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Magic and Morals: Romantic Childhood, Charles Lamb, and *Mrs. Leicester's School*

Throughout the period of time which has come to be known as the "Romantic Era" children's stories became polarized between two very different ideologies. In the mid to late eighteenth century stories produced for children began shifting toward morality tales, eschewing the sensational tales produced through mediums such as chapbooks. This group, led by writers and educators such as Sarah Trimmer, felt that fairy tales and stories with fantastic elements were detrimental to the development of children's moral and social selves. In the other camp, led by writers most often connected with the term "Romanticism" such as Wordsworth, authors defended fairy tales and bemoaned the obvious morality of stories told by people such as Anna Barbauld. Among the strongest critics was Charles Lamb, whose vitriolic condemnation of Barbauld's crew has been cited extensively in studies done on children's literature in the Romantic period. Ironically, this quote is most often used to criticize Lamb's hypocrisy for his part in writing a set of supposed morality tales with Mary his sister. While it is true that *Mrs. Leicester's School* contains many of the hallmarks of the moral stories Lamb derided, it also contains an uncommon bent toward fantasy and the Romantic ideology of childhood.

Very little analysis has been done on the Lambs' small collection of children's tales. Patricia Demers acknowledges this lack in her book *Heaven Upon Earth*: "Liberationists like Lamb, trying to free this writing from what was perceived as its dull and vitiating purposiveness, ranged themselves against solemnly concerned parents and guardians ... A whole variety of intuitive sympathies sparks their work, the range and richness of which are rarely reflected in the available criticism" (3). While Demers does not go on to examine any of Lamb's children's

books, her book being more of an overview of moral and religious children's literature, she does draw attention to the lack of critical review. Most critics that reference the book only do so in passing and nearly all gloss over it as a disappointing work of moral tales unworthy of Lamb's name. However, upon closer examination, *Mrs. Leicester's School* cannot be brushed aside so easily. While it maintains many of the moralistic trappings of other works of its time, it does not hold so tightly to them as most critics seem to suggest. In fact, when comparing it to the ideals of childhood presented by Wordsworth, Coleridge, and even Lamb himself, it becomes clear that in the collection, Lamb breaks free of traditional moral tales and illustrates the very concepts he is accused of betraying. In one of the few positive reviews of the book, Katharine Anthony comments that the Lambs' "morality is not puritanical; it is gently tempered by charity and by a true perceptiveness of child character" (97). By mixing both the moral elements that would help to sell the stories and the fantastic elements Lamb longed to see return to children's books, *Mrs. Leicester's School* bridges the gap between the two opposing views and provides an interesting text to open further discussion of the ideology of Romantic childhood.

Responses to the collection of stories co-authored by the brother and sister team of Mary and Charles Lamb have ranged widely from indifference to outright derision, but nobody appears to have taken the book seriously as a part of the Lambs' canon of works or even as representative of the genre of school morality tales. Almost all critics do agree that *Mrs. Leicester's School* leans heavily on the tradition of Sarah Fielding's *The Governess*. Sylvia Marks, in her chapter "From Governess to Governess: Setting a Good Example," discusses this tradition: "Essentially, Fielding's method consists of a frame or main story line relating the affairs of a teacher and her pupils. Digressions from the main story occur when characters relate their own individual stories and other instructive stories that illustrate an aspect of behavior currently under deliberation by the group" (28). The Lambs' book certainly follows this general outline but, as Marks

acknowledges, it "is ostensibly a collection of stories gathered by a teacher whom we initially meet but who never appears again, and thus there is no annotation or commentary" (31). While this comment is not strictly true; the invisible narrator interjects twice more after the introduction; *Mrs. Leicester's School* certainly does not contain the sort of overt moralizing present in Fielding's novel. This is a significant difference as it removes the external adult presence from the framing of the stories.

