

Journal of Folklore and Education Reviews

Exhibit Review

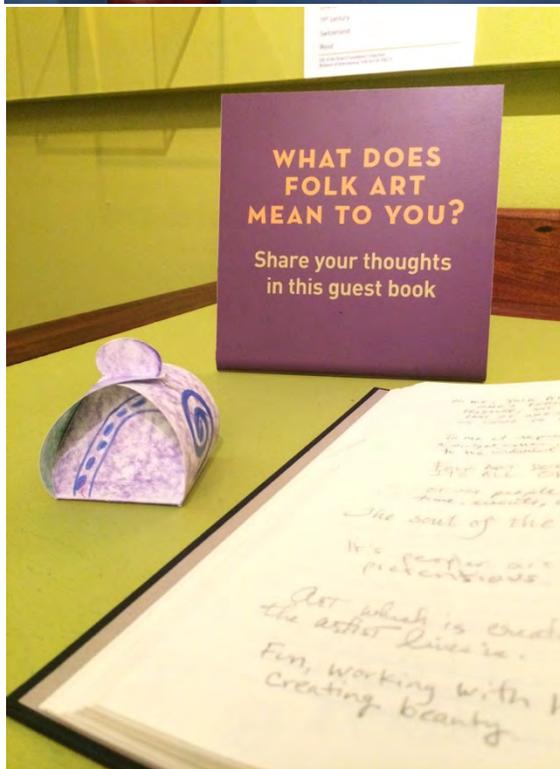
Lloyd's Treasure Chest: Folk Art in Focus at the Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico, curated by Felicia Katz-Harris, senior curator of Asian, Middle Eastern, and Oceanic folk art, permanent exhibit.

Lilli Tichinin

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The aptly named *Lloyd's Treasure Chest: Folk Art in Focus* is an almost-hidden gem of the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Named for museum donor Lloyd Cotsen, the gallery recently reopened with a fresh approach and exhibit space after a four-year closure.



Accessible via only one elevator off the main floor of the museum, *Lloyd's Treasure Chest* is a multipurpose space incorporating open storage of the Neutrogena Collections Vault, rotating display space for themed small-scale exhibits, and an introduction to the concepts of folk art. The last of these purposes is most compelling as a pedagogical tool, for while the space offers visitors the classic open-storage viewing, the new exhibit accomplishes much more than a simple peek into the collections. The exhibit is framed through questions and simple prompts. There is no single definition of folk art provided, instead the exhibit encourages visitors to “Explore Folk Art” through books, interactive screens, object handling, video, social media engagement, changing displays, and art-making activities. It asks, “What does Folk Art mean to you?”

When stepping off the elevator and into the single-room exhibit, visitors enter a small but open space with a large activity table and immediately see a colorful wall inviting them to “Explore Folk Art!” Rather than offering a static definition of folk art, the text on this wall introduces concepts that the museum uses in their work:

There are many different ways to think about folk art. In fact there is no one definition of folk art. In collecting and displaying folk art, the museum considers various concepts.

The remainder of the wall is filled with brief statements with words in bold text that folklorists will recognize well: “traditional,” “shared,” “community,” “handmade,” “change,” “innovation,” and, of course, “the people.” This concept-centric approach leaves visitors the intellectual space to explore for themselves and encourages a deeper interaction with the exhibit and the collections than a definitive statement from the “experts” might elicit.

This first portion of the room incorporates open space for themed craft projects, object handling of baskets and musical instruments, and a bookshelf and reading corner. As visitors move through the space they are invited to search through the collections on interactive screens as well as look into the collections storage through the glass windows along one entire wall.



The middle portion of the room consists of space for the rotating thematic displays, accompanied by laminated gallery object lists. As of summer 2017, visitors can view “Artistic Heritage: Syrian Folk Art.”* An alcove with information and an interactive screen about the National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellows introduces the concept of a master artist.

