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# Introduction

## *Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Teaching Folklore and Fairy Tales in Higher Education*

Christa C. Jones and Claudia Schwabe

*Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution. It is, strictly speaking, a real factor in scientific research.*

—Albert Einstein (1931), *Cosmic Religion*, 97

FROM THE EARLIEST STAGE OF STORYTELLING, ORAL TALES and their manifold retellings have served not only to mesmerize, entertain, and captivate listeners, but also to educate audiences about valuable life lessons and universal truths. Early tales contained examples of human conduct and provided guidelines on how to overcome serious challenges, survival struggles, or master problematic interpersonal relations. As Jack Zipes (2012) states in his recent study *The Irresistible Fairy Tale*, “For once a plethora of stories began to circulate in societies throughout the world, they contained the seeds of fairy tales, ironically tales at first without fairies formed by metaphor and metamorphosis and by a human disposition to communicate relevant experiences” (Zipes 2012, 4). These primary tales, as Zipes calls the early form of fairy tales, “enabled humans to invent and reinvent their lives” (4). In other words, primary tales invited human beings to propel themselves into a fantastic world filled with supernatural creatures, demons, and deities. Stories allowed listeners to mentally engage with these dangerous powers and forces of nature in the contained framework of the story and the safe space of their imagination, without putting their lives in jeopardy. Interestingly, fairies were not yet an integral part of these early tales or traditional storytelling, at least up until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which saw the rise of the French *contes de fées* (fairy tales) written by the likes of Madame D’Aulnoy, Charles Perrault, Mademoiselle Marie-Jeanne L’Héritier, Mademoiselle de La Force, Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont,

and, earlier on, Italian folklorists such as Francesco Straparola, Giambattista Basile, and Giovanni Boccaccio.

In the French fairy-tale tradition the literary fairy tale (in contrast to the *contes populaires*, or popular tales) emerged as an institutionalized phenomenon that addressed a dual audience made up of foremost women of the aristocracy and bourgeoisie on the one hand, and their children on the other. These literary tales, which were meant to reinforce the rules of courtly behavior and social mores, contained strong moral messages (*morales*, also referred to as *moralités*). They reflected primarily the tastes, values, and concerns of the French court society such as civility and propriety. The tales further highlighted the importance of reinforcing power alliances through advantageous marriages, for instance in Perrault's "Peau d'âne" (Donkey Skin) and "Riquet à la houppe" (Riquet with the Tuft), or prepared young court ladies for wedlock as in De Beaumont's "La Belle et la Bête" (Beauty and the Beast) (Perrault 1697). Perrault's "Le petit chaperon rouge" (Little Red Riding Hood), a classic cautionary tale, inspired the twentieth-century writers James Thurber, Roald Dahl, Angela Carter, and Anne Sexton, and continues to influence contemporary authors and filmmakers, including Karen Duve, Tahar Ben Jelloun, Catherine Hardwicke, Cory Edwards, and many others.

Though less didactic in nature than Perrault's moralistic tales, the Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (*Children's and Household Tales*) encapsulate fundamental educational and social values for adults and children alike (Grimm and Grimm 1974). Initially composed with an adult readership in mind, the Grimms later on embellished, sanitized, and reworked their tales to tailor them to what they perceived to be of educational benefit to children. They eliminated profanity and sexual references, added Christian prayers and values, expanded on narrative, and added illustrations. The most common didactic guidelines and mores that they incorporated into their stories include modesty, honesty, diligence, obedience, patience, courage, perseverance, and shrewdness. Although the *Märchen* reflect the social norms and cultural codes of nineteenth-century Germany, many of those values are still considered paramount in Western civilization, attesting to the universality of the Grimms' oeuvre.

In the Anglophone world, the connections between fairy tales, cautionary tales, and children as intended audience have been made through publications in nineteenth-century children's literature such as Joseph Cundall's (1850) *Treasury of Pleasure Books for Young Children*—which included Robert Southey's (1837) *The Story of the Three Bears*—and James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps's (1886) *The Nursery Rhymes of England*, which contained

the fairy tale “The Three Little Pigs.” This link was also emphasized by Heinrich Hoffmann’s (1845) *Der Struwwelpeter* (translated as *Shockheaded Peter*, first published in Frankfurt am Main in 1845, so interestingly during the lifetime of the Brothers Grimm), and by critics, most famously Austrian Holocaust survivor and child psychoanalyst Bruno Bettelheim (1976) in his seminal study *The Uses of Enchantments: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. Today’s entertainment industry, be it Walt Disney or Pixar Studios, continues to massively capitalize on classic fairy tales, putting out innumerable film productions which, as Jessica Tiffin (2009) points out in her study *Marvelous Geometry: Narrative and Metafiction in Modern Fairy Tale*, is “reassuring to children as well as to their parents, who can send children to see Disney films secure in the knowledge that sex and realistic violence will not be on the menu” (211–12).