Unfortunately, the Lambs' book has been consistently dismissed as just another morality tale, passed over in the midst of other discussions of children's books of the period. Alan Richardson, in *Literature, Education, and Romanticism*, his well-known and often-referenced book on Romantic childhood, only mentions the book in passing, stating simply that the siblings wrote "a didactic children's book ... In the Fielding vein" as an aside in the midst of a discussion on fairy tales, and in his article on "Wordsworth, Fairy Tales, and the Politics of Children's Reading," *Mrs. Leicester's School* is even more briefly touched upon (114). When speaking of Charles Lamb's essays, Richardson does say that "the prose of Charles Lamb ... forms a bridge between the early Romantic poets and the Victorian cult of the child. Lamb develops in his essays both an intense nostalgia for childhood recalled as a lost paradise, and a sentimentalized and altogether ethereal version of Wordsworth's 'heaven-born' child" (*Literature* 23). However, Richardson only refers to Lamb's essays, not his children's fiction, which he accuses of being "complicit with some of [the morality tale's] more subtly disciplinary aspects" (*Literature* 52). Judith Plotz spends a bit more time on Charles Lamb's children's titles in her book *Romanticism and the Vocation of Childhood*, but again, *Mrs. Leicester's School* receives short shrift. Plotz briefly analyzes two of the stories and her general discussion is interesting, but overall the collection of tales is only referred to, never fully examined.

On the other side of the spectrum, Geoffrey Summerfield, in his book *Fantasy and Reason*, can barely contain his contempt for Charles Lamb's hand in the development of *Mrs. Leicester's School*. He claims that Lamb's letter to Coleridge is merely Lamb "playing up to Coleridge's prejudices" rather than evidencing his own opinions on the matter of children's books (Summerfield 248). In addition he claims that if "one examines the individual 'stories' of *Mrs. Leicester's School*, what they do *not* possess is a narrative interest" (254). Summerfield accuses the stories of meandering around with no purpose, being "written ostensibly for children but offered in a maladroit fashion, with gross misjudgement" (255). What he fails to notice is that, by allowing the stories to be told in this way, with no real over-riding plot lines and odd emphasis and rambling narratives, the Lambs were actually developing the Romantic ideology of the free child. Rather than being restricted to adult expectations, each girl is allowed to tell her story in her own way and to include or exclude whatever she desires. Unfortunately, Summerfield dismisses the book and avers that the stories are condescending "fragments of imperfectly transformed memories" (254). His obvious disdain for the collection keeps him from providing any real insight into its complexities.

At the time of the book's publication critics were also polarized over *Mrs. Leicester's School*. As Michael Polowetzky points out in his book *Prominent Sisters*, "conservative critics" believed the book "did not provide its young readers with sufficient instruction in traditional ethics" and he goes on to quote an unnamed critic who stated, "We should have been happy ... Had something like morals been deduced from such incidents as afford them; ... No book intended for youth is deserving of praise which does not either explicitly promote virtue, general or particular" (29). Amusingly enough, this critic complains the book is lacking the very thing most current analysis derides it for containing. Not all contemporary reviews were so harsh, however. Another critic responded to the outcry by arguing that the book was "something of a

higher cast" with "a deep humanity which cannot fail to nurture and to mellow the opening heart, to render its seriousness sweeter, and its joy deeper and more lasting" (qtd. in Polowetzky 29-30). Family friend Samuel Taylor Coleridge also had high hopes for the book: "It at once soothes and amuses me to think, - nay, to know, - that the time will come when this little volume of my dear and well-nigh oldest friend, Mary Lamb, will be not only enjoyed but acknowledged as a rich jewel in the treasury of our permanent English literature" (qtd. in Anthony 96). While this prediction did not come to pass, it is clear that Coleridge viewed the work as more than a simple morality tale for children.

If *Mrs. Leicester's School* was not written as merely another morality tale, what was its purpose and how does it fit into the canon of other works of the day? In order to fully understand the differences between *Mrs. Leicester's School* and the books Lamb was so adverse to, the major authors and influences of the period must be briefly examined. Sarah Trimmer, best known for her periodical *The Guardian of Education*, was one of the pioneers in children's literature, providing some of the first serious reviews and analysis of books written specifically for children. Though she acknowledged the appeal of fantasy, Trimmer also warned against its dangerous effects. In a review of a Mother Goose book Trimmer said "the terrific images, which tales of this nature present to the imagination, usually make deep impressions, and injure the tender minds of children, by exciting unreasonable and groundless fears. Neither do the generality of tales of this kind supply any moral instruction level to the infantine capacity" (qtd. in Tucker 38). She took these warnings to heart in her own books for children as well. In the introduction to her most popular children's work, *Fabulous Histories*, Sarah Trimmer clearly establishes her concerns about children's perceptions of fantasy stories. The book is a narrative of two families: one of humans and one of robins, and Trimmer fears that some children will believe that animals in reality might talk in the same fashion as the birds in the book. To clarify

