



Oscar Wilde's Fairy Tales: Origins and Contexts

Anne Markey

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Now available in paperback, this book offers an innovative reevaluation of Oscar Wilde's two collections of fairy tales, *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* (1888) and *A House of Pomegranates* (1891). Providing a comprehensive account of Wilde's familiarity with Irish folklore, this study challenges the prevailing consensus that the stories draw heavily on such material. By emphasizing Wilde's own stated views on the subject - and so contesting the assumption that he simply shared the well-documented interests of his parents, Sir William Wilde and Lady Jane Wilde ('Speranza') - the book relocates the stories within a variety of literary, cultural, and narrative traditions, both Irish and European. Acknowledging Wilde's often ambivalent and ambiguous statements about his Irish national identity, *Oscar Wilde's Fairy Tales: Origins and Contexts* offers a more nuanced understanding of the importance of Ireland to Wilde's art. The detailed readings of the fairy tales show that despite the stories' continuing appeal to children, Oscar Wilde intended his fairy tales for a predominantly adult audience. The book also demonstrates the ways in which, despite their eerie and disturbing content, these fairy tales reaffirmed conservative values. *** This superb analysis...presents a new and persuasive reading of Wilde's fairy tales...Highly recommended. -- Choice *** A neglected aspect of Wilde's oeuvre comes more clearly into focus in Anne Markey's useful study.... -- SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900, The Nineteenth Century [Subject: Literary Criticism, Irish Studies]

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