

⁴Il va sans dire que la distinction n'est pas toujours absolument claire, et il a fallu trancher certains cas par un jugement personnel, favorable d'ailleurs à la définition de "fantaisie" qui accepte tout ce qui n'est pas nettement réaliste, basé sur le quotidien, sans aucun décor imaginaire ou symbolique.

⁵En feuilletant les pages de ce numéro même de *CCL*, sans prétendre à un examen scientifique, on peut noter un phénomène semblable. Les oeuvres de fantaisie tombent dans la catégorie conte de fées à décor celte, plus fréquent en littérature anglo-canadienne (la magie, les sorciers, l'île enchantée, les princesses et leurs dragons, les géants et les monstres — mais canadiens, quand même, car il s'agit du sasquatch — et ainsi de suite) et le monde animiste où l'on trouve parmi autres les animaux stéréotypes: grenouille, souris, chat, poule — et un serpent. Et souvent ce sont des personnages qui souffrent d'une difficulté à vaincre avant la fin heureuse: analphabétisme, un dragon sans feu, un train perdu, un oiseau qui a peur de voler.

⁶*op. cit.*, 7.

⁷Jean Piaget, *Six Psychological Studies*, Random House 1967.

⁸Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, Vintage 1977.

⁹Certains ont cependant constaté une distinction de classe sociale dans la réaction des enfants: ceux de milieux favorisés, exposés aux livres à la maison, préfèrent l'imaginaire pour commencer; ceux qui sortent de milieux défavorisés semblent mal saisir l'imaginaire et préfèrent le réalisme quotidien. Voir Fontannez-Howard, *op. cit.*

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Crawford's Fairy Tales

CATHERINE SHELDRIK ROSS

Fairy Tales of Isabella Valancy Crawford, edited by Penny Petrone. Illus. by Susan Ross. Borealis Press, 1977. 85 pp. \$9.95 paper.

When Crawford died in 1887, her literary executor John Garvin acquired a trunkful of her handwritten manuscripts. He eventually edited the *Collected Poems* (1905) but by his death still had done nothing with the fairy tales, short stories, and full length romances. These manuscripts passed into the Lorne Pierce collection where they are presently held, in the Douglas Library at Queen's University. Now Penny Petrone's edition of six of the fairy tales, which supplements her earlier *Selected Stories of Isabella Valancy Crawford*, University of Ottawa Press, comes as a welcome contribution to the necessary job of getting the Crawford manuscripts into print.

The six tales represented here create an imaginary "other" world where a wicked waterbeetle abducts a fairy ("The Waterlily"), a rose converses with a swallow, a butterfly, and an owl ("The Rose and the Rainbow"), a usurping uncle transforms a prince into a butterfly ("Prince Papillon, or the Charitable Violet"), a real and an imitation rose vie with each other ("The Rival Roses"), a mischievous elf uses flattery to bamboozle a pompous old owl of his promised bride ("The Vain Owl and the Elf"), and mermaids rescue a golden-haired girl from a shipwreck and carry her off to an enchanted island ("Wava, The Fairy of the Shell").

The two tales that are least like fairy tales both have a moral. In "The Rose and the Rainbow", the rose, hearing how each of three different creatures frames paradise in his own image, remarks sagely, "It seems to me that in this world everyone sees with his own heart and wishes, and is all the world to himself." At the end of "The Rival Roses", the moral addressed to the "Little reader", is in rhyming couplets: "don't be *envious* whatever you do,/It can't take from your rival, and won't add to you."

More interesting are those tales in which the fairy world has its own autonomous existence, remote from our everyday world though connected to it, in "The Waterlily" and "Wava", by human protagonists. In "Wava", Crawford creates a romance world that seems to show some influence of *The Tempest* and perhaps of *Pericles*. This tale is set on the miniature enchanted island and includes a vicious shark, a storm at sea, a shipwreck, a golden-haired girl, and a helpful bird with "snowy plumage and brilliant eyes". The mermaids, who have rescued Goldie from the "all-devouring sea", sing to Queen Wava: "Take the waif and love her well/. . . See her mem'ry goes not back/To the dull and mortal track/She so far hath trod." But, like other mortals who have found themselves guests in the fairy world, Goldie is unable to forget her human nature, and the tale ends with her departure from the magic island and safe return home.

