



The Victorian Press and the Fairy Tale (Palgrave Studies in Nineteenth-Century Writing and Culture)

Caroline E. Sumpter

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Shortlisted for the 2011 Mythopoeic Scholarship Award for Myth and Fantasy Studies

Victorian writers often claimed that the press was killing the fairy tale. In fact, it ensured the genre's popularity, bringing literary tales and folklore to the first mass readerships. Exploring penny weeklies, adult and children's monthlies, little magazines and the labour press, this innovative study is the first to combine media and fairy tale history. Bringing reading communities back into focus, Sumpter explores ingenious political uses of the fairy tale: in debates over socialism, evolution and race, and in the context of women's rights, decadence and gay culture. The book offers new insights into the popularisation of folklore and comparative science, and also recovers neglected visual material. From the fantasies of Kingsley, MacDonald and J. H. Ewing to the writings of Keir Hardie, Laurence Housman and Yeats, Sumpter reveals that the fairy tale was intimately shaped by the press, and that both were at the heart of nineteenth-century culture.

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