In this collection, we dare to de-compartmentalize traditional fairy-tale research-based, analytical scholarship by shifting and expanding our focus of analysis to include international research on pedagogy in a higher-education setting. As we have come to realize while teaching fairy tales at Utah State University, pedagogy remains a much overlooked aspect of fairy-tale studies. Acknowledging the recent rise in important fairy-tale scholarship—such as Christine A. Jones’s and Jennifer Schacker’s (2012) *Marvelous Transformations*, Cristina Bacchilega’s (2013) *Fairy Tales Transformed?*, and Jack Zipes’s (2012) *The Irresistible Fairy Tale*—we have decided that the time has come to turn our attention to the neglected field of fairy-tale pedagogy and teaching methods. While there is a plethora of academic studies on folk and fairy tales, there is to date no comprehensive study on teaching fairy tales in English or foreign-language undergraduate and graduate student classrooms. Our edited collection fills this gap in contemporary folk and fairy-tale studies and is especially relevant, given that language teachers routinely use fairy tales in beginning, intermediate, and advanced foreign-language and -culture classrooms to improve students’ linguistic proficiency, and their cultural and intercultural competency. With this in mind, our edited collection focuses on the implementation of teaching strategies and methodologies in folklore, storytelling, and fairy-tale classrooms, and in other academic disciplines that use the age-old device of storytelling, including anthropology, cultural studies, history, linguistics, literature, philosophy, political studies, psychology, theology, women and gender studies, and beyond. To this end, we decided to bring together a number of international and cross-disciplinary approaches to provide materials and inspiration to first-time as well as experienced instructors teaching folk and fairy tales in the graduate and undergraduate classrooms. In this volume, we thus recognize the universal

appeal and teaching potential of fairy tales and their adaptability to different instructional classroom settings, both traditional and online. We wish to emphasize the educational opportunities offered by fairy tales, which can fill a broad range of curricular needs: instructors in a variety of academic fields can draw on fairy tales to help students improve critical-thinking abilities, strengthen writing skills, and explore cultural values.

As instructors of foreign language, culture, literature, and fairy-tale classes at Utah State University, a doctoral land-grant institution with high research activity, we have experienced firsthand a significant lack of hands-on resources and pedagogical tools for teaching fairy tales. While conversing about our experiences teaching fairy tales, we identified the need for a teaching volume that addresses this issue, and reflects the vitality and diversity of the field of folk and fairy-tale studies. With this in mind, we set out to give voice to an international group of experts in the fairy-tale and folklore fields with close ties to Algeria, Canada, Germany, France, Italy, Portugal, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Their rich scholarship and diverse teaching methodologies all highlight the use of fairy tales in courses where they might not initially be seen as relevant, such as in courses focusing on second language acquisition. Rather than restricting fairy tales to the fields that traditionally subsume the fairy tale within their purview, the chapters in this collection introduce fresh scholarly perspectives that expand the scope of courses beyond strict disciplinary boundaries. Building on an ever-growing body of fairy-tale research, which encompasses varied intermedial and intertextual approaches and academic disciplines—such as anthropology, creative writing, children’s literature, film studies, women and gender studies, cultural studies, socio-cultural and sociohistorical approaches, translation studies and linguistics, developmental psychology, and the fantastic in the arts—we hope to provide instructors with fresh ideas, teaching materials, and out-of-the-box teaching strategies they can draw on or implement in their own classrooms. We aim to offer new and adaptable pedagogical models that can easily be applied to fairy-tale texts and films and that invite students to engage with class materials in intellectually stimulating ways. This collection is intended first and foremost as a resource for specialized and nonspecialized higher-education instructors, fairy-tale and folklore scholars, or fairy-tale aficionados and aficionadas. We also hope to inspire instructors in other fields to take on the challenge of teaching fairy tales in their respective areas, for example second language (L2), cultural studies, translation or gender studies, and elsewhere, and thus contribute to the already existing cross-disciplinary dialog and scholarship. The teaching suggestions presented in the

following chapters are meant as platforms for lively and controversial class discussions, group projects, and independent research. While devising their own courses, instructors can adapt specific methodological approaches to their own needs.