this issue and deter any possible misunderstanding Trimmer states: "before Henry and Charlotte began to read these Histories, they were taught to consider them, not as containing the real conversations of birds, (for that is impossible we should ever understand), but as a series of Fables, intended to convey moral instruction applicable to themselves" (2). While such concerns might seem ridiculous to modern readers and scholars, this concern is representative of the movement within children's books at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Anna Barbauld, the Barbauld of infamous renown from Lamb's epithetic letter, wrote multiple works for children. Her best known book, *Evenings at Home*, co-written with John Aikin, contains many of the same elements, namely talking animals. The book is a collection of fables, very Aesop-like, using both humans and animals to portray particular lessons and qualities. Many of the tales even end with an overt moral such as the tale of "The Little Dog," a story about a faithful dog who guards and protects his master's belongings and ends up saving his master's life from a collapsing building. Even though the story is filled with overt messages about fealty, faithfulness, and gratitude, it concludes with a straightforward "Moral. The poorest man may repay his obligations to the richest and greatest by faithful and affectionate service--the meanest creature may obtain the favour and regard of the Creator himself, by humble gratitude, and steadfast obedience" (Aikin and Barbauld 7). While this is certainly not a new concept for a book, it is with this sort of protrusive moralising that many of the Romantic authors took issue.

Anna Fielding's *The Governess*, contains similar overt moral statements. The book, published in 1749, is a story of a girls' academy and contains multiple vignettes, both of occurrences at the school as well as tales of the girls' histories. The purpose of each of these stories is to convey a particular guideline for appropriate behavior. In her preface, Fielding clearly states that "'The true Use of Books' is to make one 'wiser and better'" (qtd. in Marks 28). This is not to say that there is no entertainment to be had in the book. In fact, after the initial tale,

Fielding does say through the voice of the narrator, "I delight in giving my little readers every pleasure that is in my power" (10). Fielding even includes a fairy tale in her text. The oldest pupil, Jenny Peace, becomes a sort of sub-teacher and moral guide for her peers. She tells the story of two giants - one evil and one good - in order to both entertain and instruct the other girls. After telling the story Jenny shows it to Mrs. Teachum, the governess, to ensure that it was an appropriate tale. Mrs. Teachum's response is quite useful in revealing the overriding sentiment of the day:

"I have no objection ... to your reading any stories to amuse you, provided you read them with the proper disposition of mind not to be hurt by them. ... giants, magic, fairies, and all sorts of supernatural assistances in a story, are only introduced to amuse and divert: for a giant is called so only to express a man of great power; and the magic fillet round the statue was intended only to show you, that by patience you will overcome all difficulties. Therefore, by no means let the notion of giants or magic dwell upon your minds" (Fielding 27).

She goes on to say that she wouldn't even recommend the girls be told fairy tales as it could distract them from the attitudes they should be developing at the school. It is clear that each story and description, though designed to engage the children reading the book, is more specifically designed to illustrate some lesson.

It is evident that, in all three of these well-known "moralistic" books, fantasy is not entirely eschewed even as the authors present their concerns. Even the most instructive book for children tended to contain some of these fantastic elements as the authors wished to engage children and ensure the books were read. However, the inclusion of such devices was always done for a particular purpose and the authors seriously doubted the propriety of doing so. When it came down to the ultimate purpose of their books, the "final aim of this literature was overtly

didactic: its ambition was to ‘manage’ the child *and* the parent both inside and outside of the text that was produced” (Murphy 45). Those poets and authors who are considered the founders of Romanticism could not have disagreed more strongly.

In his book *The Fantastic Sublime* David Sandner points out that “[f]or Coleridge, fairy tales had a moral purpose—a deeper purpose than even overtly moralistic tales—since they led to the world of the spirit. Fairy tales for children had an educational function as clearly as eighteenth-century moral tales did, and they had a spiritual function as well” (34). Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb, and other Romantic writers felt that fairy tales allowed children to develop moral behavior naturally, coming to an understanding of what was good and right from within, rather than having that behavior imposed on them so it became a matter of pride when they performed correctly. Alan Richardson addresses this in *Literature, Education, and Romanticism* when he points out, “Rather than seeking to infiltrate the child’s mind, Wordsworth and Coleridge propose that the child be left by itself to confront gaps and limitations in its habitual thinking process; the child’s psychic growth will be stimulated by its own dissatisfaction with, or puzzled sense of something missing in, its conscious identity, rather than remorselessly guided through a graded and normatized developmental schema” (57). This is why Romantic writers were so opposed to the moralistic writings of authors such as Trimmer and Barbauld; rather than allowing the child to develop naturally, their books overtly directed the child in behavioral and thought patterns.

