

distinctively Tamil colors. Besides humans, animals, and demons, Hindu gods, such as Siva, Parvati, Kali, and Ganesa also figure in them. Most of the tales belong to the tales of magic (AT 300-749), novelle (AT 850-999), and jokes (AT 1200-1999); the number of other tale-types is considerably smaller. As folktale is a living genre in India, the reader can find references not only to the realia of the past but to modern inventions such as an electrical fan, a lorry that is needed to bring home the gifts of the heroine, and photos that help to identify characters. The marvelous elements, regarded by some researchers as the key for understanding fairy tales, appear in many tales. We read about various transformations (for example, snakes and scorpions who turn into jewels and gold, a man who turns into a hawk); talking ants and animals who help the heroes; a human's marriage with a rat-wife; the revival of somebody whose body has been cut into pieces; a little finger that substitutes for the heroine and talks with wild animals, and so on. Disjunction between the poetic realm of folktales and the every-day world is evident. The author does not focus, however, on the fantastic elements, but instead stresses the importance of moral lessons in his reading of the tales, where crimes tend to be followed by punishments. According to Blackburn, tales "register the moral concerns of the narrative community" (277). This thesis connects different narrative genres of Tamil folklore introduced in the book and sounds convincing. Following the observances of Ramanujan, Blackburn draws attention to the contrast between the religious and philosophical law of karma and the mechanism of punishment in folktales. The notion of retribution through karma is extremely rare in them; punishment is usually carried through by human, demonic, or divine agency. Thus, in spite of the fantastic elements, the folktales offer a more rational theory of retribution than the Hindu law of karma, which is an issue of religious belief.

The afterword of the book is as fascinating and thought provoking as the anthology itself. Blackburn discusses the ethnical genres, the performance of folktales, and folktales' relationship with local society. He interprets some prominent tale types and their heroes. Even more questions could be asked about the connections and discrepancies between the moral and immoral issues in the narrative world and real life. Blackburn's study provides further evidence about the difference between male and female tellings but of what kind of connection is the one between tales and society, a society shaped by caste divisions?

Moral Fictions is an inspiring, informative, and useful book, and a balanced monograph that introduces both new sources and sound interpretations of them by one of the leading researchers of Indian folklore.

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HANDOO, JAWAHARLAL, editor. *Folklore in Modern India*. ISFNR XIth Congress Papers, volume 3. Mysore, India: Central Institute of Indian Languages, 1998. viii + 232 pages. Cloth, n.p.; ISBN 81-7342-053-X.

HONKO, LAURI, JAWAHARLAL HANDOO, AND JOHN MILES FOLEY, editors. *The Epic: Oral and Written*. ISFNR Xlth Congress Papers, volume 5. Mysore, India: Central Institute of Indian Languages, 1998. 234 pages. Cloth, n.p.; ISBN 81-7342-055-6.

In an earlier review of the 9th Congress of the International Society for Folk-Narrative Research proceedings (KOROM 1999), I faulted the editor for not arranging the contributions into thematic groupings that would have made the volumes more useful for scholarly research. Fortunately, the editors of the Mysore Congress have heeded this call to produce a more easily accessible collection of essays. The two volumes under review here constitute two-sixths of those proceedings, the other four being *Folklore in a Changing World*; *Folklore: New Perspectives*; *Folklore and Discourse*; and *Folklore and Gender*. It is a pity that the latter four volumes were not available for review, but the two volumes discussed here demonstrate a significant improvement over previous ISFNR proceedings, and Jawaharlal Handoo, the general editor of the series, deserves credit for overseeing their publication.

Folklore in Modern India consists of eighteen contributions divided into four sections (Indian Folklore: Ancient Roots; Traditional Narrative: Changing Functions; Epic Themes and Folk Performance; Urban Folklore), with an introduction on folk metaphor and modern Indian society by the editor. In section one, Carsten Bregenhøj updates Indian and Indo-European theories in folk narrative research, Jennifer Haswell discusses sentiment in Pali narrative literature, S. Carlos analyzes indigenous concepts of modern Tamil ballads, and Nita Mathur attempts to construct an indigenous thesaurus of folk concepts. A fifth essay by Mahri Bagheri on a folkloric motif in the Persian *Shāhnāmeḥ* seems oddly out of place in a volume on Indian folklore, even though the author does draw parallels with some Vedic materials.

