

explanation that can account for all of the various elements. Dundes nevertheless attempts this in his concluding article, "Wet and Dry, the Evil Eye," and succeeds quite well. The article is written with great acuteness and excellent scholarship. One cannot help but agree with his main argument that the essential opposition of wetness and dryness, in terms of their relationship to the forces of life and death, forms the central explanation for the various aspects of the evil eye seen elsewhere in the book. One might wish, however, that more attention had been devoted to the other, more universal aspects of evil-eye belief as it occurred in the ancient world. I have little doubt that attitudes similar to those reflected in the Sumerian account can be found in ancient Scandinavian sources with possible roots in pre-Christian culture. For example, one Icelandic saga written before the middle of the thirteenth century contains an account of the execution of two magicians, both of whom had bags placed over their heads to prevent their using the evil eye. The bag of one was removed before he was drowned, however, and he uttered a curse upon a man and his family that later seemed to come true. The other magician, who was stoned, managed to see out of his bag with one eye and fixed his gaze upon a grassy mountainside, which was scorched black and never again supported a living thing (MAGNUSSON and PALSSON 1969, 135-38).

The Evil Eye will prove valuable for everyone involved in folkloristic research. I feel that the editor has, for the main part, succeeded remarkably well in his choice of essays for the volume, especially considering the vast amount of material available (though I would have liked to have seen at least one additional article from Scandinavia or from the mainland of northern Europe). The opening essay, "The Research Topic: Or, Folklore without End," forms a good introduction to the book as a whole, offering a serious look at the main challenge of study in folkloristics, yet presenting it in such an amusing fashion that the spirits of even the most serious of folklorists are certain to be raised.

REFERENCE CITED

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FOHR, SAMUEL DENIS. *Cinderella's Gold Slipper: Spiritual Symbolism in the Grimm's Tales*. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, The Theosophical Publishing House, 1991. xvii+223 pages. Illustrations, appendix. Paper US\$11.95; ISBN 0-8356-0672-4.

Samuel Fohr proclaims in his introduction to *Cinderella's Gold Slipper* that he is going to demonstrate "beyond the shadow of a doubt" that all fairy tales "have a spiritual content expressed symbolically" (xiv), that they are "purposeful creations designed to teach spiritual truths" (187). His attempt to do so is based on the accumulated weight of many examples, with about fifty tales selected from the Grimm collection. In an appendix, he justifies his choice (against Ellis and Dundes), declaring that "one is on safe ground in analyzing the Grimms' collection in terms of traditional spiritual symbolism" (210). I shall give some examples demonstrating Fohr's approach to the task

he has set for himself.

Let us begin with his analysis of AT 151, "The Strange Minstrel." He sums up what the story means: "Animals usually symbolize the various cravings that form our lower nature. The wolf is a symbol of gluttony, the fox a symbol of greed, and the hare a symbol of lust . . . [They] symbolize the various temptations we meet within life—food, material wealth, and sex" (25). But the woodcutter, wielding his ax, symbolizes God. Fohr then takes us deeper into the meaning: "The psyche is forced to make a decision" (26); "in the present story the soul refuses to fall into the traps set by the desires" (27). And he concludes that the story's message is that we are to transmute our desires: "The animals are chased away by the raising of the ax" (symbol of the Divine Spirit), which means that once our soul "has realized God, it has no further need of desires" (27).

Dealing with AT 513 in chapter 4 ("Six Make Their Way in the World"), Fohr says that the hero's five companions symbolize the five senses, and that the story is thus about "a person whose soul commands his senses" (30) and who is "ready to pursue ultimate happiness." The king and his daughter, however, represent the world and worldly temptation, and the story teaches us that our real task is to find "our unity" and realize our "identity with God" (32). Here his argument seems forced and his conclusion strained. Still, he is bent on proving that every story teaches a moral lesson, even if one has to strain a bit to pull one out of the hat.

This becomes obvious in the next chapter, when he deals with a genuine tale of magic (*Zaubermärchen*), AT 533. Fohr shows us how to go about abstracting the facts of a story:

The mother of the princess, the queen, represents the Passive Pole of existence from which we are all born. And in being born we, as it were, lose our father, the Active Pole of existence. That is to say, we come almost completely under the influence of the Passive Pole, and this influence is generally considered demonic in that it tends to pull us down to the lowest form of life—the life of the senses. (38)

The author offers us a straitjacket of morality, instead of resting confident (as all story narrators do) that empathy and the play between projective engagement and the unconscious will lead to a creative reworking of the dramatized relation-conflict found in the folktale.

