The Disruption Of Fairyland:
"Fairies Had Never Known How To Cry Until Then"

Anita Callaway

In the opening paragraph of "Serana: The Bush Fairy" (1926), Grenbry Outhwaite describes how:

> Man came with his axe and his gun, and began to frighten away the wild animals, trample out the wildflowers, and cut down the sheltering trees. Fairies had never known how to cry until then, but when that happened, the Fairy Queen leant her head against a ti-tree and wept bitterly. (46)

This frightening, trampling and cutting down might easily be construed as alluding to the European colonisation of Terra Australis; to the ruthless dispersal of the indigenous people and the destruction of the world they knew. However, as his second sentence suggests (and a reading of his whole text confirms), "Serana" does not openly refer to the harsh reality of colonisation; it tells of the displacement of fairy creatures from the Australian bush, rather than the historical displacement of Aboriginal people. In comparing the two displacements— one imaginary, the other distressingly real—I shall not focus on the figurative connection between fact and fairy tale that Grenbry Outhwaite suggests yet fails to clarify. Instead, I shall expand his metaphor beyond the physically disruptive colonial practices of the Victorian era, and apply it to a gender-based cultural displacement of more recent times.

Despite a timeline that situates the federation of the Australian colonies and the death of Queen Victoria within three weeks of each other in 1901, it cannot be taken for granted that the end of the Victorian era and the end of colonial Australia neatly coincided. Attitudes were slow to change: loyalty to the centre of empire remained stronger for a time than allegiance to the brand-new conglomeration of Australian states; and the red-blooded manly attributes upon which frontier society had relied were still favoured well into the twentieth century. In their promotion of a "young, white, happy and wholesome"—and distinctly male—image of post-federation Australia (White 110), established poets and painters not only scorned girlish subject matter, but discouraged women from joining their professional ranks. Little wonder that Australian girls were attracted to the modern fairy world that Australian women artists devised in a topsy-turvy transformation of Victorian fairyland's tired remains. As the connascent antithesis of federated Australia, this antipodean fairyland survived the first decades of the twentieth century as a feminine heartland where girlish dreams were represented in the practical work of women artists—survived, that is, until disrupted by those who coveted the unexpected success and contemporary relevance of this gendered space.

Although make-believe, fairyland was an intellectual abstraction that dealt with real-world issues. It flourished during the Victorian era as an imaginary alternative to an increasingly matter-of-fact world or, in less complimentary terms, as a nostalgic throwback to pre-industrial times before factories had frightened the fairies away (Bown 83).[1] Victorian fairyland was not a by-product of Victorian progress, but rather a critique of modernity, respectability and social conformity. Victorian fairies were modelled on Shakespeare's; they were intolerant, amoral, self-indulgent, and spiteful to mortals.[2]

The Australian fairies of which I speak are quite different from their British antecedents, especially those who inhabited the seminal Australian fairyland recorded in the art work of

Grenbry's far more famous wife, Ida Rentoul Outhwaite. (Following Kate Riley's lead [64] I shall refer to the artist simply as "Ida", to differentiate her from her husband, Grenbry Outhwaite (hereafter "Grenbry") and from her sister and original collaborator, Annie Rentoul ("Annie"), and to embrace both her maiden and married personae—Ida Sherbourne Rentoul and Ida Rentoul Outhwaite.) Ida's Fairyland (her particular version hereafter distinguished with a capital "F") was idiosyncratically Australian in its anti-colonial subversion of the arrogance of Empire, in its deliberate favouring of a female establishment, and in its ready acceptance of sophisticated modernity over sentimental nostalgia. Unlike the capricious, callous and carnal fairies of Victorian England, Ida's fairies were civil, caring and chaste. The serenity of her feminine realm countered the pervasive myth of colonial masculine authority that was played out in popular fiction (Dixon 5), and also permeated all forms of visual imagery, from High Art (for example, E Phillips Fox's *Landing of Captain Cook* (1902) who, in imperialist propaganda "discovered" Australia) to illustration (George Lambert's *Little White Hero* (1908) who, "like a young Horatius" [Lang 154] single-handedly repelled a band of marauding Aborigines) to tableau-vivant performance (*The British Colonizers* performed by Australian artists in London to flatter the British invaders as "masterful but kindly wooers" of a "sleeping Australia" and its people).[3] Rather than perpetuating these bully-boy foundation myths, Ida painted an idealised picture of colonised Australia as it might have been, had it been left in girlish hands, rather than presenting its brutish reality. Not surprisingly, her art work has been excluded from the Australian art-historical canon which, until recent revisionist art-histories (including those by Jeanette Hoorn, Joan Kerr, and Rex Butler), presented a strongly masculinist narrative.

