

**Gillian BENNETT and Paul SMITH (eds.), *Contemporary Legend: A Folklore Bibliography* (New York, Garland Press, 1993, Garland reference library of the humanities, 1307, xxv+370 p. ("Garland folklore bibliographies", 18), ISBN 0-8240-6103-9, US \$56.00)**

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There are a few inexactitudes in the running comments as well. One that is often repeated in Nova Scotia is the claim that the Springhill explosion of 1891 was "the worst mining disaster in Canadian history" (p. 133), but in fact the worst tragedy took place in western Canada in 1914, when 189 men died in an explosion at Hillcrest, Alberta. Another minor error of particular interest to this reviewer can also be cited: it is stated (p. 109) that the union leader J. B. McLachlan was born in 1870 but that this tombstone gives the date incorrectly as 1869; a small point, perhaps, but this then makes the first line of Charlie MacKinnon's "The Ballad of J. B. McLachlan" (p. 110-111) appear misinformed ("Born in old Scotland in eighteen sixty-nine..."); O'Donnell bases his correction of MacKinnon on the claims of an older popular history of the coal miners which, at least on this point, is misleading<sup>6</sup>. It can also be added that in a few places (p. x, p. 94) there are footnotes which are obviously inaccurate.

None of this is meant to detract from the value of the material assembled in this volume, but only to point out that an important book such as this one, originating from a university press, should have benefited from a stronger editorial process. Although much remains to be done in analyzing the history of popular culture in the mining communities of Canada, this collection stands as a reminder of the role of Jack O'Donnell and the Men of the Deeps in gaining recognition for the local industrial culture of the coal country.

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Garland Publishing of New York has become well-known in the past decade or so for its several series of academic bibliographies: literally thousands of titles, some on topics very esoteric. Such tomes are not profitably published by standard publishers, nor profitably distributed when privately published. But

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6. Birth records at the Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh, confirm 1869 as McLachlan's correct date of birth.

with its wide distribution network, Garland gets easily into libraries, and presumably turns a profit.

Garland is able to do this partly by its plain and homogenous look. Each of its publications is printed in the same format, and bound in the same cloth in only two or three colours. Nevertheless — perhaps because of this common format — standards are high. They use sewn-in signatures of acid-free paper and, if you buy Garland books, you can use them with little fear of their falling apart or rotting in the acid air. Early volumes were printed in less attractive typefaces, but in the past five years, the visual wrinkles have been ironed out.

Gillian Bennett and Paul Smith's 1116-entry, annotated bibliography of contemporary legend research is a typical, attractive Garland book, one of the eighteen titles in Garland's Folklore series, edited by Alan Dundes. For its size (340 pages) it is pricey, \$56 American (what's that — about \$75 Canadian?). But if you are an active student of contemporary legend, this is something you will keep around and use frequently.

In the task of identifying and annotating works on the topic, mainly but not entirely in English, the two editors were aided by six "Overseas Editors". Both main editors, and many of these sub-editors, have been central to the revival of legend studies that grew out of the Sheffield symposiums of the early 1980s. In particular, individually and together, Bennett and Smith have published essays, books, and books of essays. Although there is no connection between them, this book follows their useful 1990 useful little book of abstracts from the Sheffield conferences of 1982 to 1986<sup>1</sup>.

*Contemporary Legend: A Folklore Bibliography* (for convenience, just *CLFB*) has four main sections, each a class of works: anthologies; introductions and overviews; theoretical and technical studies; and texts and case studies. There is also a short supplement and a shorter list of periodicals "with a special interest in contemporary legend" (p. 293). Within each of the six sections, arrangement is entirely alphabetical: by author or authorless title in the first five; by title in the last.

A bibliography's first function is as a tool for research and reference. The arrangement of *CLFB* clearly has been chosen for users, but it is only for some; a more integrated arrangement might have been more universally serviceable. The editors suggest there are only two ways to arrange a bibliography — by classification, as they chose, and alphabetically (p. xxi). But the chronological approach, admittedly non-traditional, is an extremely useful third<sup>2</sup>. A chronologi-

1. Gillian Bennett and Paul Smith, compilers, *Contemporary Legend — The First Five Years: Abstracts and Bibliographies from the Sheffield Conferences on Contemporary Legend, 1982-1986*, Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1990.
2. The chronological approach worked well for two regional bibliographies I am familiar with: that of the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, edited by William Kirwin, George Story, and John Widdowson, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1982, 2nd edition 1991; and the *Bibliography of Newfoundland*, compiled by Agnes O'Dea and edited by Anne Alexander, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1986, two vols.

cal arrangement would have given the bibliography a historical structure otherwise unattainable. *CLFB* covers literature from 1757 (not 1852 as the publisher's blurb says) to 1991, handling especially well the period since the late 1960s. Historical shifts in focus and approach in legend studies would have become apparent to the reader had this bibliography been arranged chronologically. One would readily see the historical context of works, something quite impossible with other formats. These days, computer-generated indexes are not only possible but fairly easy and would have compensated for the lack of other organization in the main body; in fact, an alphabetical listing by author was placed at the end of the book<sup>3</sup>. I hope future bibliographers will consider this non-traditional form.