The book is filled with similar examples. Occasionally the author assigns characters new roles. The evil mother in AT 403 represents the body, her daughter represents the psyche, and the stepdaughter represents the spirit; the author explains that the psyche tends to side with the body against the spirit (40). And "the spiritual lesson" of the Biblical story of Jacob, Leah, and Rachel is "that before we can advance spiritually, we must work through our lower nature [Leah], or deal with the problems generated by the lower nature and overcome them" (43). And so on. We are asked to accept one such gratuitous interpretation after another. Even with folktales of the "jokes and anecdotes" (*Schwänke*) class such as AT 650A, normally playgrounds where a narrator can indulge in the grotesque and in humorous exaggeration, and where the listeners can admire and enjoy the unexpected trickery, Fohr will not let matters rest: there *is* no joke, he says, it's all very serious. Ignoring the entire purpose of the grotesque tale, he feels compelled to indulge in the dextrous splitting of one character into two. Thus the blacksmith who provides Grimm's young giant with the unbelievably huge iron cudgel or beam "represents God," and the cudgel itself "represents the

Divine Spirit . . . the only unbreakable beam in the world" (51). To explain why the blacksmith (who represents God, remember) is treated rudely by his customer, the author offers the fanciful suggestion that "it may indicate that once we have advanced spiritually, we have no need of a spiritual teacher." But, no doubt sensing the oddity of such a deduction, he provides his readers with a third decodification: "As a maker of metal products, he also represents technology and worldliness," and thus deserves to be treated badly (52). As you like it.

At the end of this book, which is a collection of rigid "how to understand" patterns and which makes not even the slightest attempt to discover the narrative structure and inner aims of the tales, Fohr suggests that he is supported and endorsed by all the Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Islamic, and Christian traditions that have utilized example stories as vehicles of instruction (198). But his attempt to interpret folktales by forcing them into the mold of stories used for spiritual education and moral training fails to adequately explain the vitality of the tales throughout the world in both traditional and literary form. In his closing remarks he quotes in support of his views Propp, van Gennep, Winterstein, and several other authors who deal with mythology and initiation rites, but he does not consider the possibility that there might be elementary forces keeping folktales alive, forces connected with the unconscious and involving such dynamic elements of the individuation process as separating oneself from one's parents, finding a partner, and learning to love. It goes without saying that learning to live in harmony with one's unconscious desires requires more than well-meaning, persuasive moral training. We may agree with the author when he states, following Mircea Eliade and Max Lüthi, that folktales are a sort of substitute for ancient initiation rites (197). But not in the sense he is taking it.

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OLRIK, AXEL. *Principles for Oral Narrative Research*. Translated by Kirsten Wolf and Jody Jensen. *Folklore Studies in Translation*, edited by Dan Ben-Amos. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. xxviii + 210 pages. Appendix, information, and references by Hans Ellekilde, bibliography by Kirsten Wolf and Jody Jensen, index. Hardcover US\$29.50; ISBN 0-253-34175-2. (Higher price outside North America)

Olrik's *Principles for Oral Narrative Research*, composed between 1905 and 1917, was still incomplete when he died in 1917. It was finished by one of his students, Hans Ellekilde, and published in 1921, but unfortunately the language—Danish—is not one that many scholars can read. The most original part of the work, the "Epic Laws," has appeared in German and English translation, but the work as a whole has remained inaccessible to a larger readership. With the long-awaited appearance of the present volume, however, this is no longer the case.

This book not only presents Olrik's theory of epic laws but also shows how his ideas developed as he interacted with his teachers Svend Gruntvig, Kristian Erslev, and Moltke Moe, the leading Norwegian folklorists of the time. Information on these matters is provided in Ben-Amos's foreword, Bengt Holbek's introduction, and Hans Ellekilde's detailed notes. These sections of the book as well as the main text reveal Olrik as a meticulous scholar who examined folk narrative—particularly Danish bal-