As art historians have abandoned Ida's fairy imagery to other disciplines despite critics' coverage of her eighteen or more solo exhibitions, scholarly attention has focused instead on her book illustrations. Understandably, these are not treated as individual works of art but as complements—even mere supplements—to the associated fairy tales, confirming their juvenile and decorative status. Even Marcie Muir and Robert Holden's *The Fairy World of Ida Rentoul Outhwaite* (1985) has been written largely from a bibliographic viewpoint, conceding that: "Any attempt to place Ida in the wider context of contemporary art, apart from children's book illustration, serves little purpose" (150). Yet, in reproducing otherwise unknown examples of her unpublished art work originally acquired under Holden's guidance by the James Hardie Library (now dispersed), it is this landmark volume that has encouraged a reappraisal of Ida's pictorial repertoire.

Whereas judgement of Ida's art was previously limited to the illustrations that had survived their unsympathetic culling in "updated" condensations of her lavishly-illustrated first editions, a more representative body of work is now available, thanks not only to Muir and Holden and to Holden's continuing research (1992 and 2011) but also to the recent escalation of visual material accessible via the internet. Here Ida's watercolour originals, commercial illustrations and associated ephemera—all revealed by a simple Google search as if released from a magic spell—are testament against the assumed anodyne prettiness of her work. It is appropriate, then, to submit this abundance of imagery to proper visual analysis, even if most art historians have shirked this until now.

Although British art historians have subjected Victorian fairy paintings to scholarly analysis, their Australian counterparts (with the notable exceptions of Leigh Astbury and Anne Galbally) have even baulked at treating seriously the fairy paintings by the Australian Impressionist, Frederick McCubbin, which depict children encountering tiny fairy creatures in typical Heidelberg-School landscapes.[4] Both Astbury (175) and Galbally (114) suggest

young Ida's possible influence on McCubbin—but in subject-matter only, not stylistically, for Ida used pen-and-ink and, later, watercolour, whereas McCubbin painted in oils (thereby differentiating his work as "High Art" even though, like Ida, he had worked as a black-and-white magazine illustrator in the 1880s). Although the charge of peripheral backwardness is a perennial imperialist putdown, Ida's sketches on paper were not her misguided attempt to continue in the same vein as renowned British fairy artists such as Richard Dadd, John Anster ("Fairy") Fitzgerald and Joseph Noël Paton, all of whom had flourished in the mid-nineteenth century. There are no traces of their "overt eroticism" (Susina 233), their cruelty to animals shown in Fitzgerald's *The Chase of the White Mice* (1864) and to mortals shown in Paton's *The Fairy Raid, Carrying off the Changeling* (1867) (Silver 160-61), or their near prurience in obsessively documenting the power play and sexual tension between Titania and Oberon, as there are no kings, few males of consequence, and no hint of heterosexual congress in Ida's version of Fairyland (Bradford 124; Callaway 41).

At the time of publication of the deluxe *Elves and Fairies* (1916), Ida's art work was compared favourably with that of British fairy illustrators such as Arthur Rackham (Muir and Holden 140). Recently it has been described as an example of Edwardian fairy-fever trapped in a colonial time warp (Do Rozario 13). Rebecca-Anne C Do Rozario differentiates Ida's fairies as "urbane [and] elegant…with porcelain, rouged complexions …sometimes wearing the latest English fashions" (21). I may merely quibble that these "latest English fashions" equally pertained to Australian girls; however, I would certainly question that "they are the fairies of the Cottingley fairy hoax" (22). Although the hoax was perpetrated by a couple of English girls who photographed paper cut-outs fixed with hatpins, adult men were its greatest dupes—men who, disaffected with modern society, looked to vitalism, spiritualism and similarly irrational "-isms" to reveal an elemental life-force. Ida's fairies (who drove about in limousines, chatted on the telephone, and promoted industrial conglomerates such as British Petroleum)[5] were too modern, too aware of their own commercial importance, too *ironic*, to engage in pseudo-science. Whereas Victorian fairies "gave them [Victorians] back the wonder and mystery modernity had taken away from the world" (Bown 1), Ida's fairies offered her female contemporaries both wonder *and* modernity in their own exclusive—albeit temporary—refuge from reality.

