her own room and went on with her spinning, and a saying which the old woman had often repeated when she was sitting at her work, came into her mind, and she sang these words to herself,—

"Spindle, my spindle, haste, haste thee away,
And here to my house bring the wooer, I pray."

And what do you think happened? The spindle sprang out of her hand in an instant, and out of the door, and when, in her astonishment, she got up and looked after it, she saw that it was dancing out merrily into the open country, and drawing a shining golden thread after it. Before long, it had entirely vanished from her sight. As she had now no spindle, the girl took the weaver's shuttle in her hand, sat down to her loom, and began to weave.

The spindle, however, danced continually onwards, and just as the thread came to an end, reached the prince. "What do I see?" he cried; "the spindle certainly wants to show me the way!" turned his horse about, and rode back with the golden thread. The girl was, however, sitting at her work singing,

"Shuttle, my shuttle, weave well this day,
And guide the wooer to me, I pray."

Immediately the shuttle sprang out of her hand and out by the door. Before the threshold, however, it began to weave a carpet which was more beautiful than the eyes of man had ever yet beheld. Lilies and roses blossomed on both sides of it, and on a golden ground in the centre green branches ascended, under which bounded hares and rabbits, stags and deer stretched their heads in between them, brightly-coloured birds were sitting in the branches above; they lacked nothing but the gift of song. The shuttle leapt hither and thither, and everything seemed to grow of its own accord.

As the shuttle had run away, the girl sat down to sew. She held the needle in her hand and sang,

"Needle, my needle, sharp-pointed and fine,
Prepare for a wooer this house of mine."

Then the needle leapt out of her fingers, and flew everywhere about the room as quick as lightning. It was just as if invisible spirits were working; they covered tables and benches with green cloth in an instant, and the chairs with velvet, and hung the windows with silken curtains. Hardly had the needle put in the last stitch than the maiden saw through the window the white feathers of the prince, whom the spindle had brought thither by the golden thread. He alighted, stepped over the carpet into the house, and when he entered the room, there stood the maiden in her poor garments, but she shone out from within them like a rose surrounded by leaves. "Thou art the poorest and also the richest," said he to her. "Come with me, thou shalt be my bride." She did not speak, but she gave him her hand. Then he gave her a kiss, led her forth, lifted her on to his horse, and took her to the royal castle, where the wedding was solemnized with great rejoicings. The spindle, shuttle, and needle were preserved in the treasure-chamber, and held in great honour.

Analysis of “The Spindle, the Shuttle, and the Needle”

Although this fairy tale is almost never analyzed or even mentioned, it is an extremely interesting and important fairy tale for two reasons. First, it's unique because while Asia and other parts of the world have stories which are filled with the souls of inanimate objects, this is one of the few fairy tales in the European tradition in which the spirit of an object takes an active role. Further, this story is unique because it's one of the few stories in which the spinner of fate, the one using magic to direct the action of the story, is the protagonist.

According to Jacob Grimm, spindles are one of the few objects in European folklore that are given names as if they had souls, as if they were living beings (one of the other objects is the sword). This in turn means they are one of the rare cases where the spirit within objects is acknowledged by the peoples of Europe, and this story helps to show why. “The Spindle, the Shuttle, and the Needle” of this story actively participates in helping to fulfill their owners' desires and in doing so they get rewarded by being honored as a great treasure by an entire kingdom.

The girl in the story is also interesting for her role as a spinner of fate. Recalling that it was believed to be through the craft of spinning and making clothing that spells can be cast. Even the ancient Germanic head of the deities, Wodin, works much of his magic in this way. So while on the surface this tale may simply appear to a modern reader to be advising girls to work hard, it may instead be a tale which advises them to be clever. A tale which advises girls to learn how to be able to utilize magic, to take fate into their own hands as Wodin and the girl in this tale do.

Perkiss asserts that fairies dwell within the women's domain for, although they seem to be away from the action, it is ultimately they who control it. It's because of this that Jacob Grimm asserts that women find greater status through the act of spinning than often men find from battle, and from this story it's not hard to see why. One can imagine that in the future, the protagonist of this tale will grow wiser and more powerful even as men her age grow frail. That eventually she will likely become one of the wise women, one of the norns who control everything even the fate of the deities. It's likely then that perhaps on death or even sometime before then she'll become a fairy. Someone who (The Golden Bough) asserts he is essentially a living god. In this we see perhaps why so many norns and fairies related to poor, hard-working girls who seek to marry princes for they were once ones themselves. This then is both a tale of a young girl taking power and a prelude to when she becomes a much-wiser norn.

