

The final essay in the collection, "The Preservation of History and Culture Among the Inuit of Labrador Through Their Own and Contact Languages," by F.W. Peacock, a Moravian missionary, is based upon the premise that "single words reveal and contain history within themselves" (p.92). While the article is interesting from a linguistic viewpoint, it really does not belong in a volume concerned with folklore and oral history.

The papers presented in **Folklore and Oral History** are highly uneven in quality; several articles barely mention folklore, and one does not pertain to either field. The collection is valuable due to its inclusion of the Harris and Cosbey articles, and because it underscores the fact that while there is much room for cooperation between folklore and oral history, the basic treatises still remain to be written.

The Vanishing Hitchhiker. American Urban Legends and their Meanings. By Jan Harold Brunvand. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981. Pp. xiv-208, glossary, appendix, index. \$14.95 cloth.

Reviewed by Peter Voorheis.

When we encounter works whose every sentence and paragraph conveys its message after only one reading, we may suspect that the author is speaking not to us but to the rabble outside the ivory tower. The style and format of **The Vanishing Hitchhiker** does suggest that Jan Brunvand wishes his readership to extend beyond folklorists-- to scholars in other disciplines as well as to the society at large. All of the most widely known modern legends-- the Hook, the Boyfriend's Death, etc., are represented, though for reasons of space he cannot render them the exhaustive treatment we have become accustomed to for single-legend studies in **Indiana Folklore** and elsewhere. Yet we should not too quickly equate brevity with mediocrity or lack of scholarly utility.

As many of his earlier writings indicate, Brunvand is an eclectic researcher, and presents his material without

the constrictions of a specific theoretical perspective. While this approach may sometimes be liable to charges of indecisiveness, it works well for his purposes here, for in the course of his discussion of the legends he is able to present to the reader the varied concerns of the folklorists who examine such material. In some measure, the particular interpretations discussed for each legend are governed by the previous work of other folklorists, but much of the analysis, especially his relation of the legends' themes to the concerns of their social environment, seem grounded in common sense. Particularly effective is Brunvand's treatment of the stories' interplay between oral tradition and the media, suggesting their sources of proliferation.

Brunvand's volume is by no means the final word on these legends. For many of them, no full-length study has been undertaken, and in this connection the bibliographies appended to each chapter may serve as a starting point. But its greatest potential utility in our field may be as a supplementary text for introductory folklore courses, as it deals with easily-collected narratives whose themes are relevant to the personal experiences of most undergraduates. In addition, it suggests directions for analysis, and perhaps just as important for such courses, there is not one boring page in the entire book.

My only criticism of this study does not seriously detract from its overall worth. The labelling of these legends as "urban," a term not explicitly defined by Brunvand, in the title, the text, and for that matter, in our field in general, is troublesome. Most of them do not require an urban setting for their plots, nor, as indicated by the predominance of Utah and Indiana as the sources for Brunvand's texts, do they require a city environment for their proliferation. They may be the products of a largely urbanized society, but what contemporary American cultural phenomena are not? We would not refer to Pop Tarts, after all, as "urban cuisine." It is true that the legends are "told and believed by some of the most sophisticated 'folk' of modern society-- young people, urbanites, and the well-educated" (p. xi), but any relegation of the stories to this group is misleading, since most of our available texts have been submitted to archives

by students who for logistic and other reasons tend to confine their fieldwork to the university community and to their own age group. For similar reasons the term "adolescent legend" is not as precise as we would wish. But I must admit that a convenient alternative to either term has so far eluded me.

Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy. By Terry G. Jordan.
Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982. Pp. x-147,
bibliography, index, illustrations. \$19.95, cloth.

Reviewed by Warren E. Roberts.

Much has been written about gravestones and cemeteries in the United States, but this work offers a new approach. Jordan has visited great numbers of rural cemeteries in Texas. He has not covered it completely, but Texas is a very big state, and he has described not only gravestones, but also grave decorations, lay-outs of cemeteries, fences, gates, flora in cemeteries, and other features. While other geographers, notably Fred B. Kniffen, have spoken of "necrogeography," Jordan is the first to present a large-scale example of this approach to folklife study.

Jordan has been forced to limit himself to three ethnic traditions: southern American, Hispanic-American, and German-American. While he regrets having to omit other ethnic groups in Texas, he does deal with these numerically dominant traditions in admirable detail. He describes and illustrates such noteworthy features as scraped earth cemeteries, shell-decorated graves, and gravehouses. The copious illustrations are a necessary and excellent part of the book. We are all in Jordan's debt for showing the importance of his approach to an important part of folklife studies.

The work is marred, unfortunately, by frequent "Frazerian" interpretations of symbols on gravestones and the ancient origins and supposed meaning of these symbols. For example, the legend for figure 3-20, a photo of a gravestone with a carved dove on it reads "The dove, one of the animal consorts of the ancient Mediterranean mother/fertility goddesses, dominates a commercial tombstone in