Apart from her adolescent collaborations with Annie, Ida's images were not illustrative afterthoughts. The usual hegemony of the written text was overturned in her case; indeed, the verses and stories were themselves "largely incidental" afterthoughts (Do Rozario 22) specifically contrived to support her pictures. This was especially true after her marriage to the entrepreneurial Grenbry, who managed Ida's output as a commercial enterprise and regarded her illustrated books as publicity for the exhibition and potential sale of her original art works. As Clare Bradford notes, the London *Spectator* recognised in 1921 that Grenbry's storyline for the just published *The Enchanted Forest* was "really only a thread upon which Mrs Outhwaite hangs a line of thirty-one exquisite illustrations" (118). Ida's pictorial repertoire presented the first comprehensive visual definition of a Fairyland that was specifically Australian in its happy marriage of fairies and a readily identifiable Australian landscape—recognisable, that is, to settler Australians, but apparently not to her many British readers who happily accepted the (to them) exotic aspects of her landscape as pure fantasy. Although Australian fairies are described as having "emigrated from England" (Do Rozario 14), they were particularly reassuring for a non-indigenous audience of similar migrants who nevertheless thought themselves Australian. The differentiation of Australian fairies from those of European folklore had previously been attempted in words alone, but neither comprehensively nor definitively. Similar literary attempts to distinguish white Australian

fairies from indigenous Australian lore had been clumsy and cruel, reminiscent of colonial discrimination at its worst. For example, E A G's "The Little Darkies," described as "the exact miniatures of the aboriginals…each provided with a pair of gauzy wings," (2S) had white golden-haired fairies as their "ruling race" (3S). As a further example, Eileen Clinch's "In Australian Fairyland" presented white fairies as Australia's indigenous people—thereby inverting the colonial equation by casting the Aborigines as the invaders—with the fairy queen Austral complaining: "that old torment, the Man in the Moon, sent a lot of black people to live here. They are a great nuisance to us" (6).

Earlier, I suggested that the displaced fairies in Grenbry's "Serana" may figuratively refer to the colonial dispossession of the Aboriginal people. If so, the reference is too subtle to verify. However, there can be no doubting a similar interpretation of chapter 25 in Annie and Ida's *The Little Green Road to Fairyland* (1922). After a self-imposed exile as a mortal child, the fairy heroine journeys back to Fairyland. On the way she meets Little Alcheringa, a shadow from the past, who has been longing in vain for "a little fair playmate" ever since the arrival of the White Man and the White Child to her country (Rentoul and Rentoul Outhwaite 94). Doubtless Annie's naming of "Alcheringa" (the term recorded in 1899 by Baldwin Spencer and F J Gillen as meaning "the far past times in which the mythical ancestors of the tribe [Arunta/Aranda/Arrernte] are supposed to have lived" (645) and latterly popularly translated as the Dreamtime, or the Dreaming) was a considered choice. The reference would have been appreciated not only by scholars who, like Annie herself, would have been familiar with Baldwin Spencer's anthropological writings, but also by the many Melbournians who were entertained by his public attempts to bring his Central Australian experiences to life by means of illustrated lectures and tableau performances. Spencer, who was associated with Laurence Rentoul (Annie and Ida's father) through their respective professorships at the University of Melbourne and their shared interest in indigenous matters,[6] had been one of the original subscribers (a veritable Who's Who of Melbourne society) to the limited edition of *Elves and Fairies* in 1916. However, Annie's use of Spencer's terminology was more than a return compliment to a family friend: "Alcheringa" gave her story the stamp of authenticity.

Together, Fairy and Alcheringa peer into a pond:

> There they saw the two little faces mirrored on the clear surface of the pool, and Alcheringa whispered, "Why are we different?" Then said Fairy, "You belong to Dreamland, I to Fairyland. But let us play together this little while before we part." (Rentoul and Outhwaite 95-96)