We envision that our volume will help debunk the deeply ingrained misconception that the pedagogical use of fairy tales limits itself to kindergarten and elementary school settings, or children's literature departments. Likewise, our contributors unanimously stress the universal value and importance of fairy tales. By focusing specifically on pedagogy and student-centered research activities, our study aims to fulfill a pioneering role. Further, as editors, we are confident that this work will open the door to a new understanding and appreciation of the value of fairy-tale studies in higher-education teaching, and hence pave the way to further research in this area.

The four parts of this fourteen-essay-strong collection address diverse cross-disciplinary and fundamental, critical, and methodological approaches to teaching folk and fairy tales. Instead of organizing the essays by fairy-tale authors, their countries of origin, and time periods—a common thread found in many annotated anthologies—we organized the volume with a view to facilitating easy access for instructors' respective teaching agendas. The first part firmly grounds the teaching of fairy tales in the academic discipline of folkloristics, exploring key terminology, including fairy tale, myth, fantasy, folktale, folklore, and the Otherworld. The second part delves into sociopolitical, historical, ideological, and intercultural topoi underlying the canonical fairy tales and fairy-tale retellings of the Grimms, Charles Perrault, and the *Arabian Nights*. Translation issues, linguistics, and semantics are the focal points of the third part, which ties together European fairy tales from Germany, Italy, France, Denmark, and Britain. The final part introduces iconoclastic teaching ideas pertaining to canonical fairy tales and the interpretation thereof, by offering interpretations of classic fairy tales in light of new research in the areas of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT), gender, and women's studies, thus reinvigorating the discipline. It also features a chapter (see chapter 13, Greenhill and Orme) providing hands-on advice and directions for teaching a class online using fairy-tale films and folklore.

## **PART I. FANTASTIC ENVIRONMENTS: MAPPING FAIRY TALES, FOLKLORE, AND THE OTHERWORLD**

In their essay "Fairy Tales, Myth, and Fantasy," Christina Phillips Mattson and Maria Tatar, both from Harvard University, outline a class that invites

students to explore the porosity of generic borders that characterize malleable, fictional or, as they put it, “Wonder Worlds.” Works studied include classics, such as “Hansel and Gretel,” “Little Red Riding Hood,” “Beauty and the Beast,” *Alice in Wonderland*, and *Peter Pan* but also modern works, such as *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games*. The authors move along the spectrum between fairy tales, fantasy literature, myth, and history, by analyzing fairy-tale hypertexts, mythical subtexts, allusions, tropes, and parallels in a variety of works. In this decidedly student-centered class or, as Ernest Hemingway famously said, “moveable feast” that links (Roland) Barthesian reading pleasure, his *plaisir du texte*, to cognitive gain, students learn to apply the tools of close reading, discourse analysis, intertextuality, and poetics. They delve into the works of cultural critics, structural anthropologists, postmodernists, reader response theorists, philosophers, novelists, and linguists working in the field of folklore and fairy-tale studies.

Fairy-tale scholars Pauline Greenhill and Sidney Eve Matrix (2010) have defined fairy tales as “fictional narratives that combine human and nonhuman protagonists with elements of wonder and the supernatural. They come in traditional (usually collected from oral tellers) or literary (formally composed and written) forms” (1). This definition reflects our own understanding of the genre which, for the purpose of this edited collection, needs to be clearly demarcated from related concepts such as myth, fantasy, folklore, folktale, and the Otherworld. In the *Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy Tales*, Estonian folklorist Ülo Valk provides an in-depth definition of myth: “Folklorists see myths as stories about grand events in ancient times . . . , held to be true in the culture where they belong. As sacred narratives, they are included in religious canons and acted out in rituals; as a prominent genre of folklore, they have spread worldwide at different time periods from the Stone Age to the present day” (Haase 2008, 652). Out of fairy tales and myths grew the genre that is now referred to as fantasy, which, as children’s literature scholar Maria Nikolajeva pertinently writes, “stands close to the literary fairy tale, as it is created by a specific author, even though it may be based on a traditional narrative. Similar to literary fairy tales, fantasy is less rigid in plot structure and character types” (Haase 2008, 329). It is, she writes, a “modern genre, tightly connected with the development of Modern Age philosophy, psychology, natural sciences, and general worldview” (329). Many of the tropes, motifs, and fantastic elements of fantasy are rooted in traditional folklore.

