sive nature of the older krewes. Interestingly, many of these new krewes celebrate with walking parades, which enables them to be much more mobile and logistically improvisational than the huge established krewes such as Rex, Comus, Momus, and Endymion. A consistent aspect of these downtown krewes is the homemade nature of the masks, costumes, floats, and throws, often involving easily accessible household items, such as beans and bones, and featuring individual artistry and personal creativity. Their playful nature is also evident in the wordplay of the names, including Chew Bacchus and 'tit Rex, that signal deeper inversions of the practices of the established krewes, which ironically have grown distant from the inversion and subversion that are at the heart of carnivalesque play.

The importance of improvisation is particularly interesting in this discussion of what has always been an improvisational tradition. One might wonder about the authenticity and cultural continuity of these new krewes and their practices. However, they are nevertheless steeped in the same long-standing New Orleans traditions of improvisation that contributed to jazz, the blues, and rock ‘n’ roll. The difference is that we are witnessing the invention as it happens, which is the challenge that the authors of this study are attempting to negotiate. As Wade notes in her study of the Skinz and Bonez krewe, “despite any attempt at cultural policing, change is inevitable” (p. 79). These krewes are, as the authors point out, deeply thoughtful as well as deeply playful. And while they may have ruffled feathers in the wider community, who should judge them?

One of the goals of carnivalesque play, after all, is to ruffle feathers, to challenge perceived norms, to tickle society. Ultimately, what works, works, and what doesn’t, and as a Louisiana French expression suggests, “Que le plus gêné se retire” [Let the one who is most bothered withdraw]. Wade, Roberts, and de Caro guide us deftly through these and other thorny issues, including funding, permits, and legal challenges, with a solid sense of living tradition, as well as an unfailing sense of humor.


**JoAnn Conrad**

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In *Teaching Fairy Tales,* Nancy Canepa has assembled articles from a mix of fairy-tale and non-fairy-tale scholars with the goal of providing “concrete and practical ideas for bringing fairy tales into the [college] classroom” (p. 5). Comprised of articles describing the authors’ personal classroom experiences and teaching methods and materials, the book promises to “offer teachers a variety of approaches, informative materials, and instruments for navigating the central issues of fairy-tale studies and for creating and teaching meaningful and innovative course [sic] or units on the fairy tale” (p. 4). This promise remains largely unfulfilled due to the narrow range of approaches actually presented.

*Teaching Fairy Tales* begs the question: “Who is the intended audience?” Pauline Greenhill suggests that it is for “students and faculty not trained in fairy-tale studies” (back cover), but one wonders how and why anyone not trained in fairy-tale studies, student or faculty, would find value in a book on fairy-tale pedagogy. If, on the other hand, the book is directed at those teaching these classes, the overly generalized summaries presented in the “Foundations” section should already be familiar. Additionally, many of the course outlines and materials align so specifically to the individual author’s research that their use for further course development is limited.

Without a clearly defined audience, *Teaching Fairy Tales* is organizationally confused. The slight Part I, “Foundations of Fairy-Tale Studies,” presumably directed at those untrained in fairy-tale studies, consists of only four articles, which are putatively engaged with “the big questions that stand at the fore of fairy-tale studies” (p. 6). But such a short and spotty review begs the question as to why attempt it at all. This brevity, coupled with the inclusion of the work
of a classicist not versed in the very “foundations” this section aims to elucidate, also leads to a number of mistakes, inconsistencies, and overgeneralizations. Maria Tatar’s lead article “What Is a Fairy Tale?” provides little discernable theory. Filled with vague assertions, such as her claim that fairy tales give voice to “primal anxieties and desires” (p. 16), it also fails to provide any workable definition, despite the title, which might have helped in a “foundations” section. Inattention to genre, itself “foundational” in folkloristics, also permeates this section. Classicist Graham Anderson’s tortured attempts to claim an ancient lineage of the literary fairy tale in “The Prehistory of Fairy Tales” is marred by his confusion and conflation of the basic tools of folklore; motif, type, myth, legend, and tale are all interchanged and thus rendered meaningless. Donald Haase’s heavy reliance on fairy-tale collections and the resulting canon formation and Jack Zipes’ generous recycling of his work long in circulation undermine any claims that either fairy tales in general or this volume work to subvert the canon. That all the contributors to this section are emeriti and long out of the classroom may also counter the notion that this collection provides innovative pedagogical tools.

