dissertation at an American university; the summary there mentions a fable " potentially attributed to the late sixteenth-century translation into Japanese of the Aesopic collection." The omission is a sore one, in that Dundes's preface speaks of Carnes's " fluency " in Japanese and of the fact that Carnes was a teacher of English at colleges in Tokyo for four years and author of " numerous textbooks on modern conversational Japanese . . . " (p. x). Thus, the reader might well be led to think that Carnes would be familiar with Japanese scholarship on his chosen subject and that the reason that none is mentioned can only be that none exists. Japanologists, however, know how easy it is to be inadvertently blind to major aspects of Japanese culture; it is unfortunately also not unusual for foreigners resident in Japan who speak Japanese easily but are illiterate in that language (as I assume Carnes may be) to lack any curiosity about what they cannot read. In fact, *Isoho* (or *Isopo*) *monogatari*, the translation cited without title in the quotation above, enjoys an interesting history; had Carnes been moved to investigate, he would have discovered, for one thing, that it is based largely on the " Esopus " of Heinrich Steinhöwel, the subject of his own dissertation (#171 in the bibliography). Both to Carnes and to readers of this journal can be heartily recommended Kobori Keiichirō, *Isoppu gūwa: sono denshō to hen'yō*, a very thorough volume covering the history of the Aesopic fable in Europe to the time of Caxton and in Japan into the twentieth century; a bibliography (273–276) lists studies in Japanese as well as in Western languages, including studies by Japanese authors on Western Aesopica.

(4) Better copy-editing is needed, with attention to those amenities of punctuation and syntax which aid communication. It is annoying to the reader, and should be embarrassing to the author, to encounter such howlers as:

> "Apparently an attempt to make the point that a lack of common sense might cause the superior-gifted to appear to be stupid by means of a telling of P226 ' Tortoise and Hare ' . . . " (#635)

and

> " The classical tradition is treated in detail during which the ape never achieved a clear-cut definition of character . . . " (#652)

These are not isolated instances.

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KOBORI Keiichirō 小堀桂一郎
1978 *Isoppu gūwa. Sono denshō to hen'yō* イソップ寓話, その伝承と変容 [The fables of Aesop. Their tradition and transformation]. Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha.

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DAY, MARTIN S. *The many meanings of myth.* Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, 1984. x+564 pages. Index. Hardcover US$25.75, ISBN 0-8191-3821-5; paper US$20.75, ISBN 0-8191-3822-3.

The table of contents of this book promises an overall covering of anything concerning myth: basics about myth as well as every kind of theorizing about myth from " the beginnings "; myth and religion, myth as a mirror of society, functionalism, ritualism, structuralism, psychology grappling with myth, Jungian archetypes, geomythology,

meteoromythology, biomythology and so on—and all these topics again broken up into many facets.

In the preface the author reveals his intentions, saying that he " attempts, as far as present knowledge and speculation . . . permit, to answer three questions: 1) Why and how did myth originate? 2) What functions does myth fulfill in human life and society? 3) How can we interpret myths . . . ? " The answer to the third question " is the overarching purpose of the entire work." The author also gives " important stipulations ": He warns the reader that interpretation of myth " is highly speculative." He further says that myths " must be interpreted within the context of the culture that created them," and that all " fruitful approaches should be explored." We would agree with this, yet some suspicion arises when the author characterizes this method as the ' toolbox technique ', where one is " carrying about a sizable range of tools to employ upon myth and selecting the most applicable tool for each myth " (" . . . if it is about castration, try Freud; if it is about heresy, try theology . . . "). This means that he " is not espousing any one approach but seeks to find the significant contributions of each tool in the ' toolbox '. Finally he also announces " criticisms and caveats for each approach " (vii–viii).

Indeed, it seems that the author has left out no theory, no " tool ", no single possible mythical topos. Set into some systematical order they all range side by side, together with their established critique, yet without any scholarly discussion by the author himself. Thus the book displays, above all, the vast reading of its author, his ability to summarize, and to get at once to the point of all the reasoning. Yet most of his factual " proof ", the examples for the tenets, comes in pieces from all ages, peoples, cultures, and holy scripts without regard to their respective circumstances. If the reader is not conversant with the background behind these bits and pieces, they remain but words, not apt to verify anything. It comes as no surprise that misleading or even wrong statements easily creep into these demonstrations. A few examples from Japan, taken at random, may suffice to prove this point. On page 4, under "Aition " the author says " The Japanese rice-planting ritual celebrates the marriage of the Water-goddess of the Realm of Water to the Sun-god. The child born of this union is the god of the rice field. Thus in mythical fashion is stated . . . " As in most cases, the author does not state where he got this information. Certainly Japanese mythology contains no such myth: not to mention the fact that the Japanese sun-deity is female. I am also not aware of any such rice-planting ritual. In spite of the author's assumption on page 7, the well-known story of Momotaro has nothing to do with mythology. And ' *momo* ' (peach) as slang for the female genitals is quite recent (Edo period).— There is no Japanese " fire god " called *Masubi* nor any other god with this name (32). It is at least misleading to state as the author does on page 74 that the " *Sarume* (musicians and dancers) represented from early times a respected priestly class of Japanese Shintoism." The Sarume no Kimi were a clan whose mythical ancestress is represented as staging an obscene dance designed to lure the sun-goddess from the rock-cave where she had hidden herself. Female descendants of this clan served in later times (9/10th century and later) in the Wardrobe Bureau (belonging to the Ministry of Central Affairs). In this capacity they had some functions within the yearly rite of the " Pacification of the Spirit [of the emperor] " (*chinkonsai*), a ritual which apparently came into use during the 8th century—that is about all we know about the Sarume. They are no priestly class. And it is quite out of question that heaven " is a faithful transcript in Japanese myth for the mikado's court (though it may ignore the incessant struggles of shogun and samurai) " (211)—even if we let aside the anachronism of shogun and samurai. And finally, there is no mythical account that the objects " emblemizing "

the misdeeds of Susanowo " were hurled into the sea . . . " (286), and no orientation of Shinto altars (315). One cannot but get the impression that this book has been written primarily for those who want to " memorize " what one " has to know " about myth, regardless to what context a particular piece belongs. The book may therefore appeal to a reader who looks for encyclopedic if somewhat shallow information.

