

Divine Spirit . . . the only unbreakable beam in the world" (51). To explain why the blacksmith (who represents God, remember) is treated rudely by his customer, the author offers the fanciful suggestion that "it may indicate that once we have advanced spiritually, we have no need of a spiritual teacher." But, no doubt sensing the oddity of such a deduction, he provides his readers with a third decodification: "As a maker of metal products, he also represents technology and worldliness," and thus deserves to be treated badly (52). As you like it.

At the end of this book, which is a collection of rigid "how to understand" patterns and which makes not even the slightest attempt to discover the narrative structure and inner aims of the tales, Fohr suggests that he is supported and endorsed by all the Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Islamic, and Christian traditions that have utilized example stories as vehicles of instruction (198). But his attempt to interpret folktales by forcing them into the mold of stories used for spiritual education and moral training fails to adequately explain the vitality of the tales throughout the world in both traditional and literary form. In his closing remarks he quotes in support of his views Propp, van Gennep, Winterstein, and several other authors who deal with mythology and initiation rites, but he does not consider the possibility that there might be elementary forces keeping folktales alive, forces connected with the unconscious and involving such dynamic elements of the individuation process as separating oneself from one's parents, finding a partner, and learning to love. It goes without saying that learning to live in harmony with one's unconscious desires requires more than well-meaning, persuasive moral training. We may agree with the author when he states, following Mircea Eliade and Max Lüthi, that folktales are a sort of substitute for ancient initiation rites (197). But not in the sense he is taking it.

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OLRIK, AXEL. *Principles for Oral Narrative Research*. Translated by Kirsten Wolf and Jody Jensen. *Folklore Studies in Translation*, edited by Dan Ben-Amos. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. xxviii + 210 pages. Appendix, information, and references by Hans Ellekilde, bibliography by Kirsten Wolf and Jody Jensen, index. Hardcover US\$29.50; ISBN 0-253-34175-2. (Higher price outside North America)

Olrik's *Principles for Oral Narrative Research*, composed between 1905 and 1917, was still incomplete when he died in 1917. It was finished by one of his students, Hans Ellekilde, and published in 1921, but unfortunately the language—Danish—is not one that many scholars can read. The most original part of the work, the "Epic Laws," has appeared in German and English translation, but the work as a whole has remained inaccessible to a larger readership. With the long-awaited appearance of the present volume, however, this is no longer the case.

This book not only presents Olrik's theory of epic laws but also shows how his ideas developed as he interacted with his teachers Svend Gruntvig, Kristian Erslev, and Moltke Moe, the leading Norwegian folklorists of the time. Information on these matters is provided in Ben-Amos's foreword, Bengt Holbek's introduction, and Hans Ellekilde's detailed notes. These sections of the book as well as the main text reveal Olrik as a meticulous scholar who examined folk narrative—particularly Danish bal-

lads—carefully before drawing conclusions that he formulated as a set of principles, or rather as “an agenda for research” (viii). At a time when folklore was thought of as merely the collection and scrutiny of old folk stories, he wanted to show that folkloric studies can and should be based on scholarly methods and a comprehensive theory.

Throughout the book Olrik provides examples of narratives, not only from Danish oral tradition but also from that of other regions in Europe, Asia, and India. He thereby fleshes out his idea that folklore is a reflection of culture, and that it consequently offers scholars rich and regular material with which they can trace the development of a society’s intellectual life (2). In his data he sees two levels of culture: “higher” and “lower,” from which higher and lower forms of folklore emerge. Olrik believes that folklore items continuously strive for betterment, and that folklore is in a continuous stage of evolution; thus, as folklore moves forward, forms that were in the higher categories in earlier times usually move into the lower categories later.

In the first chapter we are introduced to Olrik’s idea of the narrative and are taught about “categories of narratives” (3), a classification based on content, complexity of plot, and length. Olrik goes on to explain the difference between a literary work and a product of oral tradition, emphasizing particularly that the latter lacks the imprint of an author. He deals with the difference between oral and literary works of art in chapter 2 as well, where he explains why it is almost impossible for literary works to be transmitted orally. The reason given is that oral tradition is compact and palpable, characteristics that do not apply to literary products. This indicates his belief that oral products have an idiosyncratic inner form, on the basis of which they must be evaluated.

The main goal of chapter 2 is to describe the methods of evaluating narrative sources. Again, the structure—in Olrik’s terminology the “narrative-like character” (19)—of material recorded from oral transmission, especially the coherence of its plot, is regarded as reliable evidence for the genuineness of the narrative.