Folklorist Lisa Gabbert in her class “Introduction to Folklore” at Utah State University, raises students’ awareness of the manifold possibilities of storytelling, as she relates in her chapter “Teaching Fairy Tales in Folklore



Classes.” Her class familiarizes students with basic disciplinary terminology, such as tale type, variation, and fundamental principles in the discipline of folklore. Students are invited to discover the metaphorical dimensions of folktales and their relationship with reality in well-known German, French, and Russian fairy tales. Furthermore, they are confronted with materials that do not fit their assumptions of what constitutes folklore, such as email scams, practical jokes, and graffiti. Materials cover staple fairy tales, such as Alexandr Afanas’ev’s (1945) *Russian Fairy Tales*, Grimm’s *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, and Native American tales and other twentieth-century texts, such as Zora Neale Hurston’s (2008) *Mules and Men*, and Kirin Narayan’s (1997) *Mondays on the Dark Night of the Moon*, which are discussed against cultural and comparative contexts and theories outlined by Max Lüthi, Elliott Oring, Alan Dundes, and others. Gabbert also includes a teaching unit centered on issues of transcription, translation, and orthography, as well as a unit on collectors, tellers and settings, the latter emphasizing the performative nature and social context of tales. As folklorist and storyteller Kay Stone (2008) points out in her collection of essays *Some Day Your Witch Will Come*, *Märchen* most often mean “printed texts in books, for some scholars and most general readers,” while folklorists “are aware that behind each printed text are countless unrecorded tales by innumerable traditional oral artists, with no single telling capturing the full potential of any given story” (78). For their final project, students complete a hands-on assignment by doing fieldwork: they collect examples of folklore and thus obtain the experience of collecting, documenting, classifying, and interpreting folklore materials. Students learn that folk and fairy tales are not merely entertainment for children but carry deeper meanings.

The term *folktale*, a direct translation from the German *Volksmärchen*, is often used interchangeably with the term *fairy tale* (*Märchen*), which in fact comprises both oral (*Volksmärchen*) and literary fairy tales (*Kunstmärchen*). As folklorist JoAnn Conrad clarifies, the term *folklore* itself was an appropriation of the concept of *Volkskunde*, the lore of the people, into the English language (Haase 2008, 364). According to Swedish ethnologist Barbro Klein (2001), folklore has four basic meanings: “First, it denotes oral narration, rituals, crafts, and other forms of vernacular expressive culture. Second, folklore, or ‘folkloristics,’ names an academic discipline devoted to the study of such phenomena. Third, in everyday usage, folklore sometimes describes colorful ‘folkloric’ phenomena linked to the music, tourist, and fashion industries. Fourth, like myth, folklore can mean falsehood” (5711).

The Irish folklore of the Otherworld—rich in its manifestations, supernatural creatures, and environments—is at the center of Juliette Wood’s

course (and chapter 3), “At the Bottom of a Well: Teaching the Otherworld as a Folktale Environment.” The course caters to students seeking degrees in folklore and cultural studies, English literature, and European languages at Cardiff University in Wales. The Otherworld can be broadly defined as “a realm beyond the senses, usually a delightful place, not knowable to ordinary mortals without an invitation from a denizen” (MacKillop 2004, 359). According to folklorist Hilda Roderick Ellis Davidson, “The Otherworld may be reached through the air, perhaps on a magic horse or an eagle’s back, or by descending into the earth, and the general impression is of a land of richness and beauty, where enormous distances may separate one kingdom or supernatural being from another” (Davidson and Chaudhri 2003, 119). Wood’s class examines various ways in which the Otherworld can be presented in the context of teaching folktales. Using examples from different cultures and existing folktale collections, she surveys the Otherworld topos exemplifying the diverse ways in which it was adapted to “folktale” environments across cultures and through time. Some of the selected Otherworld tales and variants under consideration are “The Star Husband,” “Jack and the Beanstalk,” “Frau Holle,” “The Search for the Water of Life,” and “East of the Sun and West of the Moon,” with a special focus on the Celtic Otherworld and Welsh tales. While the course draws attention to the approaches and tools used by scholars to address fundamental questions about the meaning and origin of the Otherworld trope, students-centered approaches are at the heart of this class: students engage in creative-writing projects, conceptualize their own Otherworlds and folktales, and learn about the basic concept of spatial otherness through explorations of medieval maps illustrating fantastic worlds. The class aims to teach students how the Otherworld topos, with its narrated journey to an alternative environment, functions within specific tales as a way to express fundamental human needs, desires, and anxieties. Together with her students, Wood also pursues the question of archetype as a way of understanding and explaining the notion of the Otherworld, and the discourses surrounding interpretations of the Otherworld in folk narrative.

