

heavily dependent on the notes found there. For example, regarding tale number twenty, *The Old Man in Heaven*, they write: 'No data on the place of recording. AT 218 B*. See the notes for tale 18. The image of the hut built of pancakes, cheese and butter, in which the goats live, is also met with in Belorussian tales about the heavenly hut' (440). Haney provides us with the following: 'Of unknown provenance. AT 218 B*. The hut made of pancakes, cheese and butter, in which the goats live, is also known in the Byelorussian tradition' (492). Such examples, along with Haney's use of AT numbers to denote the tale types, despite the fact that ATU numbers officially superseded AT numbers in 2004, raises the suspicion that this part of the book is essentially copy-pasted from Barag and Novikov's notes.

But for all one's cavils, the arrival of the first volume of Haney's translation is an event in the world of Anglophone connoisseurs of international folktales, and his continuing efforts look likely to succeed in providing us with what will serve for some time as the standard English edition of this European folklore classic.

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Tradition in the Twenty-First Century: Locating the Role of the Past in the Present. Edited by Trevor J. Blank and Robert Glenn Howard. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2013. 225 pp. £18.74 (pbk). ISBN 978-0-87421-899-2

For the last few decades, one of the key concerns of folkloristics seems to be to actually find folklore—dead or alive. Be it for the sake of folklore itself or for the sake of the discipline's survival, the trend is clearly noticeable: the existence and specifics of folklore in the situation of modernity is highly debated. It is generally agreed that this 'new' folklore influenced by the new media differs in many aspects from the 'traditional' lore of the nineteenth century, and there are many voices mourning the disappearance of 'authentic' tradition, with which is substituted artificial constructs.

Here we come to the notion of tradition, which is one of the central concepts of folkloristics. Does the arrival of the new media lead to the disruption of tradition? What happens to the 'tradition' or 'traditions' in a world obsessed with change? This volume addresses the contemporary understanding of tradition from multiple perspectives. The objective of *Tradition in the Twenty-First Century* is wide ranging: to investigate the concept of tradition, polysemic and multifaceted.

The term 'tradition', as Elliott Oring notes in the first line of the first essay of this collection, is itself traditional (22); it has historically been used by folklorists to describe, limit, and justify their field of investigation, and, at the same time, to ascribe some aesthetic or ethnic value to it. Whenever modernity is criticized or appraised, tradition is always close at hand to form a convenient Lévi-Straussian binary opposition with it. Starting with Oring's essay, the authors in this collection consistently argue that 'tradition' as a concept has to be stripped of any evaluation and investigated as a process of cultural (re)production rather than a corpus of separate traditions.

Looking at tradition from this perspective, the contributors build their argument on several intertwined central topics, which may be understood as key aspects of tradition: how identity is formed through tradition, interpretation of tradition, authority of tradition, and authority of a group or an actor over tradition. Looking at tradition from a sociological perspective supports the idea of its persistence as a way of organizing information flow. Instead of undermining it, modern media facilitate this circulation of meanings. As Tok Thompson argues, through all human history new media have reshaped tradition, but never destroyed it (151). Tradition, then, is presented as an embodiment of both synchronous continuity (connecting members of society by shared experience and identity) and diachronous continuity (connecting present to the past as source of authority). In a multicultural society, traditions may compete and even oppose one another,

as, for example, Casey R. Schmitt shows in his paper on the Chief Illiniwek tradition (72–99). By deploying/performing a practice which is perceived or purposefully constructed as traditional, a group maintains its identity and authority.

Robert Glenn Howard argues that the authorizing power of tradition is not necessarily dependent on its empirical 'traditionality'; that is, tradition need not be widely and actively circulating or have a long history to enjoy social significance. An exciting, although perhaps underdeveloped, point in his essay is that tradition can be both empowering (e.g. as a way to avoid institutional pressure in 'vernacular webs', allowing common people to create alternatives to official cultures) and disempowering (e.g. in a sense of personal limitation, allowing only those choices which are authorized by the tradition of a group).

Yet ownership of tradition goes beyond its deployment. Merrill Kaplan describes 'curation of tradition' or, as a matter of fact, some form of folklore studies as a significant vernacular practice of the twenty-first century. Construction of tradition, which was the prerogative of professional folklorists, in the most postcolonial sense goes into the hands of the 'natives'. In Kaplan's study (123–48) these are 'net natives', but the process is unlikely to be limited to the Web. Individuals and groups construct tradition by generating texts and practices, as well as conceptualizing and structuring them. While professional folkloristics is de-contextualizing and 'museum-ifying' tradition, vernacular 'curation' works with a living tradition, interpreting and gaining power over it.

Seen in this way, tradition cannot oppose modernity or 'die out'. Tradition, to a large extent, constitutes a community by linking it together temporally, spatially, and in terms of human relations. The perception of tradition, as shown in the volume, is the keystone of a community's identity or even personal identity. This necessarily means that changes in the cultural situation do not destroy tradition, but rather force it to adapt to new circumstances, mutate in a certain way, or contest with other traditions. The power and authority of tradition remains, and this suggests the importance of construction of tradition in all senses: through performance (be it 'natural' or consciously designed) and through reflection (professional research or vernacular curation). Tradition is more than just healthy and alive, and is not limited to the circulation of information as texts, patterns, or practices. Tradition remains a source of authority and a way of circulating it. New media have revived traditional transmission and facilitated it, giving voice to the masses. More importantly, tradition is not just a reference to the past; it forms the frames for human actions which shape the future. The authors of this volume have indeed done a fine service to the whole field of folklore studies in showing directions of both future development of tradition in the contemporary world and the perspectives of its research.

Although important, the apology for tradition as a concept is not the key value of *Tradition in the Twenty-First Century*. Any essay in this collection actually requires (and is worth) a separate review since each of them stimulates discussion and future investigation. Where is the borderline between appropriation of a marginalized Other's tradition and its preservation? Who owns or who should own tradition? How does tradition gain and lose authority? These and many other questions that arise after reading the volume will, without doubt, inspire further work on the theory of tradition within anthropology, folkloristics, sociology, cultural studies, and other related fields.

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