Chapter 3 presents Olrik’s well-known epic laws, which are based on the regularity observed in compositional style common to large areas. These are devices used to achieve an enduring narrative with suspense and a coherent plot. It is noteworthy that Olrik sees them as tools revealing the universality of certain ways of thinking, for which reason he calls them “rules for the narrow selection from life” (42).

In chapters 4 and 5 Olrik’s interest in the history of narratives comes through clearly. In chapter 4 he deals with the factors that give life to a narrative or take it away, without losing sight of the narrative’s inner form. He also mentions his own concepts of “horizon” and “localization” and Tylor’s notion of “survival” as features that help people understand the structure and life of the narrative. By means of these he bridges the gap between a purely historical view and a synchronic view. In chapter 5 he describes the historico-geographical method and introduces the terms “variant” and “doublet” (95), which play a significant role in tracing the development of a narrative. He then criticizes several earlier methods of finding the oldest form of a narrative, pointing out the weaknesses in each and giving his own principles of reconstruction.

In the next chapter he analyzes the differences between individual genres of folklore, such as tales, heroic poetry, and folk legends. Finally, in the appendix, he uses his epic laws to examine the Jewish Patriarchal Tales and defends the Finnish-Danish method against the criticisms of Friedrich von der Leyen.

This book has several shortcomings that are readily apparent to the modern reader. “Records,” i.e., materials transcribed from oral transmissions, have been focused on, to the neglect of the narrator and the narrative situation. (This may be acceptable, how-

ever, when one considers Olrik's interest in medieval texts of anonymous origin [xxvi].) Although Olrik's approach does not entirely rule out a synchronic perspective, diachronic considerations seem paramount. Hence the narratives' functions and values in the life of the communities where they are told have not been fully analyzed; the only comments on such issues appear in relation to certain diachronic considerations (e.g., 77 and 87). Other points on which the author might be criticized concern his sharp distinction between higher and lower levels of culture and his unproven belief that there are folklore items that emerge from the respective cultures. However, these concepts no doubt reflect the social milieu of Olrik's time (xxii) and should not obscure his rigorous treatment of the data. On the whole, the theoretical foundation on which this work is based, its optimism regarding the struggle of the narrative for existence, its well-defined differentiation between oral and literary works of art, and its frequent reference to and appreciation of the aesthetic quality of oral products are all praiseworthy. Of greatest interest, perhaps, is the formalist/structuralist vein of thinking that eventually led to the formation of his epic laws. For this reason *Principles for Oral Narrative Research* is especially recommended to scholars who would like to investigate an early example of structuralism and to understand how the author combined the historical approach of his time with structuralist thinking to reach a comprehensive theory of folklore.

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#### JAPAN

INADA KŌJI 稲田浩二. *Nihon mukashibanashi tsūkan, vol. 28. Mukashibanashi taipu indekusu* 日本昔話通観 28, 昔話タイプ・インデックス [General survey and analysis of Japanese folktales, vol. 28: A type index of folktales]. Kyoto: Dōhōsha, 1988. vii+742+98+6 pages. Cloth ¥16,000; ISBN 4-8104-0712-8. (In Japanese, with English summary)

Inada Kōji has here compiled an extensive type-index consisting of some sixty thousand Japanese folktales gathered and recorded since the latter half of the nineteenth century. Since this is the third of Japan's folklore type-indexes, the question of its necessity naturally arises. When the founder of folklore studies in Japan, Yanagita Kunio, was gathering tales, he felt that it was still too early to compile such an index: despite the massive amounts of folklore he gathered and his awareness of the type-index of Aarne and Thompson, Yanagita maintained that folklore as a "science" was only thirty years old in Japan and therefore too young to warrant the kind of systematic study that type-indexing requires. Furthermore, Aarne-Thompson's work did not encompass Asian folklore at that time and the validity of applying their system to Japanese material was questionable. Then too, Yanagita viewed the tale as an entire entity and perhaps was averse to the notion of indexing (although not to types, as he offers 347). In any case, there were still tales to collect at that pioneering stage in Japanese folklore, and for this reason Yanagita chose to leave the work of indexing to his folklore progeny.

The first two folklore indexes to appear in Japan were those of Seki Keigo (Yanagita's protégé) and Ikeda Hiroko. Seki's *Nippon mukashibanashi shūsei* [Collection of Japanese folktales] (1958, six volumes) was the first to appear. Seki took a compara-