

## BOOK REVIEWS

### GENERAL

BRÜCKNER, WOLFGANG and KLAUS BEITL, editors. *Volkskunde als akademische Disziplin. Studien zur Institutionenausbildung* [Folklore as academic discipline. Studies concerning the formation of institutions]. Mitteilungen des Instituts für Gegenwartsvolkskunde Nr. 12. Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, 414. Band. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1983. 228 pages. Paper, ÖS 280.— ISBN 3-7001-0585-1. (In German)

This volume is made up mostly of papers presented at a symposium celebrating the 400th anniversary of the University of Würzburg and more specifically to inaugurate a new research center in Mattersburg, Austria for documenting, archiving and publishing the history of the discipline of folklore in the German-speaking world. The book is divided into three parts: 1) the establishment and institutionalization of folklore as a university discipline, 2) folklore during the Third Reich, and 3) research and documentation problems of contemporary folklore. As one might expect, the papers delivered at such a symposium are quite varied in their content and appeal.

In an opening position paper Wolfgang Brückner attempts to justify the need for such a center, to explain why it should be in Austria (more nearly neutral), and then calls for a person-oriented institutional history. Brückner recognizes that some "constellations" have developed at universities, but suggests that the primary driving force behind disciplinary development has always been the ambition of individual personalities as initiators and innovators. In the first section of the book there are seven reports on the history of folklore at various German-speaking universities. Thus, Helmut Eberhart reports on Graz (Austria) and traces the cultural-historical interests of such well-known scholars as Rudolf Meringer and Viktor Geramb, briefly describing Geramb's removal from office by the National Socialists only to return after the war. Georg Schroubek, in exhaustive detail, lists individuals associated with folklore at the University of Prag (Czechoslovakia) until 1934, summarizing courses offered from the university catalogs. In spite of this boring listing of individuals and courses Schroubek is able to discern a pattern which he sees as national-historical and folkhistorical, and concludes by quoting from a lecture in which August Sauer calls for folklore to become the firm basis for literary history, which would then lead to an understanding of the folk character, and finally of national character. Hans Trümpy also lists the great names of folklore in Switzerland and uses the occasion to rebut some of the misunderstandings which grew out of Richard Weiss' post-war book on *Schweizer Volkskunde* (1946). According to Trümpy, Weiss never conceived of his book as a Bible of German folklore, but was very much concerned with helping the discipline get back on its feet in the aftermath of the war. Rolf W. Brednich, in his inaugural address at Göttingen (1982), which he then contributed to the symposium at Würzburg, traces folklore

endeavors at Göttingen for two hundred years, from 1782–1982. His paper attempts to associate the first use of the word *Volkskunde* with Göttingen, to show the importance of such luminaries as the Grimms, Theodore Benfey, and even to single out ideas conceived in Göttingen which later resulted in the historical-geographical (Finnish) method. Far more fascinating than this search for roots in Göttingen, is his description of the occupying of the first chair of folklore in Göttingen by a National Socialist, Eugen Mattiat, who was unable to begin his lectures during his first semester, since he first had to “work up this new research area.” The contribution by Alfred Höck on the history of folklore in Hesse is little more than a parade of names associated with the numerous historical societies, with costume research, and with the two Hessian universities of Gießen and Marburg. There is virtually no comment on courses and lectures under the influence of National Socialism and there is no substantive tracing of the discipline during the war and immediately following. Erich Wimmer also falls prey to the name and course listing pattern that the others have followed, treating the Bavarian universities at Munich, Würzburg and Erlangen. Only at the very end of his paper does he show how folklore was strengthened by making it one of the requirement choices for teacher education in Bavaria. The study by Christoph Daxelmüller, Jewish Folklore in Germany before 1933, is unlike the others in this section. It is a detailed and very thorough sketching out of a distinct minority culture in Germany which was constantly faced with liberalization (and thus assimilation), and with internal conflicts when western Jews were suddenly faced with large numbers of eastern Jews who fled the pogroms in their traditional homelands. The development of Jewish folklore, particularly under the influence of Max Grunwald, is then traced through the Society for Jewish Folklore, the YIVO Institute, and finally through Jewish museums and museology. Daxelmüller concludes his excellent survey with an emotional appeal to German folklorists not to overlook the history of the Jewish minority in Germany as a research topic.