The student of myth, on the other hand, will be disappointed in many ways. The wealth of information and the didactic style conceal discrepancies and inconsistencies as well as a certain want of deeper insight into the nature of myth, in spite of all the theorizing in chapter I (Basics about myth). If archaic myth (the central concern of the book) is " sacred " (12), if we " must realize that every myth was originally treasured as a repository of real knowledge and sublime truth " (16), how, then, can one and the same myth have " many meanings "? Questions like this should have been addressed. Since the author makes no attempt in this direction the book ends up to be boring. If it would announce itself just as a record of all the approaches to myth, their merits and their failings as already pointed out by former critics, nobody could blame it for this point. But it claims to provide a " toolbox " for the interpretation of myth. The basic question however is whether this kind of highly speculative, " interpretation," where anything goes, can be the goal of our probing into myth. If archaic people deem their myths to be sacred and to convey real knowledge and sublime truth, should we not, first of all, follow their advice when they " assert that it (=myth) means what it says " (viii)? That is, we should not try to " interpret " but rather to " understand " myth. To " interpret " means mostly to put preconceived ideas, theories and the like into myth, trying to make them fit. To " understand " is something quite different, it means that we have to learn the language of myth, a language now lost. Such understanding does not impose new ideas or theories, but attempts to approach myth from within itself and to see it in its cultural and historical context.

Maybe it was unfortunate for the author that I read, parellel to his book, another one on myth: Kurt Hübner, *Die Wahrheit des Mythos* (1985). Hübner gives us what we sorely miss in the book under review: a substantiated critical appraisal of the theories on myth. To mention but one instance: Where Day devotes " considerable space " to the psychological approach " because recent generations have emphasized the psychological exploration of myth," admitting only " that much psychological probing of myth is wholly hypothetical " (viii) or " especially speculative " (500, note 1), Hübner gives the reasons why the psychological approach to myth is downright arbitrary, and he shows that the decisive error of this approach consists in having grafted—without further reflexion and, therefore, naively—an entirely modern way of thinking ahistorically onto a past of a totally different kind (Hübner 1985: 85–86). Naturally the same holds true if we consider " archaic myth " of living people, for their way of " mythical thinking," their " mythical ontology," are the same. Hübner elucidates the ontology of mythical thinking as opposed to the ontology of scientific thinking, and while Mircea Eliade and others only *asserted* that myth embodies truth, Hübner *proves* that there is truth within myth as well as in science, and he proves also that myth is as rational as science. Here we come back to the book under review. Its author declares that " all theorizers about myth agree on one point: myth is non-rational " (2), and apparently he is of the same opinion. But here as elsewhere we miss the scholarly discussion as well as the proof.

REFERENCE CITED:

HÜBNER, Kurt
1985 *Die Wahrheit des Mythos* [The truth of myth]. München: Beck.

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SHILS, EDWARD. *Tradition*. London and Boston: Faber & Faber, 1981. Viii+334 pages. Index. US$20.00 or £15, ISBN 0-571-11756-2.

The very same year that ethnologists and folklorists struggled with the concept " tradition "—this being their subject of inquiry (Honko and Laaksonen 1983: 233–249)—, a sociologist published a whole book on the subject. So once again, we see that our academic neighbors are providing us with the necessary theoretical framework.

Shils, who together with T. Parsons and G. Homans developed the theory of functional sociology in the late 1940's and early 1950's, wrote this book with the intention to reintroduce into the social sciences the dimension of time, emphasizing thereby the significance of the past for the present. Synchronic approaches, be they functional or structural, leave the bearing of the past in deep shadow; significantly, the new *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* (1968) does not carry the heading " tradition " at all!

The framework outlined by Shils is of primary importance for the " tradition sciences " as ethnology and folkloristics have lately become labeled. Shils' book merits careful study, as it will help solve many problems that sciences of tradition are struggling with. Were one to turn his propositions into questions, one would have the basis for a research program. Here we can but point out a few of the main points of importance to ethnological and folkloristic inquiry.

Shils' definition of " tradition " is very broad: tradition is a *traditum*, anything which is transmitted or handed down from the past to the present . . . having been created through human actions . . . [of] thought and imagination, it is handed down from one generation to the next " (12). This definition includes both the substance which is being transmitted and the process of transmission. It does not contain the aspects of " how " and " why ": how the process of transmission goes on and why it behaves as it does. In the rest of the book, Shils discusses mostly the " how "; the " why " he leaves to his followers to determine.

Shils' definition is somewhat broader than we usually take tradition to mean, but it answers well the problem of " rural traditional culture " vs. " urban modern non-traditional culture." Both are built of tradition complexes; however, these complexes differ as to their kind.

What is the substance of tradition? Shils answers: "All accomplished patterns of the human mind, all patterns of belief or modes of thinking, all achieved patterns of social relationships, all technical practices, and all physical artifacts or natural objects [that] are susceptible to becoming objects of transmission; each is capable of becoming a tradition " (16). This amounts approximately to a full catalogue of human culture. The working out of this catalogue in detail, the enumeration and description of the classes of entities which form the substance of tradition and of their qualities—that is the ethnologist's task.

What has to happen in order for any of these substances to become a " tradition "? It has to become subject to the process of transmission over at least two acts of trans-