In the second section, Birendranath Datta examines the changing functions of traditional narratives in northeastern India, C. M. Bandhu explores the dynamics of continuity and change in Nepali ballads, F. M. Bhatti provides a general and descriptive account of Panjabi narratives, Venetia Newell describes the social functions of Panjabi oral historians and genealogists both in South Asia as well as in the diaspora, Puiikonda Subbachary analyzes caste myths as counter-narrative traditions, and Soumen Sen looks at the social reality of folk narratives in matrilineal Khasi culture.

The third section includes a co-authored article by Ann Grodzins Gold and Lindsey Harlan on epic themes in Rajasthani women's rituals, Susan Wadley on the *Dholā* epic as a form of "native anthropology," Joyce Burkhalter Flueckiger on a regional *Mahābhārata* performance in Chhattisgarh, Richa Negi on the Pandava drama performed in the Garhwal Hills, and Nazir Jairazbhoy on metanarratives in the tales of Amar Singh Rathor. Lastly, the final, and shortest, section includes two essays, one by Leela Prasad on bilingual joking, and the other by Sadhana Naithani on the contemporary uses of folk genres by popular entertainers.

All of the essays in this volume attest to the continued vitality of Indian folkloristic study, yet some of the contributions are merely skeletal in nature, providing only a cursory outline for what one hopes would be more complete presentations in the future. Still others cover familiar ground explored more extensively elsewhere by more seasoned authors such as Gold, Harlan, Wadley, and Flueckiger. The anthology does, however, retain the flavor of the original presentations and provides useful descriptive and analytical data of value to the South Asian folklorist.

The volume on epics is comprised of thirteen essays divided into four sections (Oral

Composition of Epics, Epic Traditions in India, Epic and History, Integrating Oral and Written), with an introduction on oral and semi-literary epics by Lauri Honko. In section one, Lauri and Anneli Honko develop the concept of multiforms in epic composition, John Miles Foley examines the “rhetorical” persistence of traditional forms in oral epics, and Minna Skafté Jensen returns to Albert Lord’s concept of transition in relation to the Homeric epics.

The second section focuses more specifically on Indic materials, with Heda Jason comparing Indian and Euro-Afro-Asian epic traditions, John Brockington reviewing the evidence for formulaic expression in the Sanskrit *Rāmāyaṇa*, Mary Brockington exploring the “two brothers” (AaTh 303) in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and Wadley again contributing on oral and written versions of the Hindi *Dholā*.

Section three is the briefest in this collection, with a contribution by Doris Edel on the Irish *Táin Bó Cúailnge* and Isaac Olawale Albert on a royal Yoruba historian. Finally, in section four, Lauri Harvilahn presents the poetic “I” as an allegory of life, Kirsten Thisted reports on oral and semi-literary Greenlandic traditions, Jiāngbiān Jiācuo provides a brief sketch on the Gesar cycle in contemporary Tibet, and Jia Zhi looks at the central role of the minstrel in understanding oral epic.

With the exception of the last two papers by the Chinese scholars mentioned above, the second volume under review here is, in general, more complete in terms of editing and scholarly apparatus than the first volume. Both volumes, while highly informative descriptively and theoretically, could have been strengthened by eliminating the brief “report” papers included therein, for they take away from the strength of the other, more complete essays included in the collections. But perhaps the decision to leave them in was determined in the spirit of proceedings’ volumes in general; namely, to include all of the papers presented at the conference. This is a minor quibble, but more vexing is the lack of an index for either volume. Including indexes would have made the volumes even more user friendly than they already are. It is my hope that future ISFNR volumes retain the thematic-volume approach, but that they refine the editing even more to include indexes in each of the separate volumes.

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MARZOLPH, ULRICH. *Narrative Illustrations in Persian Lithographed Books*. Handbook of Oriental Studies, Volume 60. Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2001. xii + 302 pages. Illustrations, list of sources, indexes of names mentioned in the sources, bibliography. Cloth €93/US\$109.00; ISBN 90-04-12100-5; ISSN 0169-9423.

Marzolph, an expert on Persian narrative tradition, has made an exhaustive study on illustrated lithographed books of the Qajar (1794–1924) period. Lithography as an early form of printing technique started to flourish from the middle of the nineteenth century and replaced