Thus Alcheringa is banished to Dreamland, to the Dreamtime, to the "Far Past" (98). There is an element of sentimental regret for this disappearance of the Aboriginal people, but it is an effective erasure nonetheless. However, these are Annie's words, not Ida's. Although *The Little Green Road to Fairyland* is lavishly illustrated, Ida makes no visual reference to Alcheringa, nor to her people. Indeed, representations of Aborigines are few and far between in Ida's oeuvre: a male child ("A Little Aboriginee" [sic]) in an early songbook (Rentoul et al., 1907) and dancing warriors in a book of legends published two years before her death (Power)—none of them fairies. Seemingly, like many of her contemporaries, Ida was just as efficient in her erasure of indigenous Australians as were the original white colonists. Perhaps it is to Ida's credit that she seems never to have shoehorned an Aboriginal girl into her colonial Fairyland; that she seems never to have been tempted to transform an Aboriginal girl into another Mathinna by adding fairy wings. Yet surely Annie's pretty if self-serving sentimentality shows at least some realisation of colonial culpability, whereas Ida does not. Or, as with Grenbry's "Serana" text, are Ida's pictorial references too subtle?

What do we make of Ida's black-and-white image "They Led Her to an Open Glade" which appeared with Annie's story "The Rescue" in the same storybook as "Serana"? Six koalas and a fairy move in procession through a dark, closed-in wood. So dark is the forest that the leading koala needs a lantern to light their path. So enclosed is the forest that the full moon is barred entry by a phalanx of silhouetted tree trunks. Fairy Mothwing's head is bowed and her shoulders are slumped. She is clearly being dragged along against her will by a sturdy koala with a wicked expression: "They led her along to an open glade near the lily pool, and tied her to a tree by her waist, with the strongest spider-web ropes they could find" (116). On the face of it, this is a picture of conflict between fairies and bush animals. However, since by this stage Ida's originals were primarily intended for an adult market (this particular pen-and-ink sketch was titled *The Hostage* when exhibited for sale at Anthony Hordern's Gallery in July 1928), we might be well advised to look for another interpretation. The meaning becomes clearer when Ida's picture is analysed in conjunction with Annie's text (which illustrated Ida's pictures, rather than the other way about). Mothwing has intruded upon the secret gum-tree forest of the koalas (referred to here as "Bears" as was usual at the time, despite being taxonomically incorrect). The Bears are holding Mothwing hostage until she promises to stay away forever: "Then they all danced a *corroboree* round her, pulling horrid faces, I'm afraid, and saying rude things, and prodding her with bulrushes" (116, my emphasis). The Bears are not bears, neither are they koalas; rather, they are substitute Aborigines in this non-revisionist colonial history. Mothwing is a *white* fairy—as we are told, twice, in a story of just a thousand words (115, 118)—so, unsurprisingly, she prevails with the aid of Bunny Boy fighting as her champion. The koalas are successfully colonised: they are forced "to grant the freedom of this wood hereafter to all" and to ask "little white Fairy Mothwing to be Queen of the Wood for ever after" (118).

Clearly, fictional fairies like Mothwing could be just as ruthless as factual white male colonisers. Ida's imaginary did not rectify the indigenous/non-indigenous colonial balance. Rather, it redressed the cultural emphasis on masculinity in white colonial Australia. Men (even boys) had the run of the land, whereas girls (even grown women) were supposedly restricted to a domestic environment. It is salutary to recognise that, in the final quarter of the nineteenth century when the idiosyncratic features of the Australian bush came to symbolise a distinctive national identity, this same bush was virtually unfamiliar territory to the female population. This was not so in practice, of course—many colonial women successfully faced the rigours of bush life—nevertheless, the bush was commonly represented as a blokey precinct, a gendered closed-shop, an exclusive club for men. Australian Impressionists, such as Tom Roberts and Charles Conder, painted what Ron Radford termed "ladies in landscape": young women in frilly white frocks who are clearly out of place in the bush. Other artists bluntly represented girls next to a fence that bars their physical progress across the painted landscape—and figuratively bars their social progress too, as Sue Rowley has pointed out. This gendered demarcation is most explicit in Frederick McCubbin's iconic *Lost* (1886, National Gallery of Victoria), where a girl in a blue dress and white pinafore has strayed into the bush to pick wildflowers and, finding herself lost, now weeps uncontrollably.