Building on the recognition of multiple interpretations of folk art, the back wall of the exhibit space displays eight objects from the collection to address the question “Is This Folk Art?” Each object is accompanied by a text panel featuring two answers to that question. The answers—a “yes” or “no” and a one-paragraph explanation—are provided by museum curators, educators, researchers, and artists. The one-example-at-a-time-“is this folk art” approach will be familiar to those of us who have been through an Intro to Folklore class. While in a classroom setting this can become cumbersome, the exhibit creates a context in which the visitor does not feel pressured to walk away with a concrete mental checklist of how to determine whether an item is folk art. The inclusion of the quotes subtly reinforces the possibility of multiple interpretations by showing the visitor both that the “experts” sometimes disagree, and that even when in agreement they each have their own interpretation and reasons for the classification. Near these objects is a cabinet of archival drawers and panels addressing the ways definitions of folk art have changed over time. A guestbook is left open in hope that visitors will leave their thoughts about what folk art means to them.

* These rotating thematic displays will be curated by the museum's five curators. *Artistic Heritage: Syrian Folk Art* was curated by Katz-Harris.



For such a limited space, it is impressive that Katz-Harris has created an exhibit with multiple levels of interpretation and engagement to reach a potentially broad audience. There are options for engagement for multiple learning types, ages, visiting times, and interest levels. In addition to hands-on aspects, the hierarchy of text on panels allows visitors to take a quick look or choose to read more deeply. It is conceivable that a visitor may take only a moment to breeze through the space and glance at the words in bold on that introductory wall and at least walk

away with a few questions and words to ponder. Visitors can catch the big ideas and questions about folk art or parse quotes, examine objects, create art, and read books. Even returning museum visitors may feel compelled to make the trip to the *Treasure Chest* on multiple occasions as the temporary displays are changed.

The tone and content of the exhibit are suitable and appealing to audiences of all ages, it is informative enough for adults but simple enough for children. Importantly, I found that even as someone with an advanced degree in folklore, the exhibit prompted me to pause and consider my own definition of folk art. When face-to-face with objects from the collections, with those concepts and big ideas fresh in my mind, and being asked “is this folk art?” I was thrilled to find that I too had to think deeply before answering.

The obvious missing piece from this exhibit is the intangible. The concept of intangible culture is introduced through music via the instrument object handling and could be explored by visitors in the context of the National Heritage Fellows, but there is no mechanism to learn more. Although I recognize the limitations of an object-focused environment and collection I also see the unexplored potential to incorporate additional video and audio to capitalize on the opportunity to broaden visitors’ understanding of folk art.

Katz-Harris has created a useful tool for introducing museum visitors to the concepts of folk art. It is effective in the simplicity of its approach. The exhibit captures the dynamic nature of folk art in a way that we in the field often struggle to accomplish with any one definition. The disappointment is that the exhibit is not required viewing for all visitors to the museum. We can hope that for those who do find their way into the vault, the questions and concepts stay with them and they can apply some of the conceptual thinking prompted by the *Treasure Chest* as they explore other areas of the museum.

Website Review



Teaching Tolerance: <http://www.tolerance.org>

Kathryn R. Taylor

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The Teaching Tolerance website (<http://www.tolerance.org>), a project developed and published by the Southern Poverty Law Center, puts a huge variety of resources related to inclusion, equity, and diversity into teachers’ hands. From curriculum to professional development resources and webinars, the Teaching Tolerance site attempts to cover a wide range of inclusion topics and perspectives such as exploring immigrant communities in America, bringing the Black Lives Matter movement into the classroom, shining a light on the intersectional blind spot of LGBTQ people of color, and unpacking gender stereotypes for students of all ages.

The name itself might make some users wary. Although “tolerance” is an outdated term in diversity work—many people associate it with merely putting up with or ignoring differences rather than embracing them and working toward social justice—the makers of the site have explained their reasoning for the name by referencing the UNESCO definition of tolerance as “respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world’s cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human.” And even a cursory survey of the resources available on the site prove that they are not merely exercises in appreciating the foods and dances of other cultures but rather lessons and activities that promote anti-bias and a deep examination of culture in America. For example, for high school students, the site offers a set of resources created by Michelle Alexander to support teachers using her book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* while one of the K-5 units teaches students how to engage critically with advertising from a social justice perspective.

