Brunvand, Dégh and Vázsonyi, and Fine. Nor is this a marginal involvement. Of the two hundred English-language works listed in the references, over a third (sixty-nine) may be regarded as, broadly speaking, folklore scholarship. Of these well over half (thirty-nine) have the word "legend" in the title.

There can be no excuse now, for writers on rumor and legend to be ignorant of developments in the other field. It is reasonable to hope that this cross-fertilization will prove productive. If it does, Kapferer will have played an important part in achieving this end.

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Jean-Loic Le Quellec. *Alcool de singe et liquer de vipère... (plus quelques autres recettes)*. Poitiers: Editions Geste, 1991. Pp 269.

At first glance, this book appears to be a simple consideration of a single local legend, and an attempt to trace its origin and its spread through oral and media channels. Indeed, the first thirty pages present just such a treatment. The book begins with the author's examination of an anecdote recounting events purported to have transpired in French Brittany at the turn of the century. According to this anecdote, several fishermen come across a wooden cask lying on the beach, apparently having been deposited there after a shipwreck offshore. The fishermen tap the keg and discover it contains fine-tasting alcohol, which

they proceed to consume in some quantity and with great gusto. Upon breaking open the barrel to get at the last of its contents, they discover inside the perfectly preserved body of a large ape which had apparently been collected by a zoological expedition and stored in alcohol for the long trip. The fishermen, sickened by this discovery, are afflicted by a case of extreme nausea. So ends the anecdote.

After investigating a number of aspects of this story in an effort to determine its authenticity and to trace its origins, the author uncovers a number of inconsistencies which raise questions as to the veracity of the account. First, the author notes the number of widely-separated locales in which this singular event is claimed to have happened and the inconsistent dates attributed to its occurrence. The anecdote is localized in ten areas covering five French provinces, with dates ranging from the late nineteenth century, 1906, 1908, 1911, 1912, and 1921. While this information might normally introduce strong doubt that the event ever took place at all, further investigation by the author unearths evidence which indicates the narrative does indeed have some basis in fact. A report dated December 27, 1911, found in the Archives Historiques de la Marine à Rochefort reveals that a barrel empty of all liquid, but containing the preserved cadaver of an ape, had indeed been found washed ashore on the coast of Brittany. This government document is further supported by a newspaper item dated 5 January 1912, and another document announces the sale of the barrel as salvage on 17 January 1912. Here, events take an unusual turn, as one week later, another newspaper, known for its stance against the consumption of alcohol, publishes a supposedly factual account which selectively draws upon details of the 'real' event (the discovery of the keg) and adds embellishment which results in a version of the anecdote of "l'alcool de singe," with the purpose, one assumes, of illustrating the dire consequences of alcoholic consumption. Nevertheless, while the above offers an outline of the development of the anecdote via oral and mass media channels in one localized area of Brittany, the author suggests that this is not sufficient to explain the numerous other examples documented, and that "we must pursue our research just at that point where we had hoped to be able to close it" (p. 31).

In the sections which follow, the author broadens the field of his research to demonstrate that many anecdotes circulating in oral tradition and through mass media channels focus on cultural taboos associated with the consumption of food and drink. Numerous examples of "alimentary" punishments are found, such as the early medieval tale of the over-amorous chevalier and his twelve lovers. His indiscretions are discovered by his lovers' husbands who, by way of revenge, murder the interloper and serve their wives a stew composed of the unfortunate knight's sexual organs. Not yet satisfied, the husbands then reveal the contents of the meal to their wives who, disgusted by what they have done, subsequently starve themselves to death (p. 44). By way of comparison, Le Quellec presents more recent examples of anecdotes concerning butchers surreptitiously selling human flesh as a replacement for acceptable animal meat. These cases were documented in newspaper accounts of the nineteenth century, and often the perpetrator is identified with some "foreign" ethnic group. Interestingly, such narratives most often recount how the discovery is made only after the diners have eaten and remarked on the succulence of the dish, and it is this element of ex post facto revelation which Le Quellec pursues throughout his survey.

Le Quellec proceeds to outline a series of fascinating tales, anecdotes, and contemporary legends which follow this common theme relating acts of involuntary cannibalism, which he suggests includes the consumption of both human beings and other large anthropoids, committed by individuals unaware of their transgression against cultural sanctions. One anecdote related how in the United States, the body of a Mexican worker is found in a large vat of pickles after the contents of the vat had been packaged and sent to market for distribution to consumers (pp. 84–85). In Libya, a rumor circulated that evidence suggested that the remains of a worker in a Coca-Cola plant had been found in a vat after thousands of bottles of the soft drink therein prepared had been sent to market, suggesting that each bottle "contained at least several particles of the worker's [by then dissolved] body" (pp. 89–90). Then there is the case of the family who, upon receiving the crematory ashes of the grandmother, mistake them for a delicate condiment and consume them with their meal (p. 107). Le Quellec links all of

these examples to the cultural distinctions drawn by all societies between the "mangeable" (literally "edible," but more accurately, "permissibly edible") and the "non mangeable" (pp. 95–96), and while the author treats these concepts perhaps a little too superficially, the essence of his point is adequately illustrated by the shear quantity of examples presented. It is noteworthy that narratives of this type represent as equally taboo both the consumption of human flesh itself and of foodstuffs which had been in contact with it—what we might refer to as 'contagious cannibalism' (my term).

