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Marilyn Pemberton (ed.), *Enchanted Ideologies: A Collection of Rediscovered Nineteenth-Century Moral Tales*

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REFERENCES

Marilyn Pemberton (ed.), *Enchanted Ideologies: A Collection of Rediscovered Nineteenth-Century Moral Tales* (Lambertville: The True Bill Press, 2009), 307 p, ISBN 978-0-9791116-5-5

- 1 Marilyn Pemberton's anthology is a collection of twenty-one nineteenth-century "literary fairy tales" with annotations and an introductory essay. If many of the writers remain unidentified, the collection contains tales by the most famous fairy-tale writers and children's writers of the second half of the nineteenth-century (Edith Nesbit, Mary Sherwood, Dinah Mulock Craik, Mary de Morgan, Evelyn Sharp, Mary Louisa Molesworth), and even by collectors and folklorists, such as Sabine Baring-Gould. The tales, selected from both women's and children's magazines, from *La Belle Assemblée* (1806–32), *The Ladies' Cabinet of Fashion, Music and Romance* (1832–52), *The World of Fashion* (1824–79) to *Aunt Judy's Magazine*, edited by Margaret Gatty and her daughter, Juliana Horatia Ewing, after her mother's death, were all aimed at women readers (albeit certainly not of the same age).
- 2 In her introductory essay, Pemberton tries to contextualize the "moral fairy tale" as a kind of subgenre of the literary fairy tale and of children's literature. The essay, which blends a short history of the development of children's literature with that of the literary fairy tale makes it hard for the reader to understand what the "tales" included in the collection really are. As Pemberton argues, literary fairy tales constantly mirrored their society, even sometimes pushing for the need for change or reform though at the same time playing a part in children's "socialization". Drawing first on

Jack Zipes's view of the literary fairy tale, Pemberton mentions several scholars or scholarly approaches to the fairy tale (from structuralist to psychoanalytical) in a confusing way, contending that the adaptation of fairy tales throughout the ages aimed to "accommodate the changing functions of the family and associated perceptions of good practices of child-rearing and education" (11). She arguably sees the literary fairy tale as originating from the "oral folk tales told at all levels of principally adult society from the birth of civilization onwards" (11). She then traces the beginning of children's literature in the eighteenth century and compares Rousseauist views of gender roles to the French salon fairy tales (Perrault's tale appears as the *Petit Chapeau en rouge* [sic]), thus drawing links between the classic fairy tales and eighteenth-century British didactic literature for children by Hannah More or Maria Edgeworth. However, Pemberton explains, even if fairy tales were kept out of the nursery by such evangelical writers who set up and emphasized moral standards (as Sarah Trimmer's or Anna Laetitia Barbauld's writings also typify, aiming to keep "the child reader on a very straight and narrow road to salvation" [26]), at the end of the eighteenth century, fairy tales continued to be printed: they were adapted to suit the demands of children's literature and advocate "piety, diligence, honesty, frugality and self-sacrifice" (27). This, Pemberton argues, paved the way for the creation of a subgenre of children's literature: the "moral fairy tale".

- 3 Pemberton then looks at the evolution of fairy tales in the nineteenth century, the development of industrial England and the explosion of capitalism, most especially after 1850, and explains how new social values and realities informed literature. The period saw the emergence of women's magazines from which many of the tales in the collection are taken. The home was then "at the height of idealization" (35), giving the nursery a significant part to play in the shaping of female identity. Pemberton's collection of "moral fairy tales" thus reveals how the middle classes were in search of identity, especially in the last decades of the nineteenth century when the woman question became a key issue and woman's changing role started being reflected in narratives highlighting women's new independence.
- 4 Unlike earlier anthologies of Victorian fairy tales, such as the feminist anthologies of Jack Zipes (*Victorian Fairy Tales: The Revolt of the Fairies and Elves* [1987]) and Nina Auerbach and U.C. Knoepfelmacher (*Forbidden Journeys: Fairy Tales and Fantasies by Victorian Women Writers* [1992]), or Michael Patrick Hearn's *The Victorian Fairy-Tale Book* (1988), Pemberton's anthology is hard to frame. While some of the tales were published in the first decades of the nineteenth century, two thirds of them appeared in the last decades of the nineteenth century, making it hard for the reader to understand if the editor meant to highlight their evolution throughout the century. The reading is made even more problematic because the presentation of the "moral fairy tales" seems completely arbitrary (it is neither chronological nor thematic) making it almost impossible to understand what really unites these tales and these authors. Moreover, the names of the writers do not appear in the table of contents, and the biographical notes on some of the writers at the end of the book do not add much to what is already in other fairy-tale anthologies: they are "the bare bones only" (289), as Pemberton contends, making us wonder as to their usefulness, considering that many of the writers of the tales in the collection remain anonymous. However, the collection might be useful for making accessible tales that would otherwise have remained unknown to Victorian scholars.

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Keywords: Victorian fairy tales, children's literature, children's magazines, women's magazines

Mots-clés: littérature pour enfants, magazines pour enfants, magazines féminins

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