

stated explicitly. For the longer tales, note is made of the relevant AT numbers and motifs.

The other sections of the book have sparse introductions, leaving out much of the contextual information that could aid in a deeper understanding of the texts.

Thanks to the work that Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger have devoted to this project over 19 years, we now have a sense of the abundant repertoire of one family of travellers. This abundancy speaks of the wealth of oral traditions that have been hiding among the travelling people of Scotland.

Gary Holloway. Saints, Demons, and Asses: Southern Preacher Anecdotes. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989. Pp. ix + 124, notes, bibliography, index. \$9.95 paper.

Deborah G. Plant
Memphis State University

Saints, Demons, and Asses is a study of the oral and written anecdotes of Church of Christ preachers. Holloway compares these anecdotes, then analyzes them in accordance with Alan Dundes' guidelines of text ("a version or single telling"), texture ("linguistic features"), and context ("relations of narrator and audience"). He sets out to "show that the change from oral to written anecdotes affects the style and function of those anecdotes." He attempts to confirm Walter Ong's thesis that "writing restructures consciousness": "a change in medium is a change in message."

Holloway asserts that oral preacher anecdotes and the corresponding written version of those anecdotes, which are culled from biographies of Church of Christ preachers, differ in terms of the "paired stylistic features" of structure, frame of reference, audience directives, diction, length of presentation, relation of context to language, and variability or fixity of text. He argues that the differences are a direct result of the medium of a given presentation. For example, the relation of context to language in oral stories allows for the use of more "offensive" themes and language in those stories than in the written ones. Profanity and sexual terms are used in the oral stories. There is no profanity used in the written stories and no direct discussion of sex or sexual immorality. Holloway explains that oral stories are usually told to intimates in an informal setting. There is, then, less inhibition of language use and less fear of defamation of anyone's character. Written stories, however, are more formal and are intended for a wider and more varied audience. Any offensive material is potentially damaging. Moreover, since the written stories are part of a biography of a Church of Christ preacher, the tone of the written anecdotes is hagiographic. The language is circumscribed.

When orally transmitted stories are written down, Holloway maintains, style, that is, "texture and context together," changes. These stylistic changes result in differences in the meaning or function of the stories. Holloway

determines three main functions of preacher anecdotes: exempla, humor, and group identity. All of the anecdotes that serve as exempla are found in written form or oral versions derived from the written anecdotes. Those which have a humorous function that is therapeutic or revelatory of some fault are found mostly in oral anecdotes, while those which have a humorous function that is aggressive or reconciling are found in both written and oral anecdotes. Those anecdotes which serve to foster group identity are found more so in oral presentations. Medium determines message.

Gary Holloway's analysis of oral and written Church of Christ preacher anecdotes is systematic, thorough, and remarkably lucid. His argument is clearly delineated and substantiated. His treatment of these preacher anecdotes is both perceptive and sensitive. *Saints, Demons, and Asses* is, indeed, a significant contribution to what Ong describes as the "largely unfinished business" of exploring the discrepancy between orality and literacy. But Holloway's work does more. By examining the style and function of the preacher anecdotes collected, he gives us insight into the sensibilities of the Churches of Christ folk group. Further, that examination suggests how folklorists and cultural anthropologists alike might discern and understand certain aspects of the ethos of a particular folk group or culture based on a comparison of its oral and written anecdotes. Holloway's study will also prove useful to scholars of religion (his insights into the use of humor in religion are illuminating), and scholars and critics of oral literature, written literature which has a folklore base, and that literature in between which some critics have come to call "intermediate literature." And because Gary Holloway's study is as amusing as it is informative, anyone who picks it up should enjoy it. As he suggests in his preface, the book does contain "some of the funniest stories" you'll ever read. And who doesn't enjoy a good story?

Patricia Jones-Jackson. **When Roots Die: Endangered Traditions on the Sea Islands.** Foreword by Charles Joyner. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987. Pp. xxv + 189, appendices, selected bibliography, index. \$12.95 paper.

Laura Arntson Harris
Indiana University

When Roots Die by Patricia Jones-Jackson is a compelling account of oral-literary traditions and culture among the Gullah-speaking Sea Islanders of Georgia and South Carolina. Jones-Jackson conducted research among the Gullah throughout a period of more than nine years. Tragically, her life and a very promising career were cut short by an automobile accident in 1986.

Jones-Jackson brought to her study of Gullah language and culture a linguist's ear and research tools as well as a sensitivity to the whole of Gullah life. The result is a more complete portrait of oral traditions as they occur in contemporary Gullah society than has previously been published. Chapter Two,