

English 362 – 5 Fairy Tales Research Assignment

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Gold, Black, and Colour in Victorian Fairy Tales

Each of these selected texts is demonstrative of a specific artistic or stylistic technique that I find to be intriguing. The use of gold in illustrations, black and white, and colour images each represent the three aspects I wish to focus my selection of images around. I have selected these tales for my personal collection as they offer a comprehensive insight into illustrated story telling. I would choose the following five tales for my personal collection because of their diverse artistic qualities.

Christina Rossetti's *Poems* boasts a strong collection of illustrations that have captivated my attention because of its ability to utilize gold to explore religious and imprint heaven on its pages. The delicate gold detailing across the angelic figure evokes Eden-like natural beauty. This is accentuated by the white canvas on which it is presented as it creates an impactful compliment to the gold image. Furthermore, the elongated, flowing feathers and hair of the angel grant an ethereal and weightless quality to the angel as they catch the light. These image compositions that encapsulate themes of nature, divinity, and humanity through image are explored through the coalescence of both text and image throughout the following pages. This text interests me because it utilizes reflective gold images to accentuate the heavenly, spiritual qualities of the text and elevate the following intertextual imagery into an expression of divinity on earth and penitent reflection.

Similarly, Mrs. Burden's *Little Poems for Little People* is demonstrative of gold imagery which brings warmth to the image of children at play encapsulated in gold detailing. While Rossetti uses reflective gold, Burden's text presents a muted, matte gold on its cover. The cover illustration depicts an idyllic scene of a mother and her children reading together in a garden surrounded by vibrant flowers. This light, peaceful imagery creates a tone of love and happiness that many of the following poems present. The accents of blue flowers on the cover add an element of peace and calm to the abundant gold imagery that compose the majority of the cover. This image offers a more tangible, earthly use of gold to compliment the heavenly aspects of Rossetti's text. Together, the two texts are appealing because they use gold to give prominence to their textual themes.

Conversely, Francis Edward Paget's *Tales for the Village Children* and Charles Dicken's *The Old Curiosity Shop and Other Tales* utilize exclusively black and white illustrations to accompany their texts. Paget's illustrations are often landscape images with delicate, precise lines to create images with incredible depth. For example, the image titled "The Singers" on page four depicts a landscape image of a church with an excellent use of composition and landscape. Additional images such as the title illustration for "The Wake" utilize the same techniques of shading to illustrate the reflective sheen of the water and the intricacy of the leaves. Similarly, Charles Dickens' *Old Curiosity Shop* boasts intricate lines and shading to create equal depth and composition in his images. The immaculate textures that this text is able to create with its images distinguish it among the other five. The illustration on page sixteen is demonstrative of the technical proficiency of the illustrator uses to create almost tangible textures with a single colour. From the beards of the figures, to the wood of the walls and barrel, to the leaves in the crowns this illustration seems to come to life on the page. The title illustration for "Master Humphrey's

Clock” uses techniques of linear symmetry in the linework to construct a deep-set and detailed setting for the opening of the text. I enjoy these texts and their images because they use exceptional fine detail to bring their images to life.

Unlike the previous discussion of black and white illustrations in fairy tales, Lafcadio Hearn’s *Japanese Fairy Tales* offers exquisite and rich colour to animate his collection of tales. The incredible volume of colour and detail that composes some of the images is astonishing. For example, the tale “The Fountain of Youth” has an image of an axe on the back cover. This illustration uses brilliant colour aesthetics to capture the artistic tone of the story. The tale’s palette is muted, focusing on blues, greys, and browns to accentuate the nature-centered, humble tone of the text’s characters. Even though they fall victim to greed and overzealous behaviour, they are still elegantly depicted in the composition of the text to depict their interactions with the natural world. Conversely, the tale “Chin Chin Kobakama” presents an image with incredible, lush colours and fine details that contribute to the text’s commentary on affluence and greed. The illustration of the girl being dressed by her servants is brilliant. The illustration of the brilliant kimono dress uses extravagant colours, and blends between them, as well as the most miniscule of details to execute an opulent image of visible wealth. In summary, the tale’s use of colour is nothing short of phenomenal and would make an excellent addition to my collection.

Each of the aforementioned texts is beautiful and complex in their own unique way. Everything from construction of individual pages to the actual text and narrative that they present formulate a charming reading experience. Especially worthy of note is the experience of holding the pages of the texts in your hand and being able to appreciate the texture of the images up close. All five of these tales would be my first choices for my own personal fairy tale collection.

Works Cited

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CHRISTINA
ROSSETTI.
POEMS.

ILLUSTRATED
BY

FLORENCE
HARRISON.



LITTLE POEMS
FOR LITTLE PEOPLE

by
UNCLE TOM.



DEAN & SONS

TALES OF

GOODNESS
TRUTH AND KINDNESS
FOR THE

CHILDREN OF

ENGLAND

SIBERCE

DEAN & SON, THREADNEEDLE STREET.

wine; for the younger Giant, clapping his huge hand upon it, and throwing up his mighty leg, burst into an exulting laugh, which reverberated through the hall like thunder.

Joe Toddyhigh instinctively stooped down, and, more dead than alive, felt his hair stand on end, his knees knock together, and a cold damp break out upon his fore-

head. But even at that minute curiosity prevailed over every other feeling, and somewhat reassured by the good-humour of the Giants and their apparent unconsciousness of his presence, he crouched in a corner of the gallery, in as small a space as he could, and peeping between the rails, observed them closely.

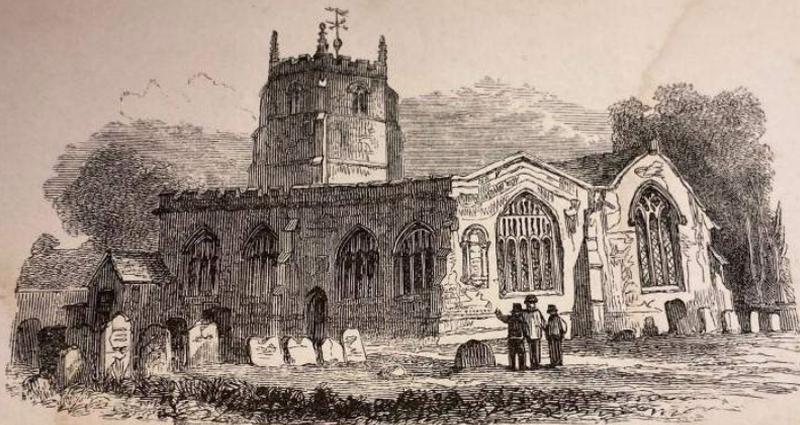


FIRST NIGHT OF THE GIANT CHRONICLES.

TURNING towards his companion, the elder Giant uttered these words in a grave majestic tone:—

“Magog, does boisterous mirth
the Giant M...

lence, cruelty and horror, has been familiar as breath to mortals—in whose sight Time has gathered in the harvest of centuries and garnered so many crops of human pride, affections...



THE SINGERS.

fond of the little girl, and did everything for her
which she ought to have been able to do for herself.
Perhaps this was what made her so lazy. When
she grew up into a beautiful woman, she still
remained lazy; but as the servants always dressed
and undressed her,