## **PART II. SOCIOPOLITICAL AND CULTURAL APPROACHES TO TEACHING CANONICAL FAIRY TALES**

In “The Fairy-Tale Forest as Memory Site: Romantic Imagination, Cultural Construction, and a Hybrid Approach to Teaching the Grimms’ Fairy Tales and the Environment,” German professor Doris McGonagill ties the study of fairy tales to ecocriticism, that is, the focus on nature and questions

about the interaction between humans and the environment. In her upper-division, undergraduate-level class taught at Utah State University, McGonagill invites students to follow “the trail into the woods” as a path to social memory and to examine trees and forests in the Grimms’ tales as constructions, expressions, and repositories of the cultural imagination. By pairing fairy-tale studies with an interest in the physical environment as a lens to examine cultural memory, McGonagill’s hybrid teaching approach suggests several distinct lines of synchronic and diachronic investigation that both focus and enrich the textual and contextual analysis of fairy tales. A catalog of questions concerning fundamental concepts—such as nature and the environment, narrative, fairy tales and folklore, and collective memory—serves as a valuable assessment tool to determining students’ level of knowledge before and after the teaching unit. This innovative class is designed to make students’ learning a truly transformative experience by drawing on multiple disciplines and promoting a deeper appreciation of the tales’ historical specificity. McGonagill offers students profound insights into the Grimms’ romantic project and their attempt to compensate experiences of longing and loss with the nostalgia of literary imagination. At the same time, students in this class benefit from close readings of individual tales, topical contextualizations, and informed discussions on German mystification of the forest.

Claudia Schwabe’s chapter “Grimms’ Fairy Tales in a Political Context: Teaching East German Fairy-Tale Films” brings Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft (DEFA) fairy-tale productions and their subliminal socialist messages and anticapitalist tropes into keen focus. In her upper-division, undergraduate-level course at Utah State University, German professor Schwabe and her students investigate relevant links and political connections between the Grimms’ fairy tales and the former German Democratic Republic. Through sociohistorically sensitive discussions about state propaganda, students are encouraged to critically engage with the East German past, examine the functions of socialist realism and ideology in the Workers’ and Peasants’ State (*Arbeiter- und Bauernstaat*), and relate their findings to DEFA’s fairy-tale adaptations. Drawing on an intermedial teaching approach that incorporates literary texts, films, songs, posters, paintings, and online resources, Schwabe’s constructive class provides students with fresh insights into how fairy tales and their innumerable retellings serve as cultural signifiers by reflecting a society’s cultural traditions, moral sensibilities, values and virtues, accepted gender norms and roles, and attitudes toward life. Students not only conduct in-depth film analyses, but also explore the fundamental concepts of gender equality, social classes,

political propaganda, and punishment and reward systems in DEFA productions, such as *Rumpelstiltskin* (1960), *Snow White* (1961), *Little Red Riding Hood* (1962), *Mother Holle* (1963), *The Golden Goose* (1964), *Sleeping Beauty* (1970), and *Three Wishes for Cinderella* (1973).