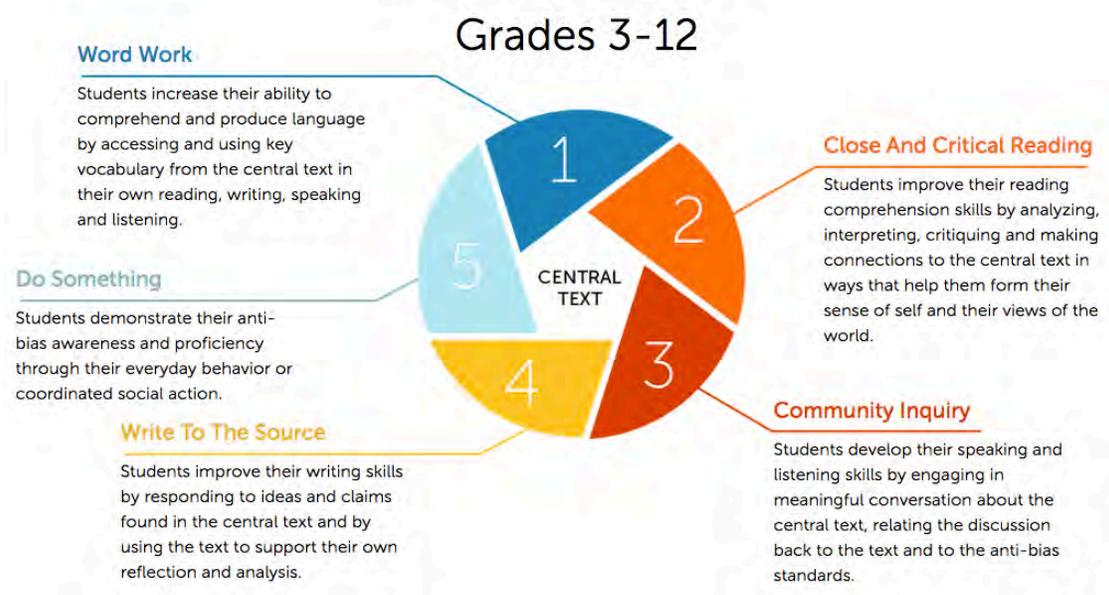
As these examples demonstrate, the most useful part of this site for teachers will likely be the many classroom resources brought together for students from Kindergarten to 12th grade. There are filters for grade levels, topics, and targeted curriculum subjects. In addition, the site allows users to search by four anti-bias domains that the organization uses to target different skills and understandings: action, diversity, identity, and justice. These filters allow teachers to search more effectively within the almost 500 lesson plans and activities gathered under the “Classroom Resources” page.

As with many ambitious projects, the Teaching Tolerance site includes both stronger and weaker materials. The resources labeled lesson plans are quite robust: they include learning targets, essential questions and enduring understandings based on the backward design work of Grant Wiggins, Common Core State Standards alignments, vocabulary lists, handouts, and other items

used in the lesson. The resources labeled “activities” and “activity exchanges” are less detailed and more narrative in nature, but nonetheless, they contain many good ideas that can be adapted and developed according to a teacher’s needs and goals in the classroom. Nearly all the items in this large database include links to other products, texts, and handouts that will be useful for teachers trying to incorporate anti-bias and inclusion into their classrooms. The variety of resources makes this part of the Teaching Tolerance website useful no matter what level of support you are looking for in your curriculum planning.

INTEGRATED LEARNING PLAN

The *Perspectives* Integrated Learning Plan features multiple curricular phases that promote social action and meet the literacy goals of the Common Core. Each phase offers a variety of strategies and tasks you can select and combine based on the needs of your students, your essential question and on the central text you select.