In his oft-quoted letter to Coleridge on the twenty-third of October, 1802, Lamb clearly lays out his own opinion on morality tales and what children should be reading:

Knowledge insignificant & vapid as Mrs. B[arbauld]’s books convey, it seems, must come to a child in the *shape of knowledge*, & his empty noddle must be turned with conceit of his own powers ... instead of that beautiful Interest in wild tales, which made

the child a man ... Science has succeeded to Poetry no less in the little walks of Children than with Men.—: Is there no possibility of averting this sore evil? Think what you would have been now, if instead of being fed with Tales and old wives fables in childhood, you had been crammed with Geography & Natural History.? **Damn them.** I mean the cursed Barbauld crew, those **Blights & Blasts** of all that is **Human** in man & child. (*Letters* 81-2)

This harsh language has most often been used to discredit and accuse Lamb of either pandering to Coleridge's sensibilities or committing gross hypocrisy by later writing his own moralistic tales. These should not be the only two options considered. While it is very likely current market considerations impacted the direction of the book, Lamb was not one to simply fold to current expectations. When publisher William Godwin expressed concerns over the graphic nature of certain scenes in the siblings retelling of *The Odyssey*, Lamb refused to change much of anything: "I cannot alter these things without enervating the Book, I will not alter them if the penalty should be that you & all the London Booksellers should refuse it" (Lamb and Lamb *Letters* 279). It seems highly unlikely that someone so resistant to changing a few scenes in one children's book would help to write another book, which came out only months after *The Tales of Ulysses*, merely to meet market demands. It has also been claimed that Charles Lamb merely tacked three tales onto a book that his sister had already almost fully developed. In one sense this is true, but if he did not agree with the purpose or development of the book, why should he have taken part in it at all? It is clear that something larger is at work here. It is much more likely that Lamb took the opportunity to play with the genre he despised and inject it with the sort of beliefs he so strongly held.

To begin with, the introduction of *Mrs. Leicester's School* says nothing about wisdom or instruction. The unknown compiler says her purpose is "in contributing to the amusement" of her

students" (Lamb and Lamb 273). While the tales themselves have moralistic overtones, the ultimate purpose in these stories is not to instruct but to entertain. While *The Governess* contains overt manipulation from, not only the narrator, but also Mrs. Teachum and Jenny Peace, the tales in *Mrs. Leicester's School* are told directly by the children themselves. The teacher from the introduction does admit that, as she attempts to transcribe the stories told by the girls, the language will necessarily change. However, these alterations are not to change the substance, but because "what is very proper and becoming when spoken, requires to be arranged with some little difference before it can be set down in writing" (Lamb and Lamb *Leicester* 275). The narrator also concedes that her "own way of thinking ... will too often intrude itself" but she assures the girls she has done her best "to preserve, as exactly as I could, your own words, and your own peculiarities of style and manner" (Lamb and Lamb *Leicester* 276). The teacher is not imposing an agenda on the stories or in the situation. Her desire is to, as faithfully as possible, record the stories of the girls as they have told them. This statement is, of course, complicated as the girls are fictions so the author, whether Mary or Charles, is fashioning the tales, but the purpose remains unique from the purpose of other similar titles of the period.

