



**HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS**

**Hugvísindasvið**

***Comparison of Settings in Which Fairy  
People Dwell or Appear in English Literary  
and Folk Traditions***

**Ritgerð til B.A.-prófs**

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**Janúar 2011**

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## Abstract

The purpose of the essay is to examine to what degree settings in which fairy people dwell or appear in English literary and folk traditions are similar and whether the portrayal of the environment which these beings inhabit coincides in literary works and legends. Due to this reason, settings in which the beings make themselves visible will be considered in W. Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* and J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. The examples from the play and the novel will expose the diversity of settings and the creatures which appear in them. The settings will be analysed from the point of view of its imagery. As legends are closely connected with folk beliefs there will be paid attention to typical locations in which fairy people remain in English folk belief. There will be made references to prominent folklorists who have contributed to the study of oral lore in England. Typical representatives of fairy people will be considered and there will be made references to their characteristics in English folk belief. Simultaneously, it will be explained why the focus in the analysis will be on trooping fairies.

As legends belong to oral narratives their main distinctive features will be perused. There will be outlined what kind of events the narratives reflect. After that the settings which we have in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Lord of the Rings* will be compared with the ones that the legends describe. The following legends have been selected for the analysis: *The Legend of St Collen*, *Child Rowland*, *The Fairy Cup*, *King Herla*, *Goblin Combe*, *Cherry of Zennor*, *Anne Jefferies* and *Dwelling on Selena Moor*. The legends have diverse settings which, to certain extent, coincide with the locations in which fairy beings dwell and appear in English folk belief. In the conclusion it will be regarded to what degree the comparison supports the thesis of the essay.

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