

BOOK REVIEWS

GENERAL

GEORGES, ROBERT A. and STEPHEN STERN, compilers. *American and Canadian Immigrant and Ethnic Folklore: An Annotated Bibliography*. New York: Garland, 1982. Xix+484 pp. US \$15.00

This bibliography of American and Canadian immigrant and ethnic folklore lists articles and books published in English from 1888 to 1980. After the first section devoted to items of a general nature, the bibliography covers fifty-six groups from "Armenian" to "Yugoslav." When an item treats more than one group, e.g., PL26 "A Study of Ethnic Slurs: The Jew and the Polack in the United States," it is cross-listed (JE20), but its annotation appears only once, under the heading of the group discussed most (PL26, i.e., Polish).

In addition to the multiple listing, four indexes ("Folklore Forms and Topics"; "General Subject"; "Geographical"; and "Author") facilitate combing through the pages to find the desired references. A combination of two capital letters and Arabic numerals identify the item. The actual reference and annotation can then be found by thumbing through the pages as one would do with a dictionary. The reader is helped with the numbers by the headings at the top of each page, which give the range of numbers contained there, e.g., "GE146—GE155." An exception to the alphabetical arrangement of the identifying capital letters is GL (General), which is placed before A. Within the individual groups, the references are arranged alphabetically according to author and also alphabetically within the author's works.

Since bibliographies of Mexican-American and Afro-American folklore have already been published, the editors did not repeat that work here. For Spanish-speaking people other than Mexicans, they put all the references under the heading "Spanish." In a word, the fifty-six groups represent European and Asian immigrants and their descendants. Since the groups may overlap, it is necessary to check the general listing to see whether there is a general, or related, category which may contain some pertinent references.

As an annotated bibliography, this book contains only those items which the compilers had in their hands. (For a more complete bibliography one would need to consult the annual *MLA Bibliography, Vol. I*.) The "List of Periodical Runs Consulted for This Work" tells which journals were examined volume by volume. When issues or volumes were not obtainable, those numbers are listed behind the journal title.

Asian Folklore Studies XLII (1983): 291-292, contained a review of Dan Ben-Amos, *Folklore in Context*. The reviewer singled out the article on the telling of Jewish jokes by Jews. Since Ben-Amos went counter to the frequently heard interpretation of "self-ridicule" or "self-hatred," I decided to investigate those interpretations as well as test the immediate usefulness of this bibliography by looking up articles on Jewish humor. Under *jokes, ethnic* were several seemingly useful items: JE28 ("Form and Function of the Ethnic Joke"); JE34 ("The Jewish Joke: The Problem of Definition"); and JE73 ("Protest Humor: Folkloristic Reaction to Prejudice"). Although these are good leads, the index did not direct me to the original

publication of the Ben-Amos article (JE7) nor to JE36 ("Tradition and Adaptation in American Jewish Humor"), which seems to be a very important article for showing the functions of Jewish jokes. For those references I would have had to consult the captions *jokes* or *jokes, dialect*. As it was, I found them by reading through section XXIX, JEWISH. Since the fifty-seven sections are usually not very long (in this case, eighty-four items), the user would most likely read all the annotated references in the group. Lest this index-loophole discourage some buyers, I would like to emphasize that the real value of the book is to be found in the annotations which more precisely inform readers whether or not the item will be useful.

The annotations are more or less fifty words long. They describe the contents, indicate the types of material and source data, summarize the arguments presented, and in general try to provide as much information as possible. In fact some pieces are précis worth reading as they are. I would recommend checking the items first in the index and then reading through the entire section of one's interest. In most cases the reader can read an entire group or even several groups of annotated references quicker than he could read one article, and in the end will have a better idea of what has been done and what needs to be done in the field.

Asian Folklore Studies readers may like to consult this work for hints or how to organize and present their own studies. They may also want the references to do comparative studies between the Asian peoples they report on and their American relatives.

The book lies open for easy note-taking and is a fascinating source of information in its own right. The compilers are Robert A. Georges, Professor of English and Folklore at the University of California, Los Angeles, and Stephen Stern, Associate Director of the UCLA Oral History Program.

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MÜHLMANN, WILHELM E. *Die Metamorphose der Frau. Weiblicher Schamanismus und Dichtung* [Metamorphosis of the woman. Female shamanism and poetry]. Berlin: Reimer 1981. 259 pp. Bibliography, index and glossary. Paper, DM 68.—, ISBN 3-496-00193-3

Contrary to Max Weber's assertion that the development of science leads to the production of ever more specialized specialists, Mühlmann stresses the need for an interdisciplinary perspective in studying a *topos* like shamanism that itself transcends the narrow confines of any specialized science. His remark that Weber might have changed his mind had he only lived longer than he did (9) might one make wonder if Mühlmann, the octogenarian, did not himself come late to appreciate the value and necessity of an interdisciplinary approach. However, a reading of this intricate book soon shows that rather than reaping a new insight Mühlmann has crystallized the leading ideas of his former work into something like the final account of his life as a student of human culture. There is no radical turnaround at the end of a long scholarly life. And yet Mühlmann opens perspectives that are intriguing and challenging at the same time.

He begins by professing his conviction that cultural anthropology is that science that is most apt to allow for an interdisciplinary approach to a given topic. Based on such views he embarks on a study of woman as shaman. Most significantly he was put on this track by being struck by the mantic elements he encountered in the