Part II, “Teaching and Learning with Fairy Tales,” consists of six chapters and clearly intends to be the heart of the volume. Lewis Seifert’s introduction, “Fairy Tales in the Classroom,” followed by chapter 1, “Fairy Tales and Tale Types,” and chapter 2, “Fairy Tales in Context,” are the most cohesive chapters in the volume and include some of the most theoretically engaged and helpful articles for those interested in developing their own lecture material. However, the ad hoc organization of articles under such a big umbrella leads to inconsistency and incompatibility. Descriptions of broad survey courses, such as Linda Kraus Worley’s “Fairy Tales in European Context,” which presents material geared toward an introductory, general education class, are combined with more granular descriptions of courses that focus on a specific cluster of tale (types) within a specific language and literary tradition, such as Anne Duggan’s comparative analysis of monster bridegroom tales (especially French literary versions from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) and Victoria Somoff’s analysis of the tale of the “Fisherman and his Wife,” highlighting Russian versions. Some of the most successful articles are those with a cultural history approach—Allison Stedman’s “Perspectives on the Civilizing Process: Using Fairy Tales to Teach French and Italian Cultural History,” Faith E. Beasley’s “The Enchantments of Eloquence,” Somoff’s “Morals and Miracles,” and Jennifer Schacker’s “Long Ago and Far Away”—that are tightly argued and indeed present new perspectives on fairy-tale material with attention to historical specificity and sociohistorical context. Less successful are those that misuse and misrepresent the function of both the tale type and the tale-type index, following the current vogue of calling out tale-type numbers as evidence of due diligence, while disregarding the methodology and theory (and rigor) of a true tale-type analysis, for example. Worley’s “exploration of the tale type index,” which asks students to extrapolate from a tally of “most prevalent types,” a hypothesis on distribution (pp. 137–8).

Chapter 4, “Fairy Tales in the Foreign-Language Classroom,” marks a dramatic shift away from the focus on fairy-tale studies and serves as a point of rupture. The connection between the three articles that constitute this short chapter is strained. While Maria Kaliambou’s article on folktales and foreign-language pedagogy and Cristina Mazzoni’s “Repetition in the Teaching of Italian Fairy Tales” can be accommodated within the chapter’s theme, Christine A. Jones’ deeply theoretical “Louisiana Fairy Tales” suffers from its inclusion here, being much more in line with the earlier chapters’ focus. Jones interrogates issues of language hybridity in the context of colonialism, multiculturalism, and race and gender relations, complexifying the concept of diffusion with that of textual hybridity.

Chapter 5, “Fairy-Tale Activities and Projects,” a grab bag of essays, includes teaching “economic thought with French Fairy Tales” (Benjamin Balak and Charlotte Trinquet du Lys), the practicalities of setting up an online fairy-tale course (Julie Koehler), and the description of a student-organized exhibit on
fairy-tale illustrations (Elio Brancaforte’s “Once Upon a Canvas”). This last essay presents visual interpretations of tales with no reference to visual theory nor to historical contexts, such as publishing and illustration histories. Absent these reference points, the article contains significant errors.

Chapter 6 is devoted entirely to listing “Fairy-Tale Courses” and their syllabi—a full 107 pages, often repeating the same lists of tales. Much of this material has already appeared in the various authors’ essays, making their inclusion here redundant. It also begs the question as to the appropriateness of including syllabi at all, as if their adoption/adaptation by others can act as a model for subject mastery or pedagogical competence. Finally, placed after the syllabi and thus rendering it an “afterthought” is chapter 7, “From Teaching Fairy Tales to Creative Tale-Telling,” an incongruous non sequitur featuring two essays on storytelling, by Kay Stone and Gioia T Hamptonelli, respectively. Not only is this inconsistent with the goal of the collection, but it also reinscribes and naturalizes the link between fairy tales and their tellers and effaces the complicated publishing histories that constitute most of the tales used in the aforementioned syllabi.

There are many good essays in Teaching Fairy Tales, but they are lost in the inconsistent organization and muddled purpose of this wide-ranging collection. Such contributions might have been better placed in a fairy-tale journal such as Marvels & Tales, where the authors could elaborate and expand their arguments. Here, however, they are outweighed by the large number of syllabi, lists of activities, personal experiences, and some off-topic essays, which in the aggregate constitute the main take-away of the book, leaving this reviewer to ask: How does this contribute to and advance the field?

Undergirding Teaching Fairy Tales are several unexamined presumptions that circulate as fairy-tale doxa. One is the assertion of a recent “boom” (p. 4) in the popularity of fairy-tale courses on college campuses, repeated by Zipes and echoed by Seifert and others—which apparently motivated Canepa to compile this collection. But is there such a high demand? A similar publication, New Approaches to Teaching Folk and Fairy Tales (Utah State University Press, 2016), which shares not only the same mission but also many of the same authors as the volume under review here, seems to undermine this claim. So, too, would Schacker and Jones’ Marvelous Transformations: An Anthology of Fairy Tales and Contemporary Critical Perspectives (Broadview Press, 2013), with its mix of pedagogy and analysis. Indeed, Marvelous Transformations forms the backbone of several syllabi presented in the current volume. Why yet another book on fairy-tale pedagogy?

