English Summaries

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Hermann Bausinger: On the Specific Character of Research Work in Folklore

In this article, folklore is defined neither by a specific area of subject-matter nor by its position in a system of scholarly disciplines, but rather by its characteristic approach. Methodological questions have received little attention during the 'hot phase' of theoretical discussions, because the orientation toward actual social problems, the interest in inter-disciplinary cooperation, and confidence in the clarifying power of 'discourse' seemed to render a more precise definition of the field unnecessary. It is precisely the cooperation with other scholarly disciplines, however, that presupposes specific focal points and emphases in folklore research work. The latter are developed in the article using the examples of a study of hooked rugs in Newfoundland and of interviews on the situation of foreign workers in the Federal Republic of Germany. Especially in comparison with sociology, these folklore studies apparently put more emphasis on the cultural factors and display a more pronounced orientation toward the study of 'every-day life' as well as a stronger emphasis on 'softer' research methods – which are, however, not used exclusively.

Helge Gerndt: On the Perspective of Folklore Research

The paper makes a case for the laying of a cognitive-theoretical foundation for folklore. The first part outlines the development of the older theoretical programs of the discipline in four stages which are represented by the seminal works of W. H. Riehl (1858), E. Hoffmann-Krayer (1900), Adolf Spamer (1924), and Hans Moser (1954). Instead of focusing on specific areas of subject-matter such as 'popular culture' or 'every-day culture' which cannot be defined empirically, folklore should draw its conception of itself from its specific approaches to a wider and only loosely defined field of research, namely 'culture'. The most pressing tasks of folklore are: the general strengthening of methodological awareness, the development of a theory of sources for the cultural sciences, the diversification of functional approaches on the basis of model studies, the refinement of research methods, and finally the ideological criticism of theoretical concepts.
Klaus Roth: Historical Folklore and Quantification

The study of historical folklore and popular culture is largely dependent on those immense quantities of written sources that have come down upon us. The quantitative statistical analysis of suitable groups of historical sources can yield insights into the more general features, categories, interrelations, structures and processes of historical folklore which could hardly be obtained with "soft" interpretive methods only. The analysis of 18th century household inventories is presented as a case in point: with the help of a multivariate statistical procedure (Iterative Cluster Analysis), the households are grouped into clear-cut and meaningful categories or 'types' which correlate with socio-economic and spatial factors. – Only the prudent combination of 'hard' and 'soft' analytical methods allows an adequate comprehensive study of individual and general aspects of historical folklore.

Konrad Köstlin: Folklorisation of Biography: Tall-Tales?

The article deals with the use of the ethnic (social and regional) past. "Folklorisierung" (folklorisation) describes the process which makes ethnic history fit for use in the individual’s or the group’s biography. Furthermore, "Folklorisierung" in this sense tries to point out that the difference between authentic and non-authentic is unimportant. Ethnic history with its stock of formulas is true by virtue of being useful for the individual’s and the group’s biography. As has become apparent (not only) at ethnic festivals there is a demand for making the past folksy and handsome. In this context Tall-Tales are to be found everywhere. The article tries to avoid (and to do away with) the concept of „Folklorismus“ which was discussed in the past decade.

Wigdis J. Espeland: Between Charity and Disdain. An Analysis of the Interaction Between a Strolling Musician and his Audience

The article attempts to analyse the minimal mutual cultural intersubjectivity which is decisive for the interaction between a strolling musician and his spectators. He represents the group of homeless alcoholics, a fact that strongly influences his repertoire of songs as well as his performance. General public attitudes toward this group of people allow him to play two roles: He may present himself as the repentant sinner or he may play the role of the jolly jester, who is able to make fun of his own misfortune. The popular conceptions of the homeless alcoholics as unproductive members of our society, particularly after they have undergone medical treatment, have to be changed in order to give them a chance to establish a positive self-image and thus to return to "our society".
Klaus Geiger: Native Region and Identity. Report on the 22nd German Folklore Congress in Kiel (June 16–21, 1979)

The report on the German Folklore Congress of 1979 that was organized by the German Folklore Society (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Volkskunde, Tübingen) and by the City of Kiel at the occasion of the Kiel Week contains an overview of the papers presented and of the accompanying program of the congress (folklore and folklife exhibition in the shop-windows of a downtown shopping street, public events in various quarters of the city organized by folklorists, etc.) as well as a final appraisal of the whole congress.

Max Matter et. al.: The "Kiebingen" Project. New Ways of Community Studies in Folklore

The report outlines the history of a project that was begun in 1970 and jointly carried out by Albert Ilien and Utz Jeggle, a community study of a small village in SW-Germany. The project comes under criticism because of the way in which socialization theory is applied.

Christa Pieske: Folklore Activities in Pennsylvania: Private Societies, their Work and Publications

The author presents a concise report on the activities and the significance of some "pennsylvanisch-deutsche Vereinigungen" (Pennsylvania German Society, Pennsylvanian Folklife Society, Goschenhoppen Historians, Historic Schafferstown).

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