

Public Abstract

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This dissertation explores the merging of two unlikely literary partners – natural history writing and fantasy – as a subgenre of mid- to late nineteenth century British children's literature. Tailoring natural history for children, the religiously-motivated writers discussed in this study desired to instill in their readers a respect and appreciation for nature in an increasingly industrialized and secular world. From the natural theology of Margaret Gatty to the providence-guided evolution of Charles Kingsley to the spirituality of Arabella Buckley, I contend that these writers coupled fantasy with science and natural history to invest nature again with the wonder and mystery that modernity had taken away.