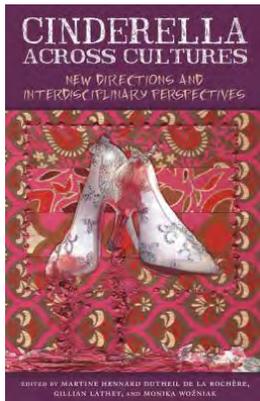


One additional resource is a site called [Perspectives Texts](https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/texts)¹, an entire literacy curriculum for K-12 based on a highly curated collection of central texts and learning goals aligned with Common Core State Standards. This website, which has been integrated into the Teaching Tolerance site, allows teachers to build a learning plan by choosing an essential question, a central text, and final writing and action tasks from a menu, and then building up smaller “word work,” “close critical reading,” and “community inquiry” tasks that will lead to the chosen goals and assessments. The website puts together and saves the plan along with all necessary handouts, assignments, and activities. This final plan also lists each Common Core State Standard that the different elements of the plan support.

Other resources on the website include the magazine *Teaching Tolerance*, PDF files of print publications, on-demand webinars that provide training on both diversity topics and anti-bias classroom strategies, and film kits that teachers can order at no cost through the website. With all these options and opportunities, the greatest fault of the website is that it may overwhelm.

1. URL for Perspectives Texts is <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/texts>.

Book Reviews



Cinderella Across Cultures: New Directions and Interdisciplinary Perspectives, edited by Martine Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère, Gillian Lathey, and Monika Woźniak. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2016, 421 pp.

Jeana Jorgensen

Jeana Jorgensen earned her PhD in folklore from Indiana University and splits her time between teaching anthropology, folklore, and gender studies at Butler University; writing; and teaching and performing dance.

Cinderella Across Cultures is an important new publication in fairy-tale studies. With 18 chapters in addition to a foreword and introduction that do much to contextualize the volume, this book offers novel perspectives on a tale familiar to many, scholars and laypeople alike. For folklorists working in fairy-tale studies, or at the intersections of folklore and education (given that “Cinderella” has a history of being adapted in children’s literature with moralizing intentions), this is an important book. The cross-cultural material and less-known historical perspectives alone make it worth reading.

Editors Dutheil de la Rochère, Lathey, and Woźniak do an admirable job situating the essays in a global context in their introduction. Referring to Cinderella as a “global cultural icon” and “a universal metaphor to promote an unjustly neglected subject” (2), they give a short overview of the tale type’s history before mentioning some important picture book and performed versions (primarily in the media of stage, opera, ballet, and film). They cover manifestations of Cinderella in popular culture and criticism, focusing on the expected theoretical approaches (such as feminism and psychoanalysis) but also bringing in a hefty amount of framing from translation studies. They conclude: “Cinderella thus appears as a multilayered and ever-changing story endlessly adapted and reinvented in different media and traditions—very much like the elusive and multifaceted heroine herself” (18). Cinderella’s multiple transformations within the tale’s plot comprise a theme that most if not all the authors in the book address, in their provocative and fruitful attempts to explain the stubborn resilience of this tale.

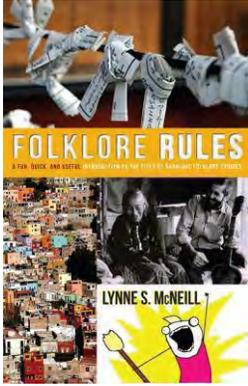
Two issues stood out as particularly intriguing: the varying interpretations of Cinderella in different versions of the tale, and the facets of the tale’s transmission less well known in the West. Exemplifying the first, I found it curious that in essays by Ruth Bottigheimer, Cyrille François, and Jack Zipes, Cinderellas from these classical versions are interpreted in rather different fashions. Bottigheimer characterizes Basile’s *Zezolla* as amoral, Perrault’s *Cendrillon* as virtuous and patient, and the Grimms’ *Aschenputtel* as quiet and pious. In contrast, François argues that *Aschenputtel* is simultaneously more active and submissive than *Cendrillon*, who mostly has wit working in her favor. Zipes argues that Perrault’s *Cendrillon* has innately good qualities, while the Grimms’ *Aschenputtel* has to earn hers, although “both tales entered the civilizing process of Europe to set a model of comportment: girls are to be gentle, pious, and good, and their beauty and happiness depend on their spiritual qualities” (360). Still, it’s clear from these essays that we’re

not yet done mining the classical versions of Cinderella for new insights. One useful observation to come from Bottigheimer is that the increasing importance of animal helpers in Cinderella retellings (i.e., Disney) has the consequence of reducing her agency, such that “the process of externalizing agency away from Cinderella by introducing animals to solve her problems also effectively strips the heroine of individualizing characteristics” (44). If any of us needed another excuse to be annoyed at Cinderella’s obnoxiously cute animal entourage, this would be it.

