

*Tale*;\* the threat offered titillating fillips of plot complication for the ingenuity of romancers and dramatists to work on—it turns up a century after Shakespeare's death in the libretto of Alessandro Scarlatti's opera *Griselda*, for example.

What Dundes fails to explain is how a theme capable of being dealt with so trivially can yet form the kernel of a catastrophe so elemental and complete as that which every reader and viewer experiences in *Lear*. The play is not only about the rupture of sexual order; it is about the rupture of social, political, and even natural order. The question that Dundes has failed to ask himself is not what the play's folkloristic "sources" might be but what claim any "source" can have on the meaning of the finished work of art to which it merely contributes. Perhaps the answer must be different in every case; here, it might be suggested, the power of the play arises at least in part through the very disparity between the slightness of the cause and the violence of the effect—but this is suggestion only. It may be that Dundes is right; nevertheless, I should hesitate to entrust my automobile for repair to a mechanic who did not care to discriminate between the car and its starter.

Despite the reservations stated above about the content and form of *Cinderella: A Folklore Casebook*, I profited from reading it. The collection fulfills very adequately its aim of not only providing information but stimulating discussion; the reader leaves it both with a keener appreciation of the successes of folktale scholarship and with a chastened awareness of the pitfalls.

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CLARKSON, ATELIA and GILBERT B. CROSS. *World Folktales. A Scribner Resource Collection*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980. Xiv + 450 pp. Appendices, selected bibliography. Paper US \$12.95. ISBN 0-684-16290-3 (Cloth ISBN 0-684-17763-3).

This is a mixed bag of folktales and children's tales, drawn from a variety of countries and ethnic groups, intended for use in classrooms ranging from the elementary school to the university. To be fair, the stories are meant to be retold by elementary school teachers, and not read directly by the pupils, but it should be stressed that elementary education was a major consideration in the compilation of the book.

As a "resource collection" the book is meant to be a source for those interested in comparative folklore studies and cross cultural comparisons of tales. The sixty-six stories are broken into ten basic categories, and each story is followed by a brief essay on its history and major points, then a list of motifs it contains, finally a list of parallel versions in other sources used by the editors.

As noted, the book is made with the student in mind. An appendix includes an essay penned by a bright grader on the topic of comparative folklore as well as guidelines for the assignment of paper topics in the college classroom and a variety of other information concerning the use of folklore in education.

Forty of the sixty-six stories are from either European or North American sources, and another six are the products of minority ethnic groups on the North American continent. Four stories are African (though at least one has been completely retold and is useless as source material), two are Russian, and there are a few stories from

\* I am indebted to Joanne Lafler for reminding me of this instance.

Asia included as well. The editors consider Russia to be a part of the "Far East" tradition. More legitimate Asian stories include one from China, one from Japan, one from Korea, one from Tibet and two from Cambodia.

In spite of its title, then, the book is primarily a collection of *Western* folktales, and one soon notices in the cross references listed at the end of each story that the editors have spent very little time looking through their Asian source material. Many legitimate references are omitted, and stories basically unrelated to the story in question are sometimes listed as "parallels."

The student of Asia might thus feel somewhat disappointed with the book, for here might have been the chance we were all waiting for to place Asian material in a larger, comparative light. Alas, this is not to be, and the mixture of teachers and Friends of Folklore that the book is intended to service is apt to come away with the impression that the folktale is more western than anything else. There is a touching account of the members of an elementary school class dressing up like Africans and presenting a "traditional" evening of African storytelling, but this serves mainly to further the impression that non-western stories are "exotic." (It also says something about the state of elementary education in the United States, but we will be better off not opening that can of worms.)

It is probably not fair to expect a single collection to present a perfect balance of stories. On the other hand, the book advertises itself as being a "resource collection" of "world folktales," and the annotations are included for those who wish to pursue comparative studies. Comparative studies are highly valued by the editors, who obviously feel that their own contributions are important. So a certain amount of grumbling that the book contains only six stories from Asia out of sixty-six, or that the Japanese and Chinese selections are far from being representative of the traditions of those two countries, or that the annotations reveal a large gap in knowledge of Asian traditions, etc., is justifiable.

Perhaps the book will have some utility to people who want a mish-mash of Stories From All Over for whatever class they are teaching ("Use of the Opening Formula in Interpersonal Relationships and Childrearing Aesthetic Practices," perhaps?), but it will be of little or no use to folklorists. Its notes are too spotty, and all the stories are available elsewhere.

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#### PAPUA NEW GUINEA

STANEK, MILAN. *Geschichten der Kopfjäger. Mythos und Kultur der Iatmul auf Papua-Neuguinea* (Stories from the headhunters. Myth and culture of the Iatmul of Papua New Guinea). Köln: Eugen Diederichs, 1982. 256 pp., plates. Cloth DM 32.00. ISBN 3-424-00752-8.

Staneck carried out his fieldwork among the Iatmul, a people of the Middle Sepik River area of Papua New Guinea, for two years from 1972 to 1974. Applying Malinowski's method of participant observation, he concentrates his research on Palimbei, which he variously describes as "village," "villages," "village area" or "people." As a result it remains uncertain from how many of the Iatmul or Palimbei villages the material was actually collected. In view of the fact, however, that the Iatmul language con-