

the formalist school in the book.

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NØJGAARD, MORTEN, JOHAN DE LYLIUS, IØREN PIØ, BENGT HOLBEK, eds.
The Telling of Stories: Approaches to a Traditional Craft. A Symposium. Odense, Denmark: Odense University Press, 1990. 192 pages.
Paper 200,00 Dan. Kr.; ISBN 87-7492-748-5.

This slim volume contains the presentations given at the 13th International Symposium of the Centre for the Study of Vernacular Literature in the Middle Ages (Odense, 21-22 November 1988); its theme was the performer and his craft.

L. Röhrich's "Tiererzählungen und ihr Menschenbild" [Animal stories and their images of human life] (13-33) is a casual, easy-going interpretation of several tales of various genres which sides with the long-held view that many folktales portray the weak gaining over the strong. In his "Moral Attitudes in Traditional Narratives about Childlessness and Childbirth" (35-46), B. af Klintberg offers a "research program" for the investigation of differences in the telling of the same tale-type by male and female narrators; his examples are four versions of the tale-type AaTh 755 and several versions of a joke about adultery. In the presentation "How Storytellers Interpret the Snakeprince Tale (AaTh 425, 430, 432, 441)," L. Dégh brings several versions of this tale-type as told recently in Hungary by her long-time narrators. In the reviewer's opinion, the texts show a clear loss of fairy-tale style and the strong influence of mass literature and electronic media narrative productions—never mind the degree of literacy of the narrators. TV does not demand literacy, and style, apparently, trickles down. H. El-Shamy offers in "Oral Traditional Tales and the Thousand Nights and a Night" (63-117) a concise review of the intellectual attitudes of the local Egyptian literary circles to oral literature and to the collecting and publishing of folktales from the eighteenth century till the recent academic efforts. In doing this he displays a broad basis of learning, for which the scholarly community is very much indebted to him. In the second part of his paper, El-Shamy compares two stories from the *Arabian Nights* (versions of AaTh 676 and AaTh 980, respectively) with their life on the recent Egyptian scene and in the Egyptian contemporary oral folk tradition. One may not always agree with El-Shamy's classifications of the tales, but there can be no doubt about the erudition that he displays. The most interesting part of the paper is the description of the Egyptian literary attitudes of the twentieth century that repeat those of the Romantic period in Europe in the eighteenth/nineteenth centuries, and of an Egyptian, U.S.-based scholar finding it interesting to pick up today an argument from the early thirties with WESSELSKI (1931). Apparently, no jumps are possible and everybody has to have his own experience. H.-J. Uther's "Hans im Glück (KHM 83). Zur Entstehung, Verbreitung und Darstellung eines populären Märchens" [Lucky Hans (KHM). Study of the genesis, distribution and graphic representation of a popular fairy tale] (119-64) is a very learned history of the literary fortunes of this story (AaTh 1415) in word and picture, which Uther considers to be a literary and not an oral product. The last two papers, the crisp style of which is a welcome dessert after the heavy main course of the two previous papers, address themselves to Hans Christian Andersen's work. B. Holbek, "H.Ch.A.'s

Use of Folktales" (165-82) looks for the roots of Andersen's tales in the oral tradition (and finds little of it!), while T. Brostrøm, "H.Ch.A. und die literarische Märchentradition" [H.Ch.A. and the literary tradition of the fairy tale] (183-92) looks for the roots in the literature of Andersen's time (and finds many!).

In conclusion, as at every scholarly meeting, few are the participants who relate themselves to the themes of the meeting the organizers took pains to select. Paradoxically, the small volume shall be used and remembered primarily for El-Shamy's and Uther's contributions, both of which do not address the meeting's official theme.

REFERENCES CITED:

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BOLTE, J. and G. POLIVKA [KHM]

1913-1931 *Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm*. 5 vols. Leipzig: Dieterich.

WESSELSKI, Albert

1931 *Versuch einer Theorie des Märchens*. Reichenberg i. B.: F. Kraus.

Heda JASON

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TONG, DIANE. *Gypsy Folktales*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1989. xv+252 pages. 16 plates, bibliography, indices of storytellers, countries, and titles. Cloth US\$19.95; ISBN 0-15-138310-3. Paper US\$12.95; ISBN 0-15-637989-9.

In this collection Diane Tong introduces folktales of the Rom (Gypsies) from all over the world, including India, the Near East, Europe, New Zealand, and North America. The approximately 200-page main text contains eighty texts from thirty-one countries, although the term "countries" must be taken in the broad sense: the areas certain of the Rom groups inhabit do not always coincide with recognized national borders, and Tong's narrators often grew up in other countries than those they lives in later. The editor illustrates her approach to classification with two examples (13): a Rom originally from Greece, but for twenty years a resident of New York, is listed under "Greece" because of his close links with his native land, while the writer Matéo Maximoff, though born in Spain of Russian parents, is entered under "France." Greece is the most heavily represented region with thirteen tales, followed by five tales each for India, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia (not divided into provinces), England, and the United States. These six countries thus account for nearly half of the tales in the collection.

The tales date from the period between 1870 and 1987; I find it particularly commendable that more than half of the accounts were collected in recent decades (during the sixties to eighties). Also praiseworthy is the decision to include various types of tales: in addition to novellae and tales of magic, we find jokes, etiological tales, ghost stories, and legend-like narratives. This approach not only demonstrates the vigor and diversity of the Rom narrative traditions but also reflects the actual performance of storytelling. Tales: tales of magic are by no means predominant, either among the Rom or other ethnic groups.

Tong has personally recorded seventeen tales in Greece and New York, mostly