

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

writings of Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, the Westfalian poet of the 19th century. Interpreters have long found her poems strange, difficult and obscure. To Mühlmann the cause for the difficulties in interpreting her poems was the inability to recognize her mantic and shamanic talent. He shows that the cryptic loci in her work can be fully understood if one accepts the idea that they reveal instances of a genuine shamanic experience. But the prevailing culture or ideology of her society, and of our as well, does not accept such outbursts of "primitivism" as a legitimate experience, and so they are ignored, misunderstood, or what is worse, repressed. After a lengthy discussion of a shaman's characteristics the author goes on to point out that they continue to exist under systematic religions which however try to ignore or suppress them.

I might say that he stresses two points: one more general, another more particular. The general point is that cultural anthropology allows the researcher to understand such phenomena, because he is able to appreciate even strange phenomena due to a fundamental connaturality (*connaturalitas*) he himself shares with all human beings. This regress to the very fundamental prepares him to grasp and understand basic phenomena as what they appear, refraining from any value judgement. By applying further his *Schichten-Prinzip* (principle of strata), a principle he first explained thirty years ago, Mühlmann goes on to explain how such basic traits link up with present phenomena. It means that any given phenomenon is only the individual form of an underlying fundamental entity. Therefore it can only be understood if it is seen in a historical context which links it to its foundation. Mühlmann understands this historical aspect in a double way, both as history in the ordinary sense of the term and also as "inner history" in the psyche of an individual.

From this theory he proceeds to develop the more particular point that shamanism is basically an affair of women. According to Mühlmann female shamanism is not only genetically older, it is also more genuine than male shamanism. Only later when patriarchic systems had become predominant did males try to ridicule and suppress this woman's role. But an analysis of the shaman's characteristics makes it clear that they converge much better with women than with men. To begin with, the fundamental disposition of the shaman to be a sufferer (*ein Dulder*) is more akin to women, since the capability to suffer is seen as more a virtue of women than of men (18). This suffering is sympathetic in the word's literal sense, and therefore enables the sufferer to participate in the suffering of all mankind. But Mühlmann also stresses that this suffering is more than just a passive disposition, it is at the same time active, because out of this disposition emerges *poiesis*, action in the wider sense of the word which includes especially poetic and dramatic creation.

In a dazzling *tour de force* that itself seems to be shamanic Mühlmann brings into his argument philosophy (including tantric philosophy), Jung's psychology, literature, history of religion, and ethnology. All this is mustered to show how it is the special power of the woman (*Weibmächtigkeit*) that makes her predestined to be a shaman and as such a protector of men. As one of the shaman's characteristics Mühlmann points out that he/she would shock the audience through otherwise unaccepted and therefore strange behavior. In a way this can be said also of the manner the author treats his readers, especially those not familiar with older traditions of German scholarship. And so one is constantly amazed at the perspectives that open up before one's mind, even more so because they are almost exclusively based on known material.

Mühlmann's argumentation is apt to lead one to question other approaches that more or less intentionally exclude any historical consideration from their analysis of human culture and/or confine themselves to nothing else but their minutely defined area. I can accept this as a healthy challenge, although it is not to mean that I accept

Mühlmann's ideas of the diffusion of shamanism as he propounds them or that I think that his argument is not open to attack. While agreeing that similar phenomena where they occur can be analyzed in similar terms, I do not think that at this moment we are ready to agree on what these terms are to be. That is part of the reason I feel that Mühlmann brings too many things together too easily. On the other hand I think that his basic points have to be accepted and need to be seriously reflected upon. Why is it that the woman as a shaman plays only a minor if any role in most anthropological writing in spite of the fact that indications do not lack that point to the fundamental role she played or still plays in this field? And what does it tell us about our own culture that this charisma of the woman is suppressed and ignored?

What Mühlmann has to say about the poetic creativity of the woman shaman and how this relates to oral traditions of songs, epics, prayers etc. will be of special interest to folklorists. Therefore I hope that this book will find many thoughtful readers. The trouble, however, is that the book almost forbids this kind of reading, because its text flows on and on like a huge stream, carrying all sorts of materials until it comes to an abrupt end. After an introductory first part, the shaman's features are discussed in the second, and the third mainly applies the findings to interpret the work of women poets. However the book's form is more of a line-up of elements than the development of an argument. Here the author could have used the benefit of a good editor, who among other things would have eliminated only half-digested words that are neither English nor German as they stand, noticed and rectified plainly intelligible sentences, omissions, incongruencies, and a host of disturbing misprints. To mention only some that stand out: Why is there a chapter IV but no chapter III? Why is Friedrich-Budruss referred to in five notes yet not found in the bibliography? Why does van Ruisbroeck's name appear in three different spellings—one in the text, another in the index and still another in the bibliography?

As to the discussion of Japanese material, viz. the women who were the writers as well as the heroines, of Heian literature, I find it interesting at times stimulating. Although I would agree that communal shamanism (*Gemeinde Schamanismus*) is older than the forms that prevailed at the court, I do not believe that the source material really allows one to make a meaningful statement on concrete features of this kind of shamanism as that it was mainly in the hands of old women. This statement becomes even more problematic where the author goes right on to say without further qualification that these old and often blind women can still be found in modern Japanese religions (175). I wonder if he has not lumped together a few things that at least in reality are apart, viz. the often blind necromancers of the *itako* type of northern Japan and some of the women who were foundresses of new religions. But for neither of them it would be a condition to be old in order to function in their role. The fact that blindness is a feature of most necromancers does not prove that it is a necessary factor. Many of these women, because they were blind, had no other chance to make a living for themselves than to become a necromancer.

In another instance names are mixed up. The author correctly introduces Kyōkai 景戒 as the compiler of the collection of stories known as *Nihon ryōiki* 日本靈異記 but he is mistaken when he states that the same man introduced tantric Buddhism into Japan (190). This honor has to go to Kūkai 空海.

The attempt to cover lots of disparate ground invites shortcomings. However, the mainly formal shortcomings of this book should not discredit the importance of its message. I would especially hope that the ideas put forward are taken up and seriously discussed and tested by folklorists and other students of culture.

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