My second observation, about the more obscure aspects of Cinderella’s history, is based on a number of the chapters. Kathryn Hoffman’s essay on glassworks in 17th-century France and Italy brings a perspective informed by material culture to fairy-tale studies, which I always find to be a welcome juxtaposition. Hoffman points out associations between crystal and purity, and the legends of incorruptible saints in glass caskets, with which French and Italian consumers of both crystal and glass, and fairy tales, would have been familiar. It’s also helpful to see Hoffman’s thorough refutation of the *verre/vair*, or glass/fur, slipper misconception. Gillian Lathey’s essay on Robert Samber, who translated the first English version of Perrault’s “Cendrillon” in 1729, was also enthralling (not least because Samber translated other well-known children’s stories but also translated materials considered pornographic in their day). Essays by Talitha Verheij and Monika Woźniak also focus on translation, but of Cinderella into Dutch and Polish respectively. I was fascinated to learn in Xenia Mitrokhina’s essay on Soviet adaptations of Cinderella that we don’t have conclusive evidence of an indigenous Russian version of Cinderella that existed before Perrault’s version was translated into Russian in 1768.

Many of the essays also addressed Cinderella as adapted in various literary and visual contexts. Chapters on adaptations of Cinderella in the writing of Margaret Atwood, Emma Donoghue, and Angela Carter demonstrate just how useful Cinderella has been to writers chewing on issues of feminism, femininity, and identity. Mark Macleod’s essay on male Cinderella figures in LGBTI fiction might be of special interest to gender/sexuality scholars as well as educators looking for YA fiction that goes beyond the heteronormative. Similarly, Jennifer Orme’s essay on the picture book *Prince Cinders* grapples with gender norms and queerness in an accessible way, also pointing toward books that educators might want to use in the classroom. The visual arts discussed in other chapters—Polish posters, Dutch picture book illustrations, Soviet films—bring another dimension to this book often lacking in studies that are strictly from a folkloristic perspective. And Zipes’ chapter on Cinderella films is thorough enough to be tough to summarize, fitting given that “there were well over 130 different kinds of Cinderella films made during the twentieth and early part of the twenty-first centuries” (361) to begin with.

All in all, the essays in this book provide a well-rounded examination of the various forms Cinderella has taken over the centuries. From close readings of visual and filmic interpretations of Cinderella to accounts of the history and scholarship of literary and pop culture versions, this book has something for everyone. Ultimately, I agree with Bacchilega’s assessment in the foreword: “The essays collectively provide new insights into contextualizing, retelling, and reimage(in)ing Cinderella, and though they wisely do not aim for a global survey, they do engage cultural traditions that, while remaining rooted in a Euro-American context, decenter the Basile-Perrault-Grimms-Disney genealogy” (xiii). Cinderella’s legacy is not culturally monolithic, and thus scholarship thereon must not be either.



Folklore Rules: A Fun, Quick, and Useful Introduction to the Field of Academic Folklore Studies, by Lynne S. McNeill. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2013, xvi + 94 pp.

Trista Reis Porter

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Folklore Rules provides an accessible roadmap through the field of academic folklore studies for instructors and students of both introductory and special topics folklore courses. As the author, Lynne S. McNeill, details in “For the Instructor,” this book provides more than the expected, basic examples of folklore subjects such as quilts and old wives’ tales, but without attempting to be encyclopedic (xiv). By swapping out the long case studies evident in other introductory texts for succinct, relatable examples throughout, McNeill helps situate folklore studies within students’ lives in an approachable, connected way.