There are two potential markets for the *Fairy Tales of Isabella Valancy Crawford* – adolescent and adult readers who enjoy fairy tales, and readers interested in the Canadian literary tradition and in Crawford's place in that tradition. The book's large format and big type, the inclusion of numerous attractive black and white illustrations by Susan Ross, the many

instances of editorial emendations of the original text, and the omission of any biographical, bibliographical, or textual information (why is there no editor's introduction to tell the reader who Crawford is and where these stories came from?) – all these suggest that the publishers had the young audience primarily in mind.

This, I think, is a pity. Not because young children would find nothing to please them in these stories, for they would. But Crawford herself obviously was writing for older readers who could enjoy such descriptions as the following one of an enchanted lake discovered by two children Maggie and Tommie:

As the mild moonlight replaced the dazzling glow of sunset, Margaret pointed out to her companion a large white waterlily which had before escaped their dazzled sight. It lay too far out in the lake to be seized by the child's eager hand, and she regarded it with a sigh of admiration and disappointment. It was as white as the driven snow, and a pure light seemed to emanate from its petals which were half-closed and emitted a faint, aromatic [an aromatic though faint] fragrance. As they stood regarding the unearthly [weird] beauty of the flower, a strain of melody, sweeter than mortal music, appeared to rise from its very heart, while its leaves quivered and shone more brightly than before.

The words in square brackets are Crawford's. The editor, however, has taken considerable liberties with the original text here and in the other tales. Some changes – for example, Petrone's substituting "elaborate praises" for "encomiums" and her practice of dividing long sentences into two shorter ones – simplify the text for young readers. Other changes, such as the omission of words, phrases, and occasionally sentences, seem to be transcription errors and suggest editorial haste. I don't think that even the deliberate changes will appreciably help the younger reader, but they do diminish the book's usefulness to the scholar who wants an accurate edition of Crawford's text and would expect, at the very least, to be warned of the extent of the editorial emendations.

One omission in particular seems regrettable. In "The Waterlily", in the climactic scene where Maggie's kiss breaks the malignant spell keeping the abducted fairy locked in the waterlily, this sentence gets left out: "As the boat touched the shore Maggie and Tommie jumped out, and Maggie gently kissed the white petals of the lily". Earlier in the story the waterspirits have sung:

On the lake the lily lies
Glimmering in the silver ray,
In its bosom pearly-white
Sad and tearful dwells the fay! [emended by Petrone to fairy]
Sprite nor fay, nor elfin band
E'er can break the potent spell
Yet an earthborn child has power.
This is all that we may tell.

Maggie's kiss that breaks this "potent spell" is the earliest example we have of Crawford's recurrent theme of the power of love to conquer darkness (the manuscript is signed "I V C/18/North Douro") and in the structure of the story itself is the necessary event that precedes this stunning description of the lily as a kind of sacred lotus:

In a second, a great and wonderful light shone round them, and a burst of harmony made the very air tremble. The petals of the lily slowly opened, and a creature no larger than a moth, but of the most exquisite beauty, unfolded her large, rose-colored wings and rose from a golden couch in the centre of the flower.

Some readers may find the stories rather too delicate and too little supplied with robust sex and violence: evil forces — the waterbeetle who abducts the fairy and the shark who wants to gobble up Wava — never seem a serious threat and are speedily defeated. The \$9.95 price tag may well deter buyers. Nevertheless the *Fairy Tales of Isabella Valancy Crawford* cannot fail to engage serious attention as the contribution of the young Crawford to the genre of the art fairy tale, a genre but rarely cultivated in nineteenth century Canada.

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Fantasy, An Extension of Reality

JO CHURCHER

The House Mouse, Dorothy Joan Harris. Illus. by Barbara Cooney. New York: Frederick Warne & Co., 1973. 48pp. \$3.95 hard cover.

The School Mouse, Dorothy Joan Harris. Illus. by Chris Conover. New York: Frederick Warne & Co., 1977. 30pp. \$7.95 hard cover.

These little books are designed for children from four to eight years old. Because they are the first two of a series, it is unfortunate that they appear