

their published works and unpublished papers a coherent and integrated view of the Grimm's pioneering contribution to the field of paremiology.

German Volkskunde: A Decade of Theoretical Confrontation, Debate, and Reorientation (1967-77). Translated and edited by James R. Dow and Hannjost Lixfeld. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986. Pp. 343. Introduction, bibliography, notes. \$35.00.

Reviewed by Mary Beth Stein.

All too often, the amount of time and energy involved in the translation of foreign works is not fully recognized or appreciated by those who reap the benefits of such efforts. It is only appropriate in a review of *German Volkskunde*, therefore, to begin with a thanks to editors Dow and Lixfeld for their service in providing American folklorists with a glimpse into a fascinating and turbulent decade of German folklore scholarship. Teachers of European folklore and scholars interested in international developments in the discipline will find *German Volkskunde* both a helpful teaching and research tool. The volume contains some of the most significant essays in postwar German folklore scholarship and highlights the efforts to re-define the theories, goals, and methods of the discipline. With the translation and publication of these works in one volume, the editors have indeed taken a step toward bridging what they correctly perceive as a "gap in the knowledge . . . in international folklore circles" (p. 3). One can only hope that many more such steps will follow.

German Volkskunde is a collection of nineteen essays written by West German folklorists between 1967 and 1977. The volume contains a

wide range of articles, from broad critiques of the discipline's theories and methods to narrow explorations into the specific genres of folk song, toys, and medicine. As with most collections, there is an inevitable unevenness to the volume. Some of the essays are landmarks in German folkloristics, pioneering new directions in theory and methodology, while others are so obscure and tangential to the thesis of reorientation that the reader may puzzle over the rationale for their inclusion. Perhaps headnotes to the individual articles or a discussion of the selected articles in the introduction would have solved this and served to better illustrate the atmosphere of the period, for many of the collected articles do not "speak for themselves" as the editors suggest. Without a guide to the intellectual and ideological contexts of the individual articles, much of their importance is lost on the reader unfamiliar with developments in German folklore since 1945. The introduction, while offering a succinct overview of the history of the discipline, does not spend enough time on the specific scope of the volume and leaves the reader often unable to make the connection between the translated article and the goals of "social responsibility, democratization of scholarship, and relevance for contemporary society" (p. 1).

It is to the credit of the editors that the selected articles attempt to embrace a wide cross-section of the German Folklore Society. The criterion of representativeness, however, unfortunately undermines the overall impact of the volume and gives a somewhat skewed picture of the period. In selecting articles representative of different institutions and fields of research in West Germany, the editors have obscured the spirit of theoretical debate they hoped to convey. The articles in the volume were not of equal importance in the process of reorientation, nor do they equally give the

"strong impression of a reevaluation of the goals of *Volkskunde* scholarship" (p. 17). The end result makes for a curious collection of articles often related to each other only by virtue of the fact that they were published in the same decade.

However, this is perhaps as it should be, for an evenness and agreement between the articles would give the reader a false impression of this period in German folklore. The most significant and far-reaching impulses for reorientation came from specific scholars and institutions; they did not necessarily reflect the society as a whole, or even the majority of German folklorists. The "decade of theoretical confrontation, debate, and reorientation" was neither smooth nor uniform, but painful and uneven. It created considerable dissension in the German Folklore Society, the effects of which are still felt to date.

Nonetheless, the volume contains several "musts"--among them Hermann Bausinger's "A Critique of Tradition" and "Toward a Critique of Folklorism Criticism," Dieter Kramer's "Who Benefits from Folklore?", Martin Scharfe's "Critique of the Canon," Utz Jeggle and Gottfried Korff's "On the Development of the Zillertal Regional Character," and Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann's "Problems of Interethnic Research in Southeast Europe." These are indeed some of the articles which best characterize the reorientation of the period and have been most significant in recent developments of the discipline. One surprising omission is Ina-Maria Greverus' "On the Nostalgic-Retrospective Orientation of Folklore" (1969). In many ways, her article, also published during this period, exemplifies the combination of critique of the past with program for the future that characterized the process of reorientation.

American readers will be interested in the parallel, yet separate and unique, challenges to

such central concepts as tradition and genre. Bausinger's critique of tradition preceded that of Ben-Amos (1971) by a mere two years, and Scharfe's critique of item-centered studies coincided with the shift in focus in American folklore from text to context, and from product to process.

Finally, a word on the bibliography which is, as the editors maintain, a "unique document in itself." With 1279 entries it is both comprehensive and impressive. The bibliography, however, would have been much more accessible and valuable as a research tool if accompanied by a concise, thematic index. In the current form the amassed entries are unwieldy and resemble the *Stoffhuberei* that the editors address in their introduction. Nonetheless, American folklorists will no doubt appreciate the work which has gone into the compilation of the bibliography and the translation of the articles in *German Volkskunde*.

References Cited

Ben-Amos, Dan

1971 Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context. *Journal of American Folklore* 84:3-15.

Greverus, Ina-Maria

1969 Zu einer nostalgisch-retrospektiven Bezugsrichtung der *Volkskunde*. *Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde* 60:11-28.

Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: An Introduction. Edited by Elliott Oring. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1986. Pp. xiv + 258, 7 figures. \$12.95 paper.

Reviewed by Moira Smith.

Those who have taught introductory folklore classes know well that the perfect introductory