

## REVIEWS

Pauline Greenhill and Jill Terry Rudy. (eds.). *Channeling Wonder: Fairy Tales on Television*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2014. Preface. Acknowledgement. Introduction. Filmography. References. List of Contributors. Index. x+450 pp. \$31.99 (paper). ISBN: 978-0814339220.

Fairy tales adapted for the screen are not a new phenomenon. However, in the recent decade, the genre has made a spectacular comeback in live-action cinema and on television. Gone are the years where fairy tales were almost essentially associated with traditional film animation and children's culture. They now fully embrace a more mature audience that keeps demanding more stories. In a way, television is unique because of the television series format that allows for variations of the same story and because of its capacity to reach people in their private realms. In this context, *Channeling Wonder: Fairy Tales on Television*, the first collection of essays dedicated to XX and XXI century fairy tales productions made for television, is a long awaited study.

The book is separated into thematic sections. The first, "For and About Kids and Adults", addresses the concept of audiences. In this section, Ian Brodie and Jodi McDavid's study offers engaging insights on how a child engages with a television program. Emma Nelson and Ashley Walton's analysis of *Merlin* as a socializing narrative is especially interesting for its look at the fan community and how the show has influenced their values and beliefs, an insight that would have brought more to this chapter if it would have been studied further. Don Tresca presents the adaptation of *Hansel and Gretel* in shows such as *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, *Criminal Minds*, *Sherlock*, *Dollhouse*, *Lost Girl*, *Supernatural*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *The Simpsons*. While the original story shows children saving themselves, the new versions intended for a more mature audience, present them as still relying on adults. Finally, Jill Terry Rudy's study of *Jim Henson's The Storyteller* provides original interpretation of the mediation of story and storytelling and how it addresses different age groups. She further analyses how sound and visual elements in cinematography support taleworld and storyrealm.

The second part of the book, "Masculinities and/or Femininities", addresses gender issues. Using the television musical *Cinderella* (1965), Patricia Sawin presents an autoethnography where she challenges the traditional assumption that fairy tales do not question conservative gender roles. Christie Barber looks at three Japanese adaptation of the same tale: *I Want to Be Cinderella!* (2006), *Train Man* and *Rich Man Poor Woman*. In all cases, the hegemonic model for masculinity is questioned by presenting nonnormative models. Jeana Jorgensen and Brittany Warman offer a feminist interpretation of the adaptation of *Sleeping Beauty* in *Grimm's Fairy Tale Classics*, a Japanese anime made for younger audience, and in *Dollhouse*, an adult thriller series. The final chapter of this section consists of a queer reading of the anime *Revolutionary Girl Utena* by Kirstian Lezubski. The transgressive model of heteronormativity in this animated series is contrasted with another more conventional series made by the same director, *Sailor Moon*.

“Beastly Humans” is the third part of *Channeling Wonder* and focuses on dark fairy tales and the horror genre. In this section, the *Little Red Riding Hood* story is examined in chapters by Pauline Greenhill and Steven Kohm, who turn to the postmodern film noir *Red Riding Trilogy* (Great Britain) as popular criminology, and by Kristiana Willsey, who questions the concept of authenticity in the current popularity of dark fairy tales with the series *Grimm*. Continuing on the same genre, Andrea Wright turns to *Snow White: A Tale of Terror* (1997)—a film made for television. In this chapter, Wright proposes an interesting psychoanalytical yet feminist reading of both female protagonists, making them much more complex than their traditional representation of good woman versus evil woman. Finally, Shuli Barzilai’s excellent analysis of the film *Bluebeard* (2009) in relation to art motifs and references (Judith and Salome, and King François I and Ivan the Terrible for example) and cinematography, proposes a reading of the film where the clear binary opposition between good and evil fades away, leading to very complex yet very rich interpretation.

“Fairy Tales are Reall!: Reality TV, Fairy-Tale Reality, Commerce, and Discourse” is the fourth section of the book. It presents issues related to the concept of arts versus economics. Linda J. Lee demonstrates how reality television shows *The Bachelor* and *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* are replete with fairy tale motifs. Claudia Schwabe examines the series *Grimm* and *Once Upon a Time*, and demonstrates how the rapprochement of the dichotomy between nonmagical and magical creates a third reality (magic realism) where both worlds coexist. The latter series is also examined by Rebecca Hay and Christa Baxter. In this chapter, the reader sees how the creation of subplots, lack of narrative closure, realistic and complex characters, and the Disneyfication of everyday life enable a greater connection with larger audiences, and thus helps bolster the series’ economic interest. (Hay, Baxter; 317) This chapter is especially interesting for its look at how online media such as Facebook, forums and the official series website, are nurturing an interest in the show and letting the fans express themselves about how they relate to a specific character, as well as offering them a fictive authorship within the narrative. The last chapter of this section by Cristina Bacchilega and John Rieder, includes an analysis of an Italian series, *Carosello*, and an American one, *Fractured Fairy Tales*.

The last section of the book, “Fairy-Tale Teleography”, consists of an examination of the problems that arise when attempting to form a list of all the retelling or motifs of fairy tales produced for television. Although the teleography is a rather Anglocentric compilation, Kendra Magnus-Johnston’s project to make it an online database and invite collaborators to the project, brings hope for an even larger and more diversified teleography.

*Channeling Wonder*’s chapters present a variety of styles. While some readers might find it makes the purpose of the book a bit ambiguous, I believe this is the book’s strength, as it offers a broad understanding of the different fields where folklore can find its niche: ethnographic observation, descriptive review of fairy-tale-based television shows, art history, cinema, theoretical analysis and methodology, etc. It also has the advantage of pleasing multiple audiences, just like the television shows they are addressing with this book. Writing the first

account on fairy-tales on television seems an almost impossible task, but Greenhill and Rudy certainly took up the challenge. The result is a smart, literary work that will take a little bit of magic to you. Even if it doesn't, it will certainly be an asset in any library. Overall, the book provides a good background in this field of studies for academics and is also accessible for the non-specialists.

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