The perception that there has been a recent surge in academic interest in the fairy tale results from a narrow and ahistorical understanding of the fairy tale’s place in academia. While it may be true that fairy tales are now increasingly incorporated into language and literature department curricula, the fairy tale has been a core element of folklore programs in the United States since their inception. Furthermore, the study of the fairy tale and the rise of folkloristics in nineteenth-century Europe were coeval; the tale was fundamental to the folklore enterprise. This centrality of the (fairy) tale in folkloristics diminished in the second half of the twentieth century, when discussing the field (particularly in the United States) turned to more anthropological approaches and away from a more literary emphasis. This was roughly the same time when area studies began to flourish and literature departments began to develop courses that utilized fairy tales to investigate various themes—the apparent “flowering.” This epistemological flaw in Teaching Fairy Tales exists in an echo chamber that is short on history and narrow in scope, a tendency that more participation from folklore scholars and cultural historians might have mitigated. Instead, the contributors to the collection come disproportionately from language and literary departments: of the 27 contributors, six hail from French departments; seven from German; three from Italian; one each from other language areas—Romance, Russian, English, Greek (modern), and Classics. Only one of the contributors, Schacker, is a trained folklorist.

Yet another assumption that underscores many of the articles is that the origins of the literary fairy tale lie in the oral tellings of nannies,
peasant women, and women engaged in weaving or other hearth-side domestic activities. Setting aside the absence of any acknowledgment of the problematic and thoroughly contested oral origin theory, many articles build on the assumption of primordial orality in a cascade of associations, few substantiated by data. There is no recognition of the extensive analytic work that exposes the conceit of the “peasant woman as tale teller” as a romantic and sexist construction. On the basis of this construct, many essays further associate the telling of fairy tales with the voice of the “people” and extend their analyses further to link this voice with resistance and subversion. For example, Gina Miele’s article, “Italo Calvino’s ‘The Parrot,’” proposes to read fairy tales as reflecting history “from the perspective of the people rather than from the historians” (p. 111), when the material itself is from Calvino, who fashioned a national body of work in the twentieth century based on material collected, collated, and published in the nineteenth century.

The volume highlights a fundamental problem that inheres in such a small subfield as fairy-tale studies: the internally focused nature of the discourse and the narrowing of the field itself. Haase, Tatar, Jones, and Duggan contributed to Teaching Fairy Tales, as well as to the aforementioned New Approaches collection; Haase edits the Wayne State University Press’s Series in Fairy-Tale Studies in which Teaching Fairy Tales is published, while editorial board members include Christina Bacchilega, Canepa, Duggan, Jones, Tatar, and Zipes. The Press is also the home of the fairy-tale journal Marvels & Tales, edited by Bacchilega and Duggan, to which many of the same authors frequently contribute. This constriction of voices in the creation and reproduction of knowledge is in itself a kind of canon formation, which resists internal and external criticism. Zipes, commenting in this volume on the institutionalization of the fairy tale as “[a] self-perpetuating institution involved in the socialization and acculturation of readers” (p. 51), perhaps also inadvertently describes the reproduction of knowledge within fairy-tale studies itself. This is ironic given the deep shadow that Zipes himself casts over this volume and fairy-tale scholarship in general. As Ruth Bottigheimer has pointed out, Zipes’ views are so powerful and complete that “they are often not tagged as his approach but as assumable fact” (Journal of Folklore Research review of New Approaches to Teaching, 2017) and provide an a priori framework for subsequent fairy-tale analyses. If fairy-tale studies is to thrive and “flower,” new analytic frameworks must break this logjam with different perspectives, critiques, and innovation.


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Toward the end of the nineteenth century, an immigrant fiddler named Ole Hendricks graced the dancehalls of Elbow Lake, Minnesota, rosin flying from his bow as he played a lively quadrille or reinlender—two of many types of dance tunes found within his handwritten musical notebook. How lucky we are that this notebook eventually made its way into the hands of Amy M. Shaw, who has written a rich historical and cultural case study of Norwegian-American musical life in the Upper Midwest based on its contents. Part biography, part critical edition, Ole Hendricks and His Tunebook invites readers to partake in a folklorist’s journey to discover the life, community, and practices of this talented, yet fairly unknown Norwegian American fiddler through deep examination of his tunebook. It is an extraordinary undertaking of oral history, textual analysis, and musical exploration that highlights the author’s deep curiosity and archival expertise.