

***Folkloristics: An Introduction.* By Robert A. GEORGES and Michael Owen JONES (eds.). (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. Pp. ix + 336.)**

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Folkloristics: An Introduction. By Robert A. GEORGES and Michael Owen JONES (eds.). (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. Pp. ix + 336.)

The solemn ebony binding, multicolour narrative-quilt cover design, and the title chosen for Georges and Jones' *Folkloristics: An Introduction* reflect the representation of the discipline within this new textbook: logical, provocative, bright, busy, and bold. In content and organization, *Folkloristics* presents itself as a supplement or alternate to Oring's 1986 textbook *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: An Introduction* and Schoemaker's 1990 essay collection and workbook, *The Emergence of Folklore in Everyday Life*. At nearly 350 pages, *Folkloristics* is about a third bigger than either of these textbooks and chock-full of photographs, text blocks, cartoons, diagrams, maps, sketches, and other figures which, together with text, effectively illustrate scholarship, art, artists, and scholars central to the discipline. Because Georges and Jones give priority to the introduction of analytic approaches over the introduction of genre, and succeed, I believe, in presenting both, their text is more difficult for undergraduates. Being more comprehensive, also, *Folkloristics* may prove harder for first-year course instructors to supplement in lectures: much is already tackled and creatively exemplified in the textbook.

Unlike the Schoemaker and Oring texts, which segregate their presentations of folklore definitions in introductory sections and proceed for the most part by genre, *Folkloristics* uses a four-part analogy as an overarching organizational framework: folklore as historical artifact, as describable and transmissible entity, as culture, and as behaviour. Beneath each heading, individual chapters outline analytical orientations characteristic of the discipline and reference past and present folklore scholarship on a wide array of genres. Under heading one, "Folklore as Historical Artifact," appear intellectual histories of the discipline which argue that folkloristics is a science with precedents not only in *Volkskunde* or antiquarianism but in ancient Western and non-Western history, poetry, and philosophy as well. The development of the discipline is then placed within the context of evolutionary and organic "models of reality" and nationalist and comparative scholarship characteristic of Western academia before and beyond the 19th centuries. Their approach here balances the sketchy

disciplinary history in Schoemaker and complements the critique of historical definitions of folklore provided in Oring's first chapter (Oring 1986:1-22).

Some chapter discussions may be lengthy and critical enough to warrant use as refresher readings in graduate courses. The length of the book as a whole and the volume of case studies and other examples might also permit its use within a two-semester undergraduate introduction. As if conducting a literature review, Georges and Jones cite and summarize contemporary and past contributions of numerous scholars to illustrate conceptual frameworks such as survival, continuity, and revival models for tradition (Chapter 3); genre and type distinctions (Chapter 4); and historic-geographic, monogenetic, and polygenetic explanations for the distribution and dissemination of types (Chapter 5). "Survival" is illustrated, for example, with a sample interpretation of the ballad *Tam Lin* as vestigial repository for totemistic and animistic motifs and beliefs; a complete text of the ballad, taken from the Child collection, appears nearby (pp. 60-62). A map of the distribution of hay derrick types across several American states, a series of sketches of derrick variants, and complementary photographs of the derricks inform the discussion of distribution and the historic-geographic method.

I found Georges and Jones' location of belief materials throughout the text strategic and interesting. Early in the book they discuss grave decoration, votive offerings, and other spiritual and healing practices to illustrate "continuity" in tradition; they distinguish continuities from revivals or survivals as behaviours that persist, because alternatives are unknown or unacceptable, or because they *are* compatible (pp. 68-69). Mormon missionary humour, in jokes, narratives, and graffiti, is used in Chapter 6 ("Folklore in Cultural Contexts") to illustrate the expression and experience of group solidarity (pp. 184-188). Healing traditions appear again in two final chapters organized under the "folklore as behaviour" heading: healing with madstones is discussed in detail under the section "Reinforcement" in Chapter 8, "Folklore and Human Psychology" and the practices of an individual *curandero* are outlined and discussed in Chapter 9, "Folklore as Personal Resource." The cumulative effect of this strategy is positive, at least for belief. Students are a) introduced to a variety of belief genres and contexts, and b) encouraged to examine conflicting and contradictory theoretical approaches to belief.

Though Hufford's "experience-centred approach" to belief (Hufford 1982) is not touched upon (one citation from him on medicine is the only one in the book), Georges and Jones present behaviorist and cultural-source interpretations provocatively, and without explicitly de-emphasizing the importance of describing practitioners' experiences in empirical detail.

The authors use figures with exceptional creativity and efficiency. In many cases, blocks contain outlines, citations, and examples that first-year instructors otherwise must (and frequently do) create themselves to offer students as handouts or overheads. In the genre and type discussion in Chapter 4, boxes frame Propp's 31 functions and a structural chart of riddle types. Competing definitions of "superstition" and "riddle" are grouped together to encourage comparison of similarities and differences. The outline of numerical classifications in the Aarne-Thompson tale-type index, and sample tale-type descriptions also appear within text blocks in the fourth chapter (pp. 114-115). A 12-part summary of the rhetorical patterns Brian Sutton-Smith identified in children's rhymes appears in Chapter 8, "Folklore and Human Psychology" (pp. 246-249). These "extras" are comparable in usefulness to Schoemaker's bibliographies and glossary and to the well-rounded presentations of definitions, genres, and special topics in the essays in Oring.