Christa C. Jones, in her communication- and writing-intensive undergraduate course at Utah State University “Teaching Charles Perrault’s *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* in the Literary and Historical Context of the Sun King’s Reign,” offers close readings of Charles Perrault’s *Contes* and surveys works by other key seventeenth-century writers, such as Jean de La Fontaine, François de La Rochefoucauld, Jean de La Bruyère, Marie-Catherine D’Aulnoy, Madame de Lafayette, La Comtesse de Ségur, and Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont. Students learn about French absolutism and about historical and literary concepts, such as classicism, *honnête homme*, propriety, salon culture, and intertextuality. Throughout the semester, they investigate the magnetism and longevity of Perrault’s tales and try to answer why, as Jack Zipes puts it, these tales “stick.” Reading Perrault’s source tales against contemporary rewritings and cinematic adaptations, students examine how heteronormative stereotypes are either perpetuated or undermined today, for example, in Jean Bacqué’s *Cendrillon* (1966), Jacques Demy’s musical comedy *Donkey Skin* (1970), in Olivier Dahan’s television film *Le Petit Poucet* (2001, “Hop-o’-My-Thumb”), or in Catherine Breillat’s television production *The Sleeping Beauty* (2010). By studying Perrault’s tales in their sociohistorical context and against contemporary remakes, students develop their literary and historical knowledge and gain a better understanding of both seventeenth-century and modern-day France.

Anissa Talahite-Moodley’s discussion-centered gender studies course “Lessons from Shahrazad: Teaching about Cultural Dialogism” at the University of Toronto is focused on feminist and postcolonial readings of *The Arabian Nights*, examining how its framing narrative, Shahrazad’s story, has been reinterpreted and rewritten through a variety of media in the past and in the present. Students apply key concepts of literary theory and cultural and historical studies to this hybrid text as they analyze East/West relations and the concept of the exoticized cultural, or gendered “Other.” Centering on cultural dialogism and drawing on key theorists such as Julia Kristeva, Fatema Mernissi, Roland Barthes, Mikhail Bakhtin, Gérard Genette, and Edward Said, they analyze Orientalism and issues of gender, and they revisit mediatized, stereotypical concepts of “Arab culture,” or the “Muslim world.” During the course of the semester, students engage with questions such as “Can the story of Shahrazad be read as a reflection of the society and culture within which it is set? And, if so, to what extent? To

what extent can we consider a work of fantasy as the ‘true’ reflection of a culture? What are the processes at work in such imaginings of the Middle East and Muslim/Arab culture in particular?” The manifold translations and retellings of the *Nights* underline the porosity of the border between historical objectivity and the collective imaginings of community, nation, and culture.

### PART III. DECODING FAIRY-TALE SEMANTICS: ANALYSES OF TRANSLATION ISSUES, LINGUISTICS, AND SYMBOLISMS

Christine A. Jones’s class, “The Significance of Translation,” teaches students at the University of Utah that translations constitute creative writings in and of themselves, since they are based on interpretation and adaptation. Her three-pronged class unit focuses on first, translation and second-language (L2) pedagogy, taking “Cinderella” as an example; second, comparison and idiosyncrasy, taking “Little Red Riding Hood” into the English-language classroom to reveal the female figure’s unstable character; and third, translations over time, using the figure of Sleeping Beauty to uncover the impact her English personae had on her reception in France. Students compare a number of English-language translations of Perrault’s *Contes* with various English-language translations from different periods of the texts’ print history, such as Robert Samber’s 1729 adaptation of “Cinderella” or American A. E. Johnson’s 1962 rendition of “Little Red Riding Hood.” Delving into the cultural palimpsest of fairy-tale reception and transmission, students learn that translations are more than a tool to transmit foreign-language stories. They thus come to credit translators for their creativity and immense influence on the fairy-tale history.

“Giambattista Basile’s *The Tale of Tales* in the Hands of the Brothers Grimm” is the title of Armando Maggi’s valuable contribution to this collection. As Italian professor at the University of Chicago, Maggi teaches an undergraduate, ten-week course “Baroque Fairy Tales and Their Modern Rewritings.” Maggi’s illuminating piece centers on the rewriting of classic fairy tales, and in particular on Basile’s *Lo cunto de li cunti* (published posthumously in 1634–36) and the subsequent appropriations of his texts. The main goal of the class is to teach students how to critically engage with folktales and fairy tales, to treat the tales with the same respect as they grant other literary genres, and to appreciate them as artistic artifacts. As an integral part of his effective teaching strategy, Maggi foregrounds the complex interaction between oral and written texts through close readings of selected

fairy tales. At the same time, Maggi integrates creative and unconventional, fun teaching activities into his curriculum, such as the use of fairy-tale tarot cards when discussing the crucial concept of “motif.” The students in this course examine how skillfully the Brothers Grimm reshaped and manipulated several of Basile’s fifty Italian tales in order to bring the tales closer to their poetics. By dissecting the Grimms’ literary style, the students learn that the German tales do not result from a faithful transcription of an oral performance, but rather from a meticulous stylistic procedure.

