

BOOK REVIEWS

GENERAL

MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA. *1983 MLA International Bibliography. Volume V: Folklore.* New York, N.Y. 10011, 62 Fifth Avenue: Modern Language Association of America, 1984. Paper US\$60.00 plus handling and shipping. ISBN 0-87352-448-9.

In 1970 this prestigious series of bibliographies began to include items concerning folklore together with the customary literature entries in Volume I. By 1981 when the bibliography split into five volumes folklore scholarship had expanded to such an extent that Volume V was set aside for Folklore alone. Also since 1981 another feature, besides the entries and author index, has been the subject index which facilitates finding items of similar interest. Both the main entries and the items in the subject index also contain references to the contents of the citations.

The word "international" in the title of the bibliography is taken seriously. Any scholarly work concerning folklore, published in whatever country or whatever language, is acceptable. Items with titles in Chinese characters or non-Roman alphabets are romanized. If in a particular year you notice that your article or book has not been cited, you are invited to send a copy of it to the MLA Center for Bibliographical Services for inclusion in the subsequent volume. (The bibliography does not claim to be all-inclusive. Only items seen and judged to be pertinent will be cited. The date in the title refers to the publication year of the majority of the citations. Items received too late or not entered previously are added to the volume of the following year's work.)

At times an article or book may not be listed in the Folklore volume because the editors have decided that readers would more likely search for the item in another volume. However if the item is of equal importance to more than one area, it is repeated. In the case of my article on tattooing, Flannery O'Connor, and Jun'ichiro Tanizaki, the editors had chosen to list it in Volume I: Literature instead of Volume V: Folklore with the other *Asian Folklore Studies* references.

Those who are familiar with the Literature bibliography's listing of items according to countries, periods, and authors, may find the Folklore arrangement a bit confusing at first. Without consulting the subject index, I opened the bibliography and looked immediately for items on Japan. They did not readily appear because the country involved is the last in a series of headings. First there are seven main divisions: Folklore; History and Study of Folklore; Folk Literature; Ethnomusicology; Folk Belief Systems; Folk Rituals; and Material. These are then broken down into several sub-divisions, e.g., Folk Belief Systems: Folk Medicine; Magic; and Religion, which in turn yield to more specific topics and finally to countries. For example under the first main heading "Folklore" comes "Folk Literature," then "Myth," and then "Myth/Europe. Ireland." Or, more specifically, the following item from *Asian Folklore Studies*: "[1914] Hansen, Kathryn, 'Indian Folk Traditions and the Modern Theatre.' *AFS*. 1983; 32(1): 77-89. [+Influence on Modern Theatre.]" falls under the headings: Folk Rituals—Folk Drama—Asia. South Asia. India.

Since about 3,000 journals make up the master list of sources always consulted, there is often the frustrating situation of finding a desirable reference but without access to the source. Sometimes the authors are members of MLA and can be contacted by using the addresses in the MLA Directory sent to the members each year. Furthermore PMLA itself sometimes publishes articles on Folklore. Thus I recommend that individual subscribers become members of the Modern Language Association and order the Bibliography with their membership.

However, even if you do not subscribe individually, at least it is advisable that the library you frequent orders it. For years I have kept up my membership in MLA mainly for the annual bibliography. Despite the increases in membership fees and the decision to charge extra for the bibliography, I feel it is worth supporting the MLA for its excellent work in making the productions of scholars all over the world known.

Maybe it is impossible to keep up with everything that is going on in our fields, but with such a bibliography available we have no excuse for not knowing at least in general what is being done.

David R. Mayer
Nanzan University
Nagoya, Japan

FOLEY, JOHN MILES. *Oral-formulaic Theory and Research. An Introduction and Annotated Bibliography.* Garland Folklore Bibliographies, volume 6, ed. by A. Dundes. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985. Xvi+718 pp. Introduction, area index. Hardcover US\$-48.00 ISBN 0-8240-9148-5.

"The field of oral literature is tremendously exciting . . . a . . . vital area . . . both in the academic disciplines which gave it birth and as a fledgeling in its own right" (p. 4). It was moving to see the enthusiasm of a scholar for his chosen field of inquiry, even in such a dry enterprise as a bibliography. Parry & Lord's ideas and concepts form surely an important contribution to the investigation of the texture in oral literature; a bibliography of works written on the subject is to be warmly welcomed.

The reviewed work is really addressed to philologists, classical and medieval, and to historians, not to folklorists. One may then wonder why the author choose to publish it in a series of folkloric bibliographies. The author, who from his initial interest in the natural sciences turned to philology and choose Old English as his special field of interest (p. x) is *not* a folklorist (see statements in his Introduction, such as: "given the lack of simple and customary author-centered, chronological, or thematic definition of the field" [p. 5] . . . "the written texts on which most of us have cut our critical teeth . . ." [p. 68]). This training explains the author's perspective and the lacunae in his familiarity with both the materials and research that relate to oral literature. So it happened that he mistook Parry & Lord's theories for "research of oral literature" in general.

Folklorists see things somewhat differently from philologists. Parry & Lord's work was surely a breakthrough in Homeric studies; but in the framework of folkloristics—although Lord's book is a most valuable contribution—it is but one in a series of studies of the patterned and formulaic nature of oral literature, an interest which started with late 19th century Russian scholarship, and was echoed by Central European scholarship in the beginning of the 20th century, and very much developed by the