

BOOK REVIEWS

GENERAL

Proverbium. *Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship*. Volume 1, 1984 and Volume 2, 1985. Editor, Wolfgang Mieder. Columbus OH: The Ohio State University.

The first of these two volumes is offered as a festschrift to Matti Kuusi's seventieth birthday. It is indeed "a wonderful coincidence" as Mieder says in the introduction that this volume could be published to adorn the anniversary of this distinguished scholar whose efforts promoted proverb scholarship so much. It is also fortunate because with the publication of the new yearbook, Mieder takes up and continues the work Matti Kuusi had begun and carried on for a decade as editor of *Proverbium: Bulletin d'information sur les recherches parémiologiques*. First it was Vilmos Voigt who carried the torch for some years, but now, with the dedicated support of a distinguished Editorial Board (Daniel R. Barnes and Galit Hasan-Rokem) and the back-up of Ohio State University it can be expected that the yearbook is again back on a good track. While all this is the fruit of many people's cooperation it is also the fruit of the untiring efforts of Wolfgang Mieder and a monument to his enthusiasm. Even by doing nothing more than turning the pages of these volumes one cannot but be impressed by the great variety of texts the editor gathered and contributes himself, and his talent to invariably make an interesting point. However, the contribution which will be most appreciated, not only in the two present volumes but also in the others to come, are the international bibliographies of proverb collections and proverb scholarship as well as an annotated bibliography by which Mieder continues and updates his earlier publication carried the torch for some years, but now, with the dedicated support of a distinguished Editorial Board (Daniel R. Barnes and Galit Hasan-Rokem) and the back-up of Ohio of 1982.

Mieder could enlist the cooperation of an impressive array of scholars who do not only guarantee an international orientation to the yearbook, but also a wide range of topics. The volumes contain analyses of form or content of proverbs, discussions of their transmission or of their scholarly treatment through history, attempts at isolating the criteria by which the listeners or users identify a saying as a proverb, and even some most interesting and informative glimpses into the workshop of proverb collecting or of dialect documentation. Rather than list all of these contributions I prefer to mention just a few which struck me as being particularly captivating. Krikmann's erudite and painstaking work to arrive at some "rules to guide semantical operations at 'deciphering' the proverbial trope and understanding the proverb text as a whole" (Volume 1, 65) is a highlight in both volumes. Stanciu's approach to the study of proverbs from systemtheory in order to arrive at an understanding of proverbs as a system is very challenging, and Pasamanick's study of how children use and interpret proverbs, and reveal a high degree of abstract and metaphorical thinking in the process, is truly fas-

cinating.

These at times highly technical feature articles are complemented by enlightening and literally insightful short pieces about a particular proverb's meaning or history, obituaries of eminent scholars, and concise book reviews. It is therefore no exaggeration to state that these two volumes offer a wealth of the most diversified information to the specialist in paremiology and a lot of fun to the lover of proverbs. In various ways it becomes clear how difficult it is to truly catch what a proverb is and that this problem is not all solved yet. This publication, however, succeeds in stimulating minds of different orientation to approach the problem.

The yearbook is conceived to be a tool fostering cooperation and exchange among paremiologists on an international level, and so it accepts contributions in English, French, German, Spanish, and Russian. As one who tries to bridge linguistic barriers of considerable height by using English as a kind of lingua franca I feel a little bit envious, because I feel that being able to transmit different cultural expressions as much as possible in their own respective linguistic form is a great service to folklore studies. Mieder brings a great deal of eastern European and western Asian scholarship into this publication and I hope that his openness would become an incentive to our Asian colleagues not only to collect and interpret proverbs in their own cultures, but also to make their treasures and their thoughts about them increasingly known to an international readership. To conclude, I join one of the authors in congratulating Mieder on this publication and hope that he would be able to keep up the fruitful exchange he has rekindled for many years to come.

NOTE:

1. Subscriptions to *Proverbium* are all US \$10.00 per volume. Checks should be made payable to *Proverbium* and should be sent to *Proverbium*, Department of English, The Ohio State University, 164 West 17th Avenue, Columbus, OH 43210 USA.

Peter Knecht

MIEDER, WOLFGANG, editor. *Disenchantments. An Anthology of Modern Fairy Tale Poetry*. xvi+203 pages. Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1985. ISBN 0-87451-327-8. Hardcover, n.p.

In European countries, as in other places, the tradition of collecting and editing fairy tales went through a long history of development. As this process was taking place, the interpretation of the fairy tales altered, depending on the viewpoint and objective of the writer or editor. In the twentieth century, however, due largely to the theories of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, new ways of interpreting the fairy tales were discovered, relying much more on psychology and a better understanding of the subconscious mind. Then, in 1976, with the publication of Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment*, another valuable key was provided as a means to enter and fathom the deep recesses of the fairy tale world. Wolfgang Mieder's book, *Disenchantments. An Anthology of Modern Fairy Tale Poetry* is still another. Certainly not purporting to be much more than an anthology of modern fairy tale poems, nevertheless it is the first of its kind, and the choice and quality of the poems included ought to guarantee the book's reputation well into the future.

As an "anthology," the book is rather short: there are only 101 poems. However, this number is surely sufficient to give the reader a good idea of how fairy tales aer