This 90-page book is split into four main chapters. In the first, “What Is Folklore?,” McNeill provides a working definition of the term and connects it to ideas of culture, variation, and tradition. The author acknowledges and expands on previous assumptions before identifying folklore as “informal, traditional culture” (14), a definition useful in its simultaneous succinctness and breadth. In other sections of this chapter, however, McNeill’s examples and explanations are unnecessarily reductive. The author does invite further nuances or problematizing of ideas at the beginning of the book (xvi) and challenges her acknowledged oversimplifications through the example of symphonic melodies and the ways “popular” or “elite” culture can be used and shared in a “folk way” (10). However, several paragraphs are devoted to defining folklore by what it is *not* rather than what it is or could be, and needlessly simplifying important terms. For example, McNeill’s description of “traditional” as simply “passed on” and its opposition to rather than relationship with “variable” or “informal” (13) seems contradictory to the fluid understanding of tradition that is usually taught.

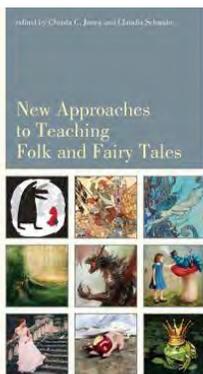
In Chapter 2, “What Do Folklorists Do?,” McNeill addresses assumptions of folklorists’ work and discusses the practices of collecting and analyzing texts, contexts, and texture. This chapter similarly warrants more complexity and explanation, although I enjoyed the author’s comparing of folklorists and criminologists to address playfully the assumptions of what it is folklorists do. The next section on “Collecting Folklore,” however, does not provide enough of a sense of *why* a folklorist would still want to collect, or the ethics of doing so, if the practice is historically tied to scholars’ beliefs that the “folk” were “the poor, the illiterate, the uneducated,” and that “folklore was the leftovers of an earlier age,” which “needed to be rescued from imminent demise” (23). Overall, Chapters 1 and 2 would benefit from a greater emphasis on the complex, connected, and generative capacities of folklore studies, as well as a critical engagement with the field’s history—a challenge that I acknowledge would risk falling into the long historiography of the field’s scope and terms, which the author largely avoids.

The last two chapters of *Folklore Rules* are by far the strongest and most valuable for teaching purposes. Chapter 3, “Types of Folklore,” considers different genres of folklore by dividing them into the categories of things we say, do, make, and believe. I especially appreciated the author’s

accessible identification of terms such as liminality and carnivalesque (48), as well as her inclusion of manufactured goods, found objects, and collections as potential “folk objects” (51-52).

Chapter 4, “Types of Folk Groups,” provides an overview of folk groups and how they are defined, as well as five specific, useful examples, including occupational, religious, campus, children’s, and digital folk groups. McNeill’s detailed elucidations of campus and digital folk groups, which illustrate the variable nature of folklore and how it is shared and practiced in everyday life, are particularly relevant for college-age students and expand the scope of folklore studies in ways that are often lacking in other introductory textbooks. Similarly, each section of Chapters 3 and 4 is supported by examples to which students can immediately relate, as well as brief annotated bibliographies of key folklore texts related to each genre or group. These bibliographies, also found at the end of Chapters 1 and 2, are especially useful for interested students or instructors wishing to expand on specific topics.

Overall, *Folklore Rules* accomplishes the author’s intentions of applying folklore to everyday life in a succinct, approachable, and enthusiastic text. Most of my apprehensions with the book concern McNeill’s means of defining terms and categories related to folklore studies, which at times are too narrow and lacking in complexity and nuance. As with other introductory texts, however, these are points that could and should be mediated by the instructor. Although *Folklore Rules* is less functional as a stand-alone text, much of its utility as a tool for instructors and guidebook for students comes from its brevity, clarity, and organization. Because of the book’s length and the organization of the chapters and sections, McNeill’s text can be parsed and supplemented by outside texts to suit the needs of the particular course and reading expectations. I look forward to integrating parts of this text in my introductory folklore course and observing how students engage with and relate to its subject matter.



New Approaches to Teaching Folk and Fairy Tales, edited by Christa C. Jones and Claudia Schwabe. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2017, 252 pp.