Thirty years later, Ida reworked McCubbin's theme in her own watercolour *The Boy in the Forest* (exhibited in the Fine Art Society's Rooms, Melbourne, in September 1916, and published in *Elves and Fairies*). In wandering alone into the bush, Ida's little lost girl has come face to face with a free spirit: a boy in a skimpy leopard-skin tunic. The Boy in the Forest is the complete opposite of the girl who finds him: he is male, uncivilised, free and feral. The girl, with her red bonnet reminding us of Little Red Riding Hood, is facing a vital force as dangerous as any Big Bad Wolf. This is the moment of decision. Will she throw

away her upbringing and join The Boy in the Forest, running free in the wilderness? Or will she dutifully return to her pre-determined role of perpetual girlhood, just as Aboriginal men were perpetual "boys" in colonial Australia?

Or will she invent Fairyland instead? If imagination can be considered a counter-hegemonic practice (Martinez-Vázquez 73) then picturing Fairyland can reverse women's oppression, if only in the imagination. Although Ida's fairies remained perpetual girls, they had the freedom and authority of mortal men. They lived in the bush, yet led a modish lifestyle that matched the one advocated in Sidney Ure Smith's stylish *Home* magazine (1920-1942): they took up the latest fashion in clothing and hairstyles (e.g. *The Shingle*, in *Fairyland* 115); they held tea dances and cocktail parties (e.g. *Cocktails in the Bush* c.1927, watercolour, National Library of Australia). Fairyland was a feminine enclave where the only Y chromosomes belonged to subordinate fairy creatures such as elves, or to boorish koalas (who, when not threatening Fairy Mothwing with spears, drank liberally and smoked cigars).[7]

In *The Revoke* (*Fairyland* facing 120), fairies played bridge with koalas in a humorous foursome that calls to mind not only Walter Potter's anthropomorphic Victorian dioramas but the American Cassius Coolidge's *Dogs Playing Poker* series of painted tobacco advertisements from the early 1900s. (The latter comparison is not too far a stretch considering Ida's interest in commercial art, both as practitioner and as instructor with Melbourne's Art Training Institute.) Fairies kept house, but in a parodic fashion that subverted the "housewifization" (Acosta-Belén and Bose 300) of mortal girls. This sharp social commentary is apparent in Ida's unpublished illustrated manuscript, "The Fairy-House" (auctioned, Leonard Joel, August 2011). The intended cover illustration shows the fairy householder leaning provocatively, hand on hip, against the doorframe of the tradesmen's entrance. The door-to-door salesman (a sturdy kookaburra) seems well aware of the implicit sexual invitation from this pert redhead in a short petal skirt. Transcription of the manuscript by Juliette Peers shows that this Fairy-House completely overturns all domestic conventions, with ill-mannered males closely confined to their own quarters, while the fairies have the run of the house.

Ida's father—the Reverend Laurence Rentoul, prominent Presbyterian minister, professor of theology and minor poet—had named her after Tennyson's *The Princess* (1847), a fictional bluestocking who expounded the equality of women and retreated into a feminist scholarly enclave.[8] In Tennyson's poem, Princess Ida's "University for maidens," and her maidenly virtue, finally succumbed to the onslaught of a bold and handsome knight. In a similar way, Ida's Fairyland eventually succumbed to an invasion by colonising boys who disrupted its girlish harmony, much as their colonising fathers had disrupted Terra Australis. Ida's pictorial record not only documents the fictional invasion of a fictional space, but is poignantly self-reflexive in its prediction of the demise of her Fairyland genre.

Like most invasions, it seemed innocuous at the start. In *The Concert* young John, having ventured into Fairyland at night, sits entranced listening to a fairy playing her flute (Rentoul and Outhwaite, *Fairyland* 41). In *Then Jasper Played a Little Wild Woodland Melody* in *The Little Green Road to Fairyland*, a little lame boy has inveigled Fairy into surrendering her flute, so that he can play "the music of his heart's desire" (Rentoul and Rentoul Outhwaite 57). Fairy (who has already sacrificed her fairy heart to become a substitute human child for a grieving mother) "cried a little" at the loss of her flute, but thought "He needs it more than I" (60). In *The Boy Piper* (auctioned Lawsons, August 2012) the situation is completely reversed—now the little boy plays the flute, and the fairies gather around to listen.

