

Oscar Wilde and the Cultures of Childhood edited by Joseph Bristow. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. vii, 245 pp., 18 b/w illus. ISBN 978-3-319-60410-7. \$119.99.

Joseph Bristow's collection *Oscar Wilde and the Cultures of Childhood* provides some exciting new insights into Wilde's fairy tale writings. The illustrations and photographs that accompany the volume are a wonderful addition to the chapters, serving to reinforce visually Wilde's wide influence on Laurence Housman, Evelyn Sharp, the culture of photography in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and visual adaptations of his fairy tales. This fascinating collection explores Wilde in the context of a number of different and varied topics: photography, aestheticism as a family culture, materialist aesthetics, dress and the decoration of characters, and the adaptation of Wilde's works as picture books or graphic novels for young audiences. All of these essays set out to analyze Wilde in relation to the "cultures of childhood."

Therein lies my one major quibble with this otherwise excellent collection. Children's cultures generally refer to children's cultural artefacts, children's media and literature, and the myths and discourses that surround the concept of childhood itself. Even more importantly, within the field of Children's Studies, an analysis of the cultures of childhood should take a child-focussed approach to such texts, and by that I mean an outlook that privileges the lived experiences of young people who engaged with or who engage now with Wilde's *oeuvre*. In general, however, with the exception of Perry Nodelman's article, most of the chapters in this collection approach Wilde's fairy tales from an adult-centred perspective, detailing what Wilde and/or then-contemporary critics imagined "children" as being. Indeed, the "child" as cultural construction per se is as elusive in this collection as is the idea of "children's cultures." For example, Lindsay Smith's chapter "Play [ing] Narcissus to a Photograph: Oscar Wilde and the Image of the Child" explores Wilde's fascination with the medium of photography and the pleasures he took in taking pictures and portraits of beautiful youths whom he befriended while in Italy during his final years. Smith isolates the transformation of the male child or youth into an image, a transformation that occurs thematically in the four tales in the *House of Pomegranates*, as one that also generates images of a child for an adult reader. "The tales impel their reader to *look at the child*," Smith claims. This analysis of the shaping of the "child" for a photograph, and the larger process of "looking at" this child both in photographs and in literature, points to the collection's general exploration of the constructions of childhood (Western, white, middle-class, etc.) deployed *by* adults *about* young people as opposed to the lived experiences of