Mrs. Leicester's School is a collection of ten tales, each told by a different girl as a way of passing time and allowing the new students to come to know each other better upon their arrival at the school. The girls are encouraged "to relate some little anecdotes of your own lives" since "Fictitious tales we can read in books" (Lamb and Lamb *Leicester* 274). By framing the stories in this way the Lambs actually encourage a blurring of fiction and reality rather than ensuring their readers understand the tales are merely told for instruction. While each story provides its own interesting addition to the book as a whole, and would be useful to develop the validity of the argument, it is necessary to focus in on a few of the narratives. Since it is Charles Lamb's diatribe that is being defended it makes most sense to limit the discussion to his three

contributions. Lamb is, of course, not working within a vacuum. He was heavily influenced by both Wordsworth and Coleridge, and the three are often listed together in discussions of the developing ideology of Romantic childhood. While Wordsworth did not write specifically for children, his view of childhood in his many poems and, particularly, in his *Prelude* offer a helpful example of Romantic ideology and provide a framework for discussing the elements of Lamb's three stories. David Sandner points out that the Romantic poets "changed the course of its history nevertheless simply by embracing the imagination and linking it positively with childhood" (7). By bringing together both the contemporary morality tales and the imaginative powers he felt to be so important, Lamb created a unique and, contrary to most criticism, complex set of stories in *Mrs. Leicester's School*.

The first tale is the account of young Maria Howe and has been titled "The Witch Aunt." This, out of all the tales in the book, is the one most often referenced by critics as it is similar to Charles Lamb's essay "Witches and Other Night Fears," which was based on a personal experience from his childhood. Alan Richardson claims that Lamb turns his experience "into a fable about the dangers of unsupervised reading" (*Literature* 142). It does appear to be one of the messages of the story based on the early remembrances of Maria saying, "I was eternally fond of being shut up by myself to take down whatever volumes I pleased, and pore upon them, no matter whether they were fit for my years or no, or whether I understood them" (Lamb and Lamb *Leicester* 318). The solution to Maria's fears also includes the reading of only books "what were rational or sprightly; that gave me mirth, or gave me instruction" (323). These are the kinds of quotes most critics seem to have turned to in order to prove that the story as a whole is merely a moral tale with a specific message. However, what is often overlooked is the initial cause of Maria's fear. Maria, left to her own devices reads whatever she chooses, yet it is not fairy tales or other fantasy stories she turns to. Instead, the books she reads are representative of the kind of

book commonly used to teach children to read and help them to learn the tenets of the faith at the same time: namely a Book of Martyrs about early Christian's devotion to the faith and "Stackhouse's History of the Bible." These books give her nightmares and cause her to doubt the fidelity of her religious and compassionate aunt. It is true that Maria conflates Stackhouse's illustrations with another book on the history of witches, but Lamb's inclusion of two moral books as the causes of Maria's terror undermines and complicates the straightforward message often claimed.

It is also made clear that Maria's isolation and confinement to a dark and dreary house contributes significantly to her harmful suppositions. When she is removed from her home and placed in "lightsome rooms" with "cheerful faces" and surrounded by "companions of [her] own age," Maria is able to cast off the dangerous imaginings and "laugh at witch stories" (Lamb and Lamb *Leicester* 323). While it is not explicitly stated, there is a sense of movement from confinement to an open and freer locale. The outdoor world at Maria's home is described as a "dark walk ... in the garden" - nothing like the light and freedom intimated at in her visit to the family friend that whisks her away from her melancholy (Lamb and Lamb *Leicester* 318). Maria herself says that, because of the change of scene, "a new turn of ideas was given" (323). In book V of his *Prelude*, Wordsworth espouses a similar sentiment, saying that it is not within traditional book learning, but rather in the natural world that a child is meant to grow and develop. The poet longs for "A race of real children, not too wise, / Too learned, or too good, but wanton, fresh" who are filled with "Simplicity in habit, truth in speech, / be these the daily strengtheners of their minds; / May books and nature be their early joy, / And knowledge rightly honoured with that name - / Knowledge not purchased with the loss of power!" (Wordsworth V.436-7, 446-9). Too much exposure to educational (religious or otherwise) texts reduces a child's innocence and restricts them from natural and appropriate development.