Cyrille François, senior lecturer at Université de Lausanne (Switzerland) presents in his chapter “Teaching Hans Christian Andersen’s Tales: A Linguistic Approach” a new modality for studying Andersen’s tales through a linguistics-oriented analysis. François’s well-conceived teaching approach is based on close readings of tales from a linguistic perspective with an emphasis on translation. Through class discussions, lectures, comparative studies, and linguistic analyses, students learn that fairy tales differ significantly in the way in which they are told and gain deeper insights into the revolutionary impact of Andersen’s tales on the Danish language. In order to better understand Andersen’s productive fairy-tale output in its European context, François encourages his students to compare the paratexts of collections by Andersen, Perrault, and the Grimms. By drawing on the works of Viggo Hjørnager Pedersen, Diana and Jeffrey Frank, and Sven Hakon Rossel, students better comprehend the challenges associated with translations and how to successfully overcome those challenges when translating Andersen’s tales. One crucial objective of the class is for the students to develop a fine sense for Andersen’s special language by comparing his tales, for example, “The White Swans,” with similar texts by Mathias Winther and the Grimms. Focusing on punctuation, deixis, and reported speech in the classroom, the chapter reveals how students and instructors who do not know Danish can still make useful comparisons between Andersen’s tales and their translations.

In his essay “Teaching Symbolism in ‘Little Red Riding Hood,’” Francisco Vaz da Silva, professor of folklore and anthropology, focuses on a two-week introduction of his fairy-tale class at Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (Portugal). Students in this course learn that grasping symbolism in fairy tales demands taking into account thematic variations, that is, focusing on intertextual links rather than on any single text. As an integral part of his introduction to symbolic analysis, Vaz da Silva employs an effective hands-on approach: together with his students he explores four variants of the popular tale “Little Red Riding Hood”—the literary texts by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, and two oral variants (one

French, the other Portuguese)—to reach beyond the commonplace knowledge of the theme. By teaching his students about the common misconceptions that orally transmitted stories are based on a specific fairy-tale urtext or authorial story, Vaz da Silva uses a strategy he calls “a flip of the mind” to help students understand *why* intertextual readings of a given tale are of paramount importance. Students critically engage with seminal works by Frederic Bartlett, Roman Jakobson, and Petr Bogatyrev, and they discuss Alan Dundes’s ideas on the symbolic equivalence of *allomotifs*—the different motifs occupying the same narrative slot in different texts. Thanks to Vaz da Silva’s scaffolding strategy and a constructive course design, students then learn *how* to undertake intertextual readings and to explore the symbolic codes underlying all the variants of “Little Red Riding Hood.”

#### PART IV. CLASSIC TALES THROUGH THE GENDERED LENS: CINEMATIC ADAPTATIONS IN THE TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM AND ONLINE

Anne E. Duggan’s class “Binary Outlaws: Queering the Classical Tale in François Ozon’s *Criminal Lovers* and Catherine Breillat’s *The Sleeping Beauty*,” at Wayne State University, introduces students to queer theory (drawing on theorists Alexander Doty, Steven Angelides, Lauren Berlant, and Michael Warner) and the “queer possibilities” of the fairy-tale genre. Students do comparative readings of classic source tales (Charles Perrault’s “Sleeping Beauty,” Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Snow Queen,” and the Grimms’ “Hansel and Gretel”), and Breillat’s and Ozon’s contemporary French fairy-tale films. Both filmic remakes destabilize normative gender roles, calling into question their heteronormative plots and the traditional configuration of gender roles. In this communication-intensive course, students carry out comparative analyses of the films and their source tales in ways that foreground the queering techniques of the films, and the queer possibilities of traditional source tales. By weaving Perrault’s “Sleeping Beauty” and Andersen’s “Snow Queen” into her film, Breillat subverts gender oppositions that mark Perrault’s heteronormative source tale. Students learn that the concept of “binary outlaws” (characters that move between masculine and feminine, heterosexual and homosexual, active and passive) in both films challenges heteronormativity and points to new, queer fairy-tale forms.

