

"The Vardoger," "The Fylgie," "The Finn Messenger," "The Dream Soul," and "Death."

Below each account of a belief or a legend, Kvideland and Sehmsdorf provide the place where the item was collected and by whom, and where it was subsequently published or recorded. Often the authors gloss the entry with an explanatory note of their own to provide the reader with a more detailed explanation or a possible motivation for the belief. In this way, the reader is given not only the item and its provenance, but also the contextual backdrop for the account, indeed a welcome addition.

The back matter is very thoughtfully presented, beginning with a list of abbreviations and an exhaustive bibliography. There are four indexes: a general thematic index keyed to the numbered entries in the body, an index of legend types from Reidar Th. Christiansen's *Migratory Legends* (FFC no. 175), followed by an index of unnumbered legend types (i.e., those not included in Christiansen's work above), and an index of memorates.

*Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend* is a very readable work which is both informative and interesting. It is also a useful reference tool. Because the entries are both diverse and illuminating for introductory classes in folklore, I have used it in the classroom with great success. Lindow's *Scandinavian Mythology* is also a must-have for any student of Scandinavian folklore and literature. Together they form a good beginning to a Scandinavian library.

**Bennett, Gillian. Traditions of Belief: Women, Folklore and the Supernatural Today.** New York: Penguin Books, 1987. Pp. xi + 222, appendix, select bibliography. \$7.95 paper.

Reviewed by Barbara Truesdell

Gillian Bennett has written a fascinating, thoughtful book exploring the relationship of supernatural folk belief to a particular population's worldview. In this study, the informants are older women, a group in which Bennett finds skeptics, believers, and all the spectrum between those two commitments. Utilizing the emic terms the women themselves use to discuss and debate their beliefs (for example, asking about "the mysterious side of life" instead of "the supernatural"), Bennett has collected a rich corpus of legends about good and bad spirits, ESP, fortunetelling, and spiritualism. Bennett argues that the acceptance of supernatural traditions, and the kind of traditions accepted, are shaped by her informants' basic assumptions about their social, philosophical, and moral position in the world.

The first two chapters offer a concise history of folklore as a discipline, describe Bennett's own approach, and discuss the traditional patterns of belief and disbelief in which modern supernatural traditions thrive. These initial chapters contextualize the intellectual climate from which she approaches her analysis of the women's stories and are especially enlightening in addressing the

lack of scholarly attention being given to current supernatural folk belief and legend.

Bennett finds two distinct kinds of spirits in the corpus of legends she collects: those her informants identify as evil or "nasty," such as poltergeists; and good spirits—those of parents, spouses, siblings and children—who continue to love, protect, and occasionally interact with the living. In examining the rhetorical traditions of belief and disbelief in which these stories play a part, Bennett finds them closely interrelated with her informants' traditional attitudes about familial relationships and women's roles and attributes. She argues that these precepts determine what beliefs are acceptable to her informants. For example, spiritualism seems to be taboo to believers and skeptics alike; it undermines the qualities of purposefulness, connectedness, and caring that differentiate the good dead from the bad for believers, and it also challenges the skeptics' view that the world is knowable and "un-supernatural."

ESP and divination of various kinds are also the subjects of some of Bennett's data, and here again the worldview of the tellers colors their relationship to the belief. While telepathy and premonitions of various kinds are consonant with the women's views of themselves as intuitive and emotionally connected to others, divination is viewed with suspicion as "delving" into areas outside the natural and permissible sphere of knowledge.

While historical background and documentation for these beliefs is found throughout this excellent book, the final chapter is devoted to a brief history of ghosts and a discussion of their place in the worldview of different eras, providing a fascinating overview of the extensive literature on this subject and demonstrating that then, as now, ghosts fit in as part of a wider belief system and comprehensive worldview. *Traditions of Belief* is an exciting addition to this literature, and one that will, I hope, inspire further serious research in this area.

Harrold, Francis B. and Raymond A. Eve (eds.) **Cult Archaeology & Creationism: Understanding Pseudoscientific Beliefs about the Past.** Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1987. Pp. xii + 163, preface, notes, bibliography, figures, appendix. Cloth, n.p.

Reviewed by Kenneth D. Pimple

*Cult Archaeology & Creationism* is a collection of essays which "grew from a symposium at the 1986 meeting of the Society for American Archaeology" (xi); the symposium was organized by Kenneth Feder, Luanne Hudson, and Francis Harrold, all anthropologists. The essays are concerned with "pseudoscience," a blanket term which covers both creationism and "cult archeology," or claims about the past which cloak themselves in the guise of science but which are at best bad science, such as Erich von Däniken's *Chariots of the Gods* (1970). Efforts have already been made to debunk cult archeologists, and so the articles in this book "are not primarily concerned . . .