This theme is carried on in Charles Lamb's second tale in *Mrs. Leicester's School*. Susan Yates' recounting of her "First Going to Church" seems very simple. She tells of growing up in a remote area where travel to town was impractical and difficult and the family is unable to attend church. After an inheritance provides them with transportation, the family is able to make the journey and Susan recalls her first impressions of the church service. There is no overt moral, nor is there any particular lesson or instruction, yet Lamb takes the opportunity to express a very Wordsworthian sentiment on child-raising. Susan's father holds the view "that young heads should not be told too many things at once, for fear they should get confused ideas, and no clear notions of any thing" (Lamb and Lamb *Leicester* 328). Because of this Susan has virtually no understanding of organized religion, but has a sweetness and purity in her views, believing the chime of the bells to be the songs of angels. At the end of the tale, Susan laments having been corrected in her assumptions and, although she now knows "better," says, "I never can hear the sweet noise of bells, that I don't think of the angels singing, and what poor but pretty thoughts I had of angels in my uninstructed solitude" (Lamb and Lamb *Leicester* 331). Again, at first glance the story supports the idea of proper instruction, though much more subliminally than "The Witch Aunt." However, ending on this note of melancholy for lost innocence again complicates the reading of the passage. Susan's wistful yearning echoes the poet's question in *The Prelude*, when he asks when educators and instructors will learn "[t]hat in the unreasoning progress of the world / A wiser spirit is at work for us, / A better eye than theirs, most prodigal / Of blessings and most studious of our good, / Even in what seem our most unfruitful hours?" (Wordsworth V.384-8). Although her church attendance is viewed in a positive light, and could be construed by many as an apparent religious directive, the shades of narrative subvert the more obvious reading and provide a more interesting perspective on Lamb's views.

The final story in the collection is also, perhaps, the most curious. While the previous nine take place in familiar English locales, Arabella Hardy's narrative begins "I was born in the East Indies" and dwells on her voyage from there back to England to begin her proper education. Since her escort falls ill as they are about to board, the first mate takes Arabella under his care and entertains her throughout the voyage until he falls ill and dies just before they arrive in England. Of all the stories in the collection, this one has virtually no overt message. Arabella must deal with the death of someone she's come to care for, but a specific lesson she must learn through the course of the tale is absent. What is evident is Lamb's educative philosophy. As the first mate, nicknamed Betsy by the other shipmates for his gentle demeanor, spends time with Arabella he is constantly teaching her. Arabella relates how "he would shew me all pretty sea sights:--the dolphins and porpoises that came before a storm, and all the colours which the sea changed to ... all these various appearances he would shew me, and attempt to explain the reason of them to me, as well as my young capacity would admit of" (Lamb and Lamb *Leicester* 333). She goes on to say that it is "[w]ith such notions he enlarged [her] infant capacity to take in many things" (333). It is not through formal instruction or illustrated books of science that Arabella's mind grows, but from the simple observation of the natural world that surrounds her. Certainly, she has a guide, but he is not enforcing language or knowledge upon her. There are no lengthy speeches or harsh chastisements as are so often present in other children's books of the Romantic era. Instead, Lamb seems to be saying, she is allowed to grow and develop more naturally.

When Arabella fears the storm, "Betsy" soothes her by telling her "the sea was God's bed, and the ship our cradle" and when the wind howled "he would call it music, and bid me hark to the sea organ, and with that name he quieted my tender apprehension" (Lamb and Lamb *Leicester* 333). It is through fantasy that the first mate is able to turn the terrifying into something more understandable. This scene reflects the overall perception of fantasy by the "Romantics." It

is also a scene which brings to mind one of Wordsworth's most famous vignettes from *The Prelude*. When the child of the poem discovers a dead body he says, "no vulgar fear, / Young as I was (a child not nine years old), / Possessed me, for my inner eye had seen / Such sights before among the shining streams / Of fairy land, the forests of romance" (Wordsworth V.473-7). In a similar way, Betsy's death is ameliorated by Arabella's remembrances of his "kind assiduities" (Lamb and Lamb *Leicester* 335). These "assiduities" are his kind actions and his gentle attendances, but from the story it is clear that this was almost entirely played out through his tales.

In his infamous free lecture on education, Coleridge summed up the Romantic educational philosophy: "much is effected by works of imagination ... they carry the mind out of self, and show the possible of the good and the great in the human character. The high ... of the imaginative standard will do no harm ... We should address ourselves to those faculties in a child's mind, which are first awakened by nature ... the memory and the imagination" (317). These two faculties, the memory and the imagination, are the two faculties Lamb appeals to in his tales from *Mrs. Leicester's School*. The girls are asked to regale their new friends with a tale remembered from their own life and each one has elements of imagination and mystery. While the book may have multiple moralistic tendencies it is certainly more than simply another moral tale. Many threads of Lamb's Romantic ideology are woven throughout adding layers of complexity and interest to a collection that has been overlooked for far too long.

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