Increasingly, Ida's Fairyland was destabilised by an influx of boys. Piping boys loll against tree trunks and entice the fairies to dance for them like oriental slave girls (*Moonbeam*, auctioned Christie's, 1995), often showing a startling amount of leg (*Untitled [Dancing to a Piping Boy]*), auctioned Sotheby's New York, April 2011). In a juvenile burlesque of Actæon and Diana, or of Susanna and the Elders, boys spy on fairies bathing, as in *The Creek* (*Elves and Fairies* 15; original drawing sold, Douglas Stewart, 2010) where the little boy refers to the naked fairy as his "sweet surprise" (14). Boys became as annoyingly pervasive in Ida's Fairyland as that other introduced exotic species, the rabbit, had become in real Australia. Rabbits were Ida's favourite animal motif; indeed, boys sometimes morphed into rabbits and back again, so that they became indistinguishable in her Fairyland. I noted earlier that Bunny Boy acted as Fairy Mothwing's champion in "The Rescue"; in *Bunny Boy Charged on the Bears* (Rentoul and Outhwaite, *Fairyland* 119), he resembles a boy dressed in a bunny-suit, with a fluffy pom-pom tail and a pair of perky ears on his cap. Is he a boy? Is he a rabbit? This fantasy hybrid reappears throughout Ida's work, especially in *The Enchanted Forest* where Peter Pottifer, the hero, is represented sometimes as a rabbit, sometimes as a boy in a bunny-suit, and sometimes as a wild child "dressed in a little fur tunic and nothing else" (Rentoul Outhwaite and Outhwaite 97). Lovable as they might be, boys and rabbits were pests. Nevertheless, they were here to stay. Fairyland was not.

The exaggerated femininity and the whimsy of Ida's fairy pictures have led to general disparagement of her work. Naturally, most of her critics are male—yet even the fictional girl detective Phryne Fisher (who ought to have known better) considered Ida and her kind to be "away with the fairies" (Greenwood 9). In his review of Ida's exhibition at Hogan's Gallery, Melbourne, in 1933 (which included *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*—Ida's spoof of Anita Loos' 1925 novel, showing a fair-haired fairy surrounded by goggle-eyed pixies to the dismay of a deserted brunette), Arthur Streeton, the esteemed Heidelberg-School landscapist, described her exhibits from the position of a master painter damning a girlish amateur with faint praise: "They are as if a little girl like Alice in Wonderland had kept opening windows and doors, and each time had stepped into a new pastoral scene or fairyland" (8). Streeton's relegation of Ida's work to nursery illustration is symptomatic of the growing antagonism towards commercially successful female artists by their male counterparts who, regretting their self-imposed exile in nostalgia for the colonial past, now sought to re-establish their cultural authority.

Bernard Smith's subsequent treatment of Ida's work points to this trend. Smith, a lonely young man who spent three years teaching at an isolated bush school in southern New South Wales in the late 1930s, enrolled in a correspondence course with the Art Training Institute in Melbourne. The ATI listed a dozen or so teachers in its prospectus, as "Men [sic] from Whom You Learn," with an addendum at the bottom of the page in small print, noting: "Also Mrs Ida Rentoul Outhwaite has made a valuable contribution to the Art Institute's wonderful course" (Art Training Institute 38). A whole page of her black-and-white drawings followed (39). Smith reacted like any other red-blooded Australian male at the sight of fairy pictures:

> But when he came, by chance, upon some of her own work that featured fairies among the gum trees he was disillusioned. Pink bottoms among the wattles, he had long ago decided, could not be trusted. (Smith 232)

"Pink bottoms" may well have been commonplace in the immodest fantasies of Victorian fairy painters. Ida's twentieth-century fairies, on the other hand, were chaste, and kept their nether regions delicately covered. Smith's churlish remark, "pink bottoms among the

wattles," referred to his chance witnessing of a sexual encounter in the bush, a prejudice unfairly transferred to Ida:

> [H]e returned from a day sketching in the hills, and was pushing along the track where the bush grew thickly. Did he not catch a glimpse of the elder sister of one of his pupils in the hollow below there, an ever so sensuous girl? Or was he just imagining things? Her short check skirt half hidden by the yellow fuzz of Cootamundra wattle and her long legs moving deliciously—that must surely be the pink of her bottom—under the weight of the commercial traveller from Wagga Wagga. (220)

This was the first, and last, time that Ida was mentioned by Smith. When he returned to Sydney and commenced his career as artist, art historian, and scholar, he dismissed the current crop of women artists as "Spinsters [who] flaunt a bit of colour and call themselves 'modernists'", and their work as "pretty little things the public like" (253). He dismissed them as effectively as invading boys had disturbed Ida's Fairyland, as ruthlessly as their imperialist bully-boy antecedents had disrupted Terra Australis—ironically, a place that was once as much a European fantasy as fairyland itself.