The second section includes three very unequal studies of folklore during the Third Reich. Heidemarie Schade teases the reader with a brief but very intriguing look into the files of the De Gruyter publishing house in Berlin, a major publisher of folklore, quoting letters from the publisher to some well-known folklorists, e.g., John Meier, and about others, e.g., Will-Erich Peuckert. De Gruyter's letters reveal not only a very real dissatisfaction with sales problems, but also with some of the folklore studies, this “chewed up folklore mush,” causing Herr De Gruyter on occasion to go into a “cold rage” when he had to deal with requests for financial subvention for works promised. Schade cites several letters in which the political leanings of many famous German folklorists during the 1920s and 1930s can be discerned. Gerhard Lutz' treatment of the Rosenberg Bureau is disappointing for the simple reason that Lutz is known and highly regarded as an historian of German folklore. His paper is too superficial and does little more than concentrate on the role of Matthes Ziegler as a driving force in the “Nazification” of folklore in Germany. Lutz was apparently embarrassed at the symposium when he stated that nothing was known about Ziegler after he left the Bureau on his own request and disappeared after the war. He had to admit in a footnote that he did not know that Ziegler was in fact active as a protestant minister in the Odenwald during the immediate post-war years. Peter Martin concludes this section with a fascinating portrayal of the Reich Vocational Contests, through which students wrote essays about their disciplines and competed for recognition and even the possibility of going to Berlin to be personally congratulated by Hitler himself. Over 700 of these essays have survived and are in the university archives in Würzburg. Those which treat folklore themes and which were directed by well-known folklorists

certainly represent an unusual chapter in the history of the discipline as well as a unique research source.

The final section of the book gives the reader some ideas on the inception of the idea for a scholarly document center (by Brückner and Beitzl), a brief look at the plans of the center to publish an historical lexicon of folklorists as well as a contemporary bio-bibliographical listing of those active in the field (by Martischinig), and finally a presentation of a similar undertaking by German scholars of English and American studies (by Thomas Finkenstaedt).

The book is certainly valuable for the detail which it offers on individuals, institutions, publishers, etc. Perhaps it is too much to expect from the proceedings of a symposium, but the promise by Brückner in his opening remarks that German folklore and folklorists would be treated as part of the "great intellectual developments, scholarly educational programs, cultural changes and political developments," is true in only a very few cases in this volume. Even more disturbing is the failure on the part of good scholars to address the problems of the last fifty years, particularly the fascistic intrusion in the discipline and the post-war refusal to deal with it, both of which are unfortunately very much a part of the history of the discipline. What the book offers, however, is a useful collection of papers which treat the early history of the discipline of folklore in the German-speaking world, and a few unique insights into the research potential of archives of publishers, societies, and university departments. Like so many other German undertakings, this one too promises to result in a research locale and a multi-volume lexicon of individuals and institutes, but there is little real discussion here of intellectual and social history.

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CARNES, PACK, editor. *Fable Scholarship. An Annotated Bibliography*. Garland Folklore Bibliographies. Alan Dundes, general editor. Xvi+382 pages. Name and subject index, index of fables, tale type index. Hardcover US\$65.00, ISBN 0-8240-9229-5.

The volume under review is intended for the folklorist, but it should be welcomed by scholars in other disciplines, as well. Readers of this journal should be warned that the reviewer is not a trained folklorist: my qualifications derive from having at one time been obliged to prepare myself to teach a freshman comparative literature course on "fairy tales and fables." Locating critical and historical writing about fairy tales presented few problems, so long as one did not ask that it make sense; but finding information about fables was a slow and frustrating business, for lack of precisely that sort of bibliographic guidance which Carnes's work offers. I am, therefore, very much aware of the difficulties encountered by the novice in this field. The work is not as convenient to use as it might be; its value and utility are nevertheless undeniable, and they far outweigh its shortcomings.

The book consists chiefly of approximately 1450 bibliographical entries, each accompanied by a paragraph of summary of the contents of the work in question. In accordance with the purposes of the series, the summaries often include evaluative comment. Unfortunately, it is not invariably clear whether a closing sentence represents the author's conclusions or Carnes's comments on them; vague and slovenly