Alan Dundes, as series editor, contributed a short preface to *CLFB*. He did not resist giving a few examples of citations the editors missed. He points out that it is their bibliography and they can name it as they like, but he doesn't like their term "contemporary legend" — it "smack[s] of journalistic practice" (p. xi), and such legends will no longer be contemporary some time from now. Such an argument misses the point of why so many people prefer this to other terms such as "modern legend": such legends are told in a kind of present, with a kind of contemporaneity. "Bosom serpent" legends from the 18th century, and Daniel Defoe's report of a 17th century "AIDS Mary" story are included because they were "contemporary" to their telling.

*CLFB*'s indexes may have been compiled before all the entries were in place, throwing some numbers out of true; as a result, there are some small unhelpful typos. I will not trouble you with a list — none of the ones I saw was so out of whack that I could not find the correct entry, which was on the same or next page. There are, however, some troublesome typos in the text; for example, item 569 gives us neither volume number nor year for a reference.

These criticisms having been made, it must be said that *CLFB* is a wonderful work. The two indexes, one by author and the other more generally by topic, place, legend name, and journal title, are very useful. There's some interesting folklore trivia to be culled here: from the first index we find editor Gillian Bennett is, of about 800 authors listed, the one with the most citations, 26. Editor Paul Smith is number five with 23 citations. In between are Bill Ellis, 25, and Jan Brunvand and Linda Dégh, both with 24. Mind you, if Bill Ellis's entry #554 were broken up into its constituent parts, he'd lead the pack by about ten entries.

From the general index, we find that *CFc* is cited once (Jennifer Connor's 1985, 7: 35-53, article on folklore in medical journals), as is *Atlantic Insight* (a 1987 article, 9.8: 11-13, on "urban legends" by journalist David Holt). Of the provinces of Canada, only Newfoundland (referring to Holt's article), Ontario

3. I might say that I regret not choosing that approach with an alphabetical bibliography I published some time ago: "Newfoundland Folklore and Language — A Bibliography", *Regional Language Studies*... Newfoundland 12, December 1989, p. 2-56.

and Québec (both referring to articles in Edith Fowke's *Folklore of Canada*) are indexed. Canada as a whole rates four other entries. By comparison, *Oregon Folklore Bulletin* and *Northwest Folklore* each have five citations; other regional journals have similar or greater numbers. I doubt this comparison indicates a lighter bibliographic touch in Canada, but rather think that Canadian writers have been less concerned with the genre of contemporary legend than American and British writers.

The general index of *CLFB* is especially good for finding what's written on particular legend types. The "Bosom Serpent" mentioned above (motif B784, Animal lives in person's stomach and tale type AT285B\* Snake Enticed out of Man's Stomach) is a good example: no less than 70 references are given. That's about three times what Ernest Baughman lists<sup>4</sup>. Although motif and tale type numbers are used from time to time in the book, there is no central index of them; reliance is instead on the topically organised General Index.

At about \$75 a pop (plus, uhhh, applicable taxes), buying this book will probably require either an edict from a course instructor or an income tax deduction. In his preface, Dundes almost suggests what I would agree with — that it will make a very good textbook in a dedicated contemporary legend course. If you or your students plan research in contemporary legend, this is an indispensable tool; encourage your library to order it, even if you also buy it for your own collection.

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Martin HALLET et Barbara KARASEK (édit.), *Folk and Fairy Tales* (Peterborough, Broadview Press, 1991, xii-383 p., ISBN 0-921149-61-1).

Dans le «Rossignol et l'Empereur» («The Nightingale»), un des contes d'Anderson reproduit dans cette anthologie, un rossignol au chant merveilleux et infiniment varié accepte de suivre les envoyés de l'empereur de Chine. Il émeut l'empereur par son chant et devient l'attraction principale de la cour jusqu'au jour où l'empereur du Japon, informé du prodige, envoie à son collègue un rossignol mécanique magnifiquement serti de pierres précieuses (on sait que le plumage des rossignols est quelconque), avec la mention suivante sur un ruban: «Le rossignol de l'Empereur du Japon est inférieur à celui de l'Empereur de Chine.» L'automate

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4. *Type and Motif-Index of the Folktales of England and North America*. Bloomington & The Hague, Indiana University Press and Mouton, 1966.