Whereas most women's art work from this time has now been reclaimed for art-historical scholarship, Ida's Fairyland remains culturally marginalised. Although the tranquillity of her storybook version was disrupted by unruly boys, as a creative conceit Ida's Fairyland is as yet uncontaminated by masculinist assumptions and wide open to feminist visual analysis. In *The Little Green Road to Fairyland*, Annie's Boy of Tomorrow identified himself as "Vision", his sister as "Fancy"—a slight, but telling, difference (Rentoul and Rentoul Outhwaite 88). Both were headed for the future "where dreams come true" (88), and declined Fairy's offer to take them with her to Fairyland, which lay in the opposite direction. Yet, just as she had overlooked Alcheringa in the same story, Ida made no visual record of these Children of Tomorrow. Whether intended as a feminine retreat or feminist frontier, Ida's Fairyland was not set in the past or in the future, but in a topsy-turvy present where fairies enjoyed the responsibilities and rewards promised to, but in practice unattainable by, Australian girls.

Notes

[1] Here Bown makes reference to the last chapter of Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* (1849).

[2] As documented, inter alia, in Maas et al., Casteras, and Bown.

[3] See program of the reception given by Australian artists at the Imperial Institute, London, in May 1911 (State Library of Victoria).

[4] See Frederick McCubbin, *Childhood Fancies*. 1905. Oil on canvas. Private collection; *What the Little Girl Saw in The Bush*. 1904. Oil on canvas. Private collection (also exhibited in 1913 as *Fairies Away*).

[5] See Outhwaite's *When Tarrant's Motors Came to Fairyland* 1909 advertisement (Museum of Victoria), and her promotional material for British Petroleum: *The Sentry and the Shell Fairy* booklet, Melbourne, c.1922, and the *Shell Fairy Calendar 1924-25*, Melbourne, 1923.

[6] For example, both were office bearers in the Association for the Protection of the Native Races.

[7] See illustration in *Elves and Fairies* (47).

[8] As it turned out, Ida would have been a more appropriate name for Annie, who achieved a First in Classics at the University of Melbourne in 1905.

Works Cited

Acosta-Belén, Edna and Christine E Bose. "From Structural Subordination to Empowerment: Women and Development in Third World Contexts." *Gender and Society* 4.3 (1990): 299-320. Print.

Art Training Institute. *Commercial Art as Your Career*. Melbourne, 1933. Web. http://nla.gov.au/nla.aus-vn4763694

Astbury, Leigh. *City Bushmen: The Heidelberg School and the Rural Mythology*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1985. Print.

Bown, Nicola. *Fairies in Nineteenth-Century Art and Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Print.

Bradford, Clare. "The Return of the Fairy: Australian Medievalist Fantasy for the Young." *Australian Literary Studies* 26. 3-4 (2011): 115-32. Print.

Butler, Rex. *Radical Revisionism: An Anthology of Writings on Australia Art*. Fortitude Valley, Qld.: Institute of Modern Art, 2005. Print.

Callaway, Anita. "Not Afraid of Flying: Fairies and Femocrats." *Artlink* 15.4 (1995): 48-49. Print.

Casteras, Susan P. "Winged Fantasies: Constructions of Childhood, Innocence, Adolescence, and Sexuality in Victorian Fairy Painting." *Picturing Children: Constructions of Childhood between Rousseau and Freud*, Ed. Marilyn R Brown. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002. 126-42. Print.

Clinch, Eileen. "In Australian Fairyland; or, How the Native Bear Lost Its Tail." *Australian Children's Newspaper* 28 January 1900: 6-7. Print.

Dixon, Robert. *Writing the Colonial Adventure: Race, Gender and Nation in Anglo-Australian Popular Fiction, 1875-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Print.

Do Rozario, Rebecca-Anne C. "Australia's Fairy Tales Illustrated in Print: Instances of Indigeneity, Colonization, and Suburbanization." *Marvels & Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies* 25.1 (2011): 13-32. Print.

E A G. "The Little Darkies: An Australian Fairy Tale." *Queenslander* 3 December 1910: supplement 2S-4S. Print.

Fitzgerald, John Anster. *The Chase of the White Mice*. c.1864. Oil on canvas. Private collection.

Fox, E Phillips. *The Landing of Captain Cook 1770*. 1902. Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Victoria.