The temporal scope of anecdotes of this sort is revealed throughout Le Quellec's study. For example, he cites the example from the thirteenth century of how a group of Egyptian grave-robbers came across a large jar of ancient honey which, they found upon tasting, was still sweet and edible. However, after consuming heartily of this condiment, they were nauseated to discover that the jar contained the mummified corpse of a child. A similar anecdote is told by Bracciolini (1380–1459) of a Florentine sailor consuming a mummified corpse (p. 124), and a Central African tale recounts the misadventure of a mythical character who selfishly consumes the contents of a jar of honey, only to discover the cadaver of an ape at the bottom of the container (p. 125). The similarity between these examples and the case of the "alcool de singe" is unmistakable, and the implied identification of apes as a primitive human type.

The theme of the secret recipe for the refined dish in reality containing disgusting ingredients recurs constantly in modern urban tradition, and the author cites the well-known examples of the American "junk-food" outlets and ethnic restaurants as prime foci of contemporary legends which, he claims, in the case of the former reflect the anxiety and even resentment felt by many consumers faced with impersonal, mass-produced meals. Le Quellec attributes the presence of widespread distrust of ethnic restaurants to racist and xenophobic elements in society (pp. 50–53).

Throughout the remainder of the book, Le Quellec provides data and examples relating to taboos associated with the involuntary consumption of taboo items, and the subsequent discovery of their transgression by the consumers. Le Quellec discusses such motifs as: the weight-loss pill whose active

ingredient is a tape-worm (pp. 59-61); the serpent swallowed at drinking fountains and remaining alive in the drinker's stomach (pp. 62-66), or even, in the case of a female, resulting in pregnancy, a motif common in Celtic mythology; the discovery of frogs and toads in cans of food (pp. 75–83); and "cokelore" relating to the discovery of foreign organisms, especially mice, in bottles of Coca-Cola (pp. 89–92). While farther from his central theme, such anecdotes are clearly related to it.

Le Quellec's analysis of the various narratives allows him to arrive at a narrative "type" characterized by the following elements of content: (1) individual(s) find/are presented an apparently edible dish; (2) individual(s), often possessing negative behavioral or personality traits, consume the dish; (3) individual(s) remark on fine/interesting taste of dish; (4) discovery/revelation, to horror of diners, of dish's true contents; (5) disgust/nausea caused by this discovery/revelation. In most cases, the narrative would appear to serve one of two didactic functions. Some anecdotes are presented as examples of how the undesirable characteristics or behavior of the victims are punished, while others instruct listeners not to trust modern technology or certain ethnic groups involved in the food industry.

Le Quellec's study is not a performance-centred approach in the typical sense of this much-abused term. Indeed, he deals very little with performance situations, preferring instead to treat his material as the product of a broader popular culture. He seeks similarities and patterns in apparent diversity and is fairly successful in accomplishing this limited objective. He does engage in a brief discussion of narrative structure, but this is strictly limited to an *en passant* observation of the works of sociolinguist William Labov on the structure of personal narratives. He compares this to the pattern proposed by W.F.H. Nicolaisen for the rumor, and offers a comparable model for the riddle, suggesting that "selon son organisation structurelle, la même histoire peut appartenir tantôt à l'une, tantôt à l'autre des trois catégories: récit, rumeur, énigme" (p. 157). ["Depending on its structure, the same story can belong to one or another of the three categories: account, rumor, riddle"]. This is a useful starting point, but Le Quellec probes no deeper, suggesting only that "Une recherche approfondie sur la forme des récits montr-

erait semblablement comment la même histoire se donne à reconnaître tantôt comme fait-divers, tantôt comme anecdote à laquelle croit le narrateur, et tantôt comme facétie" (p. 157). ["A deeper study of narrative forms would similarly show how the same story occurs sometimes as a news item, sometimes as a believed anecdote, and sometimes as a joke"].

Given the quantity of Le Quellec's data, it would have been most interesting to see his own application of these principles in more detail, and it is the absence of such a study, hinted at but never concretely presented, which I consider one of the major disappointments of this book. In particular, no mention is made of the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss, whose paradigmatic structuralism relates directly to the type of oppositions Le Quellec is concerned with. He does redeem himself somewhat towards the end of the book with his structural treatment of the "double renversement," or double inversion which relates the content of the "alcool de singe"narrative to anticipated audience response, but even here, the absence of any reference to Lévi-Strauss is puzzling.

In conclusion, Le Quellec presents us with an interesting array of anecdotes which, on the surface, are quite different but which, upon closer scrutiny, display consistent elements. As such, it is a worthy example of the use of comparative content analysis to identify the culturally-significant, underlying themes which give the narratives their 'truth.' Its one major flaw is the author's failure to treat in sufficient detail the theoretical and methodological issues raised by his detailed analysis.

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