

SPELLONYMS IN MODERN ENGLISH FAIRY TALES AND THEIR ROLE IN DEFINING THE GENRE OF THE WORK

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Abstract

Spellonyms have aesthetic, ideological, and symbolic purposes in contemporary English fairy tales, and they also aid in defining the genre's traits. Through them, the work's genre is more clearly expressed, its spiritual notion is strengthened, and its content and significance are expanded. As a result, studying magical characters helps one comprehend the structure, genre affiliation, and semantic levels of a literary work better. Spellonyms are crucial for determining a text's genre.

Keywords: Magical characters, spiritual notions, spellonyms.

Introduction

In modern English fairy tales, spellonyms not only fulfill aesthetic, ideological, and symbolic functions, but also help define the genre characteristics of the work. Through them, the content and meaning of the piece are enriched, the spiritual idea is enhanced, and the genre of the work becomes more clearly expressed. Therefore, analyzing magical characters contributes to a deeper understanding of a literary work's structure, genre affiliation, and semantic layers. Spellonyms play an important role in identifying the genre of a text.

If magical figures take a central role in the narrative and the events occur between fantasy and reality, the work belongs to the fantasy or science fiction genre. If spellonym characters are integrated into real-world settings, the work is classified as magical realism. If magical plots are reconstructed and reinterpreted, then an epic novel or mythological novel genre is formed. Spellonyms often drive the character's transformation or development. Positive magical figures gain new opportunities through supernatural powers, undergo trials, or achieve their goals.

Two-part and multi-part spellonyms include phrases consisting of a name and an additional descriptive element, which often evokes a clear mental image in the reader. For example:

- Gandalf the Grey – "Grey" reveals his character traits.
- White Witch – "White" is associated with power, coldness, and evil.

Words associated with magical powers or beings often carry multifaceted meanings. They are frequently used to escape evil, to help people, or to overcome challenges. For example, in the fairy tale of Queen Mab, the character is rooted in folklore and appears as a being associated with night dreams. She is depicted as a negative character capable of influencing dreams and manipulating people through deception. Queen Mab is marked by cunning, mysterious abilities, and sometimes malice. She possesses a magical and powerful nature, and her popularity dates back to the 16th century.

In William Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" (1597), Queen Mab is mentioned in Mercutio's monologue. In this passage, Queen Mab is described as someone who reveals dreams to people in their sleep. Mab is portrayed as a tiny, mischievous magical figure who rides a small chariot made of insects and shows people their dreams.

Mercutio's Monologue: Act 1, Scene 4. The monologue begins with the phrase: "O, then I see Queen Mab hath been with you."

This typically appears on pages 31–32 of standard editions of the play.

In Michael Drummond's novel "Mab, Queen of Shadows" (1997), Queen Mab is portrayed as a terrifying figure. The exact page numbers may vary by edition, but the core plot generally begins around Chapter 10, covering the middle part of the book.

In Percy Bysshe Shelley's poem "Queen Mab" (1813), Queen Mab is depicted as a spirit who reveals the possibilities of the future to a human. She is shown as more benevolent, striving to improve the world through philosophical reflection and revolutionary ideas.

Merlin – Also known as *Wizard Merlin* or *Warlock Merlin*, is one of the most famous characters in Arthurian mythology. His image has developed over centuries and across various literary works.

In *Geoffrey of Monmouth's* "The History of the Kings of Britain" (*Historia Regum Britanniae*, 1136), Merlin is introduced for the first time as the king's advisor. This work is considered one of the first and most influential sources in the creation of the Merlin legend. In this book, Merlin predicts the future and helps King Arthur. He also serves as an advisor and mentor to kings such as *Ambrosius Aurelianus*, *Uther Pendragon*, and later *King Arthur*. His wisdom and magical abilities help establish just rule and protect the kingdom. A key episode is his prediction of Arthur's birth and his role in facilitating it. Merlin helps *Uther Pendragon* change his appearance so that he can meet *Igraine*, the wife of *Duke Gorlois*. This encounter leads to the birth of the future King Arthur. (Pages 160–180)

In *Mary Stewart's* "The Crystal Cave" (1970), the first book in the Merlin Trilogy, Stewart describes Merlin's early life and how he became a great wizard. This version focuses on Merlin's human side, his internal struggles, and his development as both a person and a magician.[3, 165]

Merlin is a multifaceted character who plays a vital role in the Arthurian legends. His persona combines elements of magic, wisdom, and prophecy, making him one of the most meaningful and memorable figures in literature and culture.

Example Spellonyms in Literature

Spellonym	Origin	Role	Notes
Merlin	Welsh/Celtic	Wizard	Arthurian legend
Morgana	Arthurian	Sorceress, Antagonist	Sister/enemy of Arthur
Queen Mab	Celtic folklore	Dream Fairy, Trickster	Referenced in Shakespeare
Gandalf	Tolkien (Old Norse)	Wizard, Mentor	From <i>The Lord of the Rings</i>
White Witch	C.S. Lewis	Villain	From <i>The Chronicles of Narnia</i>
Prospero	Shakespeare	Magician, Hero	From <i>The Tempest</i>

To conclude spellonyms are more than just names; they are narrative devices, symbolic markers, and cultural artifacts. Studying them reveals the deep interconnection between language, myth, cultural history, and literary imagination.

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