Lewis C. Seifert

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Over the past few decades, as fairy-tale studies have become an ever more vibrant field, university-level courses on folk and fairy tales have appeared more and more frequently in the curricula of a diverse range of disciplines, including anthropology, film and media studies, gender and sexuality studies, and language and literary studies, to name but a few. So, the time is more than ripe for a volume such as this, the first anthology of essays devoted to the teaching of folk and fairy tales. In it, editors Christa Jones and Claudia Schwabe have assembled essays by some of the most prominent scholars in the field who present a richly assorted panorama of methodological and pedagogical perspectives. In addition to disciplinary variety, the courses described in the volume approach fairy tales in different ways: many are devoted entirely to folk and fairy tales, but others are not and incorporate them as part of a broader topic. The result is a collection that is enlightening and useful for all those—veterans and newcomers alike—who teach or would like to teach these genres.

New Approaches to Teaching Folk and Fairy Tales is divided into four sections, preceded by a foreword by Donald Haase and an introduction by the editors. In the first, “Fantastic Environments: Mapping Fairy Tales, Folklore and the Otherworld,” three essays describe courses that relate the fairy tale to broader phenomena of myth, fantasy, and folklore. Christina Phillips Mattson and Maria Tatar discuss their course on fantasy and children’s literature that aims to have students read familiar texts otherwise, especially by pairing them with carefully selected historical and theoretical readings. Lisa Gabbert explains how she uses fairy tales in a course on folklore, shifting attention away from tales as texts toward tales as performances within a processual and action-centered framework. And Juliette Wood describes a course on the topos of the Otherworld and demonstrates how this thematic focus allows her to give students an in-depth exploration of fundamental human anxieties and desires expressed by folk and fairy tales.

The second section, “Sociopolitical and Cultural Approaches to Teaching Canonical Fairy Tales,” features four essays on teaching folk and fairy tales in specific cultural and historical contexts. Incorporating insights from ecocriticism, Doris McGonagill presents a course on the culturally specific meanings of trees and forests in the Grimms’ tales. Claudia Schwabe discusses a class on East German film adaptations of the Grimms that focuses on their overt and subliminal sociopolitical import. Christa Jones describes how she sets Perrault’s fairy tales against their historical and literary context and their afterlives. In a course on the figure of Shahrazad, Anissa Talahite-Moodley uses the *1001 Nights* to examine the dialogical elaboration of cultures with a focus on the relationship between the East and the West and the construction of the exotic Other.

In the third section, “Decoding Fairy-Tale Semantics: Analyses of Translation Issues, Linguistics, and Symbolisms,” four scholars present their approaches to questions of language, semantics, and translation. Christine Jones demonstrates how translation can and, indeed, *should* be foregrounded in the teaching of fairy tales in L2 (second language) as well as literature courses. Armando Maggi illustrates how he uses a tale by Basile and the adaptation by the Grimms to show that fairy tales are “inventive and dynamic conglomerations of motifs that travel through space and time” (148). Using the example of Hans Christian Andersen and adopting a literary perspective, Cyrille François insists on the importance of close attention to language—over and beyond motifs, themes, and structures—when studying fairy tales. By contrast, describing an activity on versions of *Little Red Riding Hood*, Francisco Vaz da Silva argues that the meanings of folk and fairy tales should be derived from comparative analyses aimed at identifying “symbolic equivalences.”

The fourth and final section, “Classical Tales through the Gendered Lens: Cinematic Adaptations in the Traditional Classroom and Online,” explores pedagogical approaches to gender and sexuality in folk- and fairy-tale texts and films. Anne Duggan explains how she has students use concepts from queer theory to analyze Ozon’s *Criminal Lovers* and Breillat’s *The Sleeping Beauty*. Pauline Greenhill and Jennifer Orme review the challenges and opportunities of teaching an online course about gender in fairy-tale film and cinematic folklore. And Jeana Jorgensen describes group classroom activities she employs in a course on fairy tales in a gender studies curriculum to foster both critical analysis and creative exploration. Across the board, the essays in this volume are detailed and specific about both the challenges and the successes of the activities, units, and courses described. A truly important contribution, this volume should be required reading for instructors who have a stake in teaching of folk and fairy tales.