Having used both the Oring and Schoemaker anthologies as first-year folklore textbooks, I find *Folkloristics* a more overtly political and integrated, multicultural presentation of what the discipline has to offer, though neither the Oring nor the Schoemaker text is deficient in these areas. Chapter 9, "Folklore as Personal Resource," portrays folklore as individual behaviour and psychological expression in the lives of an African-American quilt-maker, a Polish Jewish-Canadian parable teller, a Peruvian *curandero*, a Mende and a Navajo storyteller, a Scottish ballad singer, and a West-Coast American chainsaw carver, among others. Gender, ethnic, Gulf War, and gay male jokes — and reported reactions to them from different audiences — in Chapters 5-8 acknowledge and encourage open examination of the aggressive, homophobic, racist, and misogynist facets of materials and reactions we study. Puzzling however, after Chapter 7's citation of Goodwin's perspectives on gay male jokes and customs, is the complete lack of reference to lesbian or bisexual folklore or culture. One is left with an impression that the study of homosexual culture and experience begins and ends with Goodwin's work or with gay

males in folkloristics. Centuries of interdisciplinary scholarship on homosexuality (which, as the authors argued for folkloristics, can be dated back to ancient Greece) call for acknowledgment here, along with the 1993 special issue of *New York Folklore* on gay and lesbian folklore and other contributions by folklorists to the domain of queer studies.

Achievements of women as scholars, investigators, and artists are strikingly displayed and celebrated with subtlety and humour in dozens of photographs, which support the text from the introduction onward. On page one a stern portrait of Mary Alicia Owen meets our gaze, over a caption describing the popularity of her work in the 19th and early 20th centuries and her interests in Gypsy, Native-American and African-American topics. A photo on page 14 next introduces Zora Neale Hurston, conducting fieldwork with African-American singers in Florida in 1935, followed by a photo of Linda Gastañaga (p. 15) interviewing Nevada ranchers on the jobsite, with a daunting microphone the size of a giant corn cob. A heavy-looking reel-to-reel recorder hangs on Gastañaga's hip; her clothing and worker's shoes, lightly coated with dust, match those of her male informants. More shots of women follow, as well as two of male scholars in action: Wayland Hand peering over an ocean of archive data cards at UCLA (p. 15) and Vance Randolph recording white Southern fiddlers with 1940s audio equipment (p. 18). The book portrays folklorists generally as both participants and observers, and as agents for change and intervention as often as cultural conservationists. Photos of informants assessing fieldwork products (dancers watching videotape, church deacon reading article, pp. 18-19) support the value of reflexive ethnography. An extensive and accurate portrait of the range of settings, inside and outside academia, in which folklorists find employment in the United States is provided in the introduction.

I was excited to find Memorial University's Ph.D.-granting program mentioned alongside other such programs in the United States, but disappointed that no more than a couple of Canadian scholars are mentioned, in passing, in the course of the entire textbook, in contrast to dozens of American and European scholars canonized enthusiastically throughout. The history of folklore studies in Canada, via early field studies, Memorial, Laval, FSAC, and other organizations remains undocumented here, as is overlooked for the most part the history of folklore societies, programs, and archives in the United States. Developmental connections

between folkloristics, English literature, and anthropology are not readily apparent. Scholars who have put and kept folkloristics on the map in Canada — Barbeau, Lacourcière, Creighton, Fowke, Halpert, Klymasz, Carpenter, to name a few — cannot be found in the index. The result is a textbook that, in the context of use in Canadian programs especially, may be described as American in orientation, rather than North American.

The choice of the unwieldy, lengthy handle “folkloristics” — rather than the ambiguous term “folklore” or the more research-oriented “folklore studies” advocated by Laurel Doucette (1993:123) — to describe what we think and do in this discipline struck me as rather charmingly arrogant, as if to encourage folklorists to *enjoy* the mellifluous jargon and useful analytical frameworks we too invent and may therefore manipulate any way we like in interdisciplinary communication. *Folkloristics* lends the discipline a welcome air of canonical competitiveness, and general preparedness to play some theoretical and politically conscientious hardball with the other social sciences and humanities. A more reliable assessment of this textbook’s value will come not from single reviews but from the collective evaluation of the instructors who use it as a course text over time in the United States and Canada.

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Philosophy, Oral Tradition and Africanistics. By Joachim MUGALU.
(Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1995. Pp. 226, preface, introduction, bibliography.)

Joachim Mugalu's *Philosophy, Oral Tradition and Africanistics* is worth recommending for those with an interest in African philosophy and oral traditions. In his study, Mugalu surveys and examines two bodies of knowledge which are central in the discourse of Africanistics: the "Question of African Philosophy" and "Oral Traditions" (p. 13). Essentially, Mugalu investigates and examines elements of African philosophy in African oral traditions. The oral tradition which he uses as a case study is the "Story of Kintu" (*Olugero Iwa Kintu*) — a mythological narrative text from the corpus of oral traditions in Buganda (Uganda). His approach to the analysis and interpretation of the "Story of Kintu" has been inspired by *cultural hermeneutics* (the philosophical investigations and interpretations of the various facets of culture and/or tradition). The author's analysis of the "Story of Kintu" further proves that there is in existence what can be considered a distinctive "African philosophy" and "African oral tradition."

The structure of the book reflects its origins as a Ph.D. thesis. The work is divided into five parts which are in turn subdivided into chapters. Although each part deals with specific topics, all the topics presented, described, and examined are interrelated.

Part 1, "Philosophy and the Oral Traditions in Africa," surveys and examines the question of philosophy and the relationship between philosophy and oral traditions from the perspectives of four major schools of thought in African philosophy, namely: ethnophilosophy, philosophical sagacity, nationalistic ideological philosophy, and professional philosophy. Mugalu's