Galbally, Ann. *Frederick McCubbin*. Richmond, Vic.: Hutchinson, 1981. Print.

Greenwood, Kerry. *Away with the Fairies*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2001. Print.

Holden, Robert. "Ida Rentoul Outhwaite: International Fantasy Illustrator." *A Golden Age: Visions of Fantasy*, vol.1, *Australia's Fantasy Illustrators: Their Lives and Works*. Pymble, NSW: Angus & Robertson, 1992. 37-53. Print.

Holden, Robert. *Ida Rentoul Outhwaite: "Revel in Fantasies and Imagination."* Prahran, Vic.: Douglas Stewart Fine Books, 2011. Print.

Hoorn, Jeanette. "Misogyny and Modernist Painting in Australia: How Male Critics Made Modernism Their Own." *Journal of Australian Studies* 16.32 (1992): 7-18. Print.

Kerr, Joan, ed. *Heritage: The National Women's Art Book*. Roseville East: Art & Australia, 1995. Print.

Lang, W H. *Romance of Empire: Australia*. London: T C & E C Black, 1908. Print.

Maas, Jeremy et al. *Victorian Fairy Painting*. London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1997. Print.

Martinez-Váquez, Hjamil A. "Breaking the Established Scaffold: Imagination as a Resource in the Development of Biblical Interpretation." *Her Master's Tools? Feminist and Postcolonial Engagement of Historical-Critical Discourse*. Eds Caroline Vander Stichler and Todd Penner. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005. 71-91. Print.

Muir, Marcie and Robert Holden. *The Fairy World of Ida Rentoul Outhwaite*. Seaforth, NSW: Craftsman House, 1985. Print.

Outhwaite, Grenbry. "Serana: The Bush Fairy." *The Fairyland of Ida Rentoul Outhwaite*. Annie R Rentoul and Grenbry Outhwaite. 1926. London: A & C Black, 1931. 45-107. Print.

Outhwaite, Ida Rentoul and Grenbry Outhwaite. *The Enchanted Forest*. 1921. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1981. Print.

Paton, Joseph Noël. *The Fairy Raid, Carrying off the Changeling*, 1867. Oil on canvas, Glasgow Museums.

Peers, Juliette. Personal communication. 2011.

Power, Phyllis M. *Legends from the Outback*. London: Dent, 1958. Print.

Radford, Ron. *Ladies in Landscape: An Exhibition of Women in the Landscape Painted at the Turn of the Century*. Exhibition catalogue. Ballarat: Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, 1974. Print.

Rentoul, Annie R. "The Rescue." Rentoul and Outhwaite, *The Fairyland of Ida Rentoul Outhwaite* 115-18. Print.

Rentoul, Annie R and Grenbry Outhwaite. *Elves & Fairies of Ida Rentoul Outhwaite*. Melbourne and Sydney: Lothian, 1916. Print.

---. *The Fairyland of Ida Rentoul Outhwaite*. 1926. London: A & C Black, 1931. Print.

Rentoul, Annie R and Ida Rentoul Outhwaite. *The Little Green Road to Fairyland*. London: A & C Black, 1922. Print.

Rentoul, Annie R, Georgette Peterson and Ida S Rentoul. *Australian Songs for Young and Old*. Melbourne: George Robertson, 1907. Print.

Riley, Kate. "*Elves and Fairies*: A Case Study in Australian Art Publishing." *La Trobe Journal* 77 (2006): 49-67. Print.

Rowley, Sue. "The Journey's End: Women's Mobility and Confinement." *Strange Women: Essays in Art and Gender*. Ed. Jeanette Hoorn. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1994. 81-97. Print.

Silver, Carole G. *Strange and Secret Peoples: Fairies and Victorian Consciousness*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. Print.

Smith, Bernard. *The Boy Adeodatus: The Portrait of a Lucky Young Bastard*. Ringwood, Vic.: Allen Lane, 1984. Print.

Spencer, Baldwin and F J Gillen. *The Native Tribes of Central Australia*. London; Macmillan, 1899. Print.

Streeton, Arthur. "Six Art Exhibitions. Five 'One-Man Shows'. Is this a Record?" *Argus* 14 November 1933: 8. Print.

Susina, Jan. "Dealing with Victorian Fairies." *Children's Literature* 28 (2000): 230-37. Print.

White, Richard. "Young, White, Happy and Wholesome." *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1981. 110-24. Print.