In “Teaching ‘Gender in Fairy-Tale Film and Cinematic Folklore’ Online: Negotiating between Needs and Wants,” fairy-tale and gender studies scholars Pauline Greenhill and Jennifer Orme share their longtime experience teaching online (starting 1989 for Greenhill and 2009 for Orme),

and here, teaching a third-year undergraduate online women's and gender studies class at the University of Winnipeg, Canada (also see Greenhill and Matrix 2010, which contains materials for their course). Negotiating pedagogical goals, available materials, and analytical approaches to the content are challenging when teaching online. Audio and video lectures, readings, and films made available online include *Little Red Riding Hood* (1997, Kaplan), *The Juniper Tree* (1990, Keene), *The Wolves of Kromer* (1998, Gould), *Donkey Skin* (1970, Demy), *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* (2001, Kunuk), and *Capturing the Friedmans* (2003, Jarecki), among others. Challenges tied to time, technical, and quality-feedback issues are outweighed by the benefits of independent and collaborative learning, analytic, peer-reviewed writing, and web discussion assignments. Orme cautions that preparing a course online takes about twice as long as preparing for a traditional course.

Fairy-tale and women's studies scholar Jeana Jorgensen in her stimulating essay "Intertextuality, Creativity, and Sexuality: Group Exercises in the Fairy-Tale/Gender Studies Classroom" puts her students in the driver's seat in an upper-division class taught at Butler University. This chapter is particularly valuable and thought provoking, given that Jorgensen—as do Greenhill and Orme—reflects on why certain approaches worked or failed in her classroom. She details three specific group exercises focused on the depiction of sexuality and the intersections of gender, sexuality, and intertextuality. Students analyze a broad range of classic German, French, and Danish fairy tales and contemporary retellings such as the film *The Company of Wolves*, the television show *Dollhouse*, and Angela Carter's *The Sadeian Woman*. Guided by a catalog of questions, prompts, and specific instructions, her students become creative participants in the production of tales. Assignments include blog posts, presentations, lectures, and three short essays—"Versions and Variations," "Revisiting Disney," and "Scholarly Sources"—in addition to other creative writing exercises and fairy-tale retellings.

The importance of studying fairy tales is clear to scholars in the field, yet needs to be reiterated to a wider public. As Christina Phillips Mattson and Maria Tatar eloquently put it, their teaching goals are tailored to their students' needs and interests, because students acquire skills and insights they can use in their major programs. They further enrich their personal worldviews by learning to call into question long-held convictions: "Our students acquire the critical skills they need to be successful in this course and in their other college courses, as well as in their postcollege lives (e.g., critical thinking, close reading, thorough research, and composing a clear and logical argument)" (personal communication). Another recurrent



teaching goal, stressed by contributor Anne E. Duggan, is to recognize the importance of reading fairy tales critically. All too often, they are taken for granted as being “innocent,” nonideological texts for children.

As the following chapters show, fairy-tale pedagogy—or as the Germans put it, *Märchenpädagogik*—is highly diverse. Most instructors in this collection use a mixed approach that combines several teacher- and learner-centered strategies. Teacher-centered approaches include lectures, lecture-discussions, demonstrations, and direct instruction, whereas learner-centered approaches include small-group work, fairy-tale retellings, games, reading reports, role-plays, discussion groups (in the classroom or online), creative projects, student presentations, case studies, discovery learning, graphic organizers, journals, blogs, scaffolding, Know—What to Know—Learned (K-W-L), problem-based learning and inquiry, research papers, and simulations. Virtually all teaching methodologies to some extent emphasize comparative close readings of texts or film materials, interpretation and analysis of literary texts or cinematic adaptations, discourse analysis, semantics, and poetics. As instructors, we constantly need to remind ourselves that we are responsible for the quality of the ongoing intellectual dialog in our classrooms and that by making our lessons as interactive as possible, we can considerably enhance the quality of class discussion and the free-flowing exchange of ideas. Finally, it is essential to appropriately frame fairy tales in their respective cultural and historical contexts so that students may develop a deeper understanding of the intricate and complex ways that continue to shape the fairy-tale web (see Bacchilega 2013). May this collection serve as a “compass” to guide your teaching and steer your students safely through the web of stories.

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