

Williams, Christy. *Mapping Fairy-Tale Space: Pastiche and Metafiction in Borderless Tales*.

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Christy Williams explores fairy-tale structures in an innovative way by using a geographic metaphor to trace the history and interconnections of the fairy-tale genre. The map and web concepts are effective for explaining how these stories intersect across time and space and for decentering the European fairy-tale tradition by expanding beyond that canon. The main focus of Williams's book is to use the notion of mapping to analyze twenty-first century fairy tales, and she does so by organizing her study into two parts with two chapters in each that cover a range of examples from both television and written texts. At the core of this analysis lies an exploration of the ways in which familiar, well-known fairy tales are reconfigured and made relevant for modern audiences.

In the introduction, Williams effectively lays a foundation for her analysis with a discussion of how other scholars, including Marina Warner and Cristina Bacchilega, have viewed fairy tales and postmodernism. She carefully makes the distinction between a few terms key to her analysis, including the techniques of pastiche and parody; while both contain elements of imitation, the second is notably satirical. She also discusses the difference between revision (in which a tale is altered) and duplication (in which the main aspects of the tale are reproduced). Williams employs the term pastiche as a useful way to examine how it "captures the multiplicity with which fairy tales are engaged at a genre level" and sees the connection between pastiche and nostalgia as relevant to the texts she analyzes, but she diverges from the postmodern arguments that classify pastiche as "without critical impetus" (14). Additionally, most of the stories examined in this study are identified as metafictional texts that comment on their own status as fiction.

One of the main ideas Williams analyzes is how some fairy tales collapse multiple tales into one shared narrative space or “storyworld,” and how other stories employ fairy tales as maps or guides for characters to use to navigate and think through their own situations. She contends that the texts she examines “have at their center a crisis about the relevance and sustainability of fairy tales” (3). Overall, Williams observes that twenty-first century stories mix fragments and genres, rather than simply retelling a single fairy-tale, which also reaffirms the cultural importance of the genre in the present day.

In Part 1, Williams examines how the pastiche technique creates a shared storyworld that brings together diverse fairy tales. She uses the geographic metaphor as a “figurative representation of the epistemological shift born of an increasingly interconnected world” (21). The strongest example Williams analyzes in her book is the television show *Once Upon a Time*, which premiered on ABC in 2011 and ran for seven seasons. She asserts that the show uses pastiche to create a combination or “mash up” from multiple sources that aimed to explore what was missing in the original tales rather than retelling the stories. Characters live in the same fairy-tale realm and fulfill multiple parts in each other’s tales. While the show mostly draws upon fairy tales, there are other references to mythology, children’s books, and gothic fiction. Williams contends that the notion of translating genre into geography is a useful way to reinvent fairy tales for modern readers and a powerful narrative technique. Additionally, while the show heavily draws upon Disney imagery (though not exclusively), Williams argues that it is really a distinctly “American Fairy Tale Land” created in the show, and if Disney features predominantly it is because that corporation “has had great commercial success as progenitor of American fairy tales” (40). She makes a compelling point about how the show uses the collapse of narrative borders to “reconfigure not only character traits and plots but also the tropes and motifs expected for the fairy-tale genre” (48).

Once Upon a Time is a particularly effective example of this concept of shared geography because it opens up opportunities to diverge from the sources and create new, unexpected stories that probe into the complexity and fluidity of heroes and villains.

In the next chapter, Williams examines how the pastiche technique works in serialized novels with examples from Marissa Meyer's *The Lunar Chronicles* (2012-2015) and Seanan McGuire's *Indexing* (2014). Notably, these novels mix other genres with fairy tales—especially science fiction and crime drama. Williams makes a strong argument for how serialization allows for expanded space to provide additional context that adds new meanings to familiar old tales. *The Lunar Chronicles* focuses on one tale in each of the books in the series, while *Indexing* is similar to the television show *Once Upon a Time* in that it contains overlapping tales in its book series. Although each series blends fairy tales with other genres and uses pastiche in different ways, both result in a “conceptualization of the interconnectedness of fairy tales grounded in geographic metaphor” (66). The discussion of *The Lunar Chronicles* focuses primarily on the first book, which features a cyborg Cinderella. Williams effectively illustrates how the series uses fairy tale plots to provide structure to the science fiction elements in innovative ways that draw in young adult audiences. Similarly, the *Indexing* books underscore the adaptability and flexibility of fairy tales through an inventive format. Williams asserts that the series uses the crime fiction structure as a stable background that stands in contrast to the variability of the fairy tales, and as a result, this complicates our understanding of the genre. In McGuire's storyworld, some of the characters know they are fairy-tale characters, and metafictional awareness is an important aspect of the books. The fairy tales, legends, and myths in *Indexing* are catalogued with an index by agents who work at an organization known as the ATI Management Bureau. The tales are shown to be unstable and part

of what Williams refers to as a shared cultural space that shapes reality in the books, even as the agents try to stop that from happening.

In the second half of her study, Williams turns to an exploration of how characters use fairy-tale narratives as maps to guide them through their own problems and situations. The only non-American text that Williams examines is the Korean television drama *Secret Garden* (2010-2011). In this series, the two main characters attempt to use the fairy tale “The Little Mermaid” to help them navigate around their different social statuses which keep them apart, but ultimately, they must rewrite the story since the original was not effective as a map. Similarly, Williams examines three short stories by Kelly Link, which have characters who unsuccessfully try to use fairy tales to solve their problems. This notion of using fairy tales as maps is part of the critical history of fairy tales and their socializing function. As Williams contends, they can connect us and can serve as patterns that suggest ways to deal with conflict and offer hope, but as some of the example texts show, fairy tales need to be reimagined for a twenty-first century world. It is notable that fairy tales often function better as “a compass, pointing in a direction, [rather] than a map with a path to follow clearly marked” (168). Although the second half of the book is less compelling, it does support Williams’s central argument that these texts reaffirm the value of the fairy-tale genre and the need for its adaptability.

In a larger context, Williams’s use of the geographic metaphor allows her to tackle the notion of narrative borders and how modern audiences view them as more fluid and flexible. The symbolic connections between the fairy-tale genre and geography are clearly established through the analysis of the pastiche and fairy-tale mixing techniques in the television shows and novels that are examined. Williams asserts that these texts are part of a “long tradition of fairy tales being shaped and reshaped to reflect specific sociohistorical moments” (103). As she argues, these

examples highlight the fairy-tale tradition as worthy of serious study, and the adaptability of the tales is seen as a natural evolution rather than a negative critique of the genre. This is a fascinating study of fairy tales as a flexible genre that can be “remapped” for twenty-first century audiences in interesting and meaningful ways.

Debbie Lelekis is the Chair of the Humanities Department and an Associate Professor of English at Texas A&M International University. She received her PhD in English from the University of Missouri.