I wonder if anybody at home ever thinks of me? (74, p. 156)

Each rhyme is presented in English, using familiar poetic breaks, with footnotes to clarify literary expressions. Below each translated rhyme is the original Chinese text with occasional footnotes citing misused words. Hom also has included maps both of the regions in China where the anonymous authors originated and of the areas in United States, including a street map of San Francisco's Chinatown, where their Gold Mountain songs were created.

With its detailed literary and historical information and the rarely seen inclusion of Chinese texts, *Songs of Gold Mountain* is a valuable resource for scholars of Chinese and Chinese-American folklore as well as those with interests in Asian-American Studies.


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Occasionally, I fear that folkloristics has nothing to offer living people, that it is only a dry intellectual effort totally removed from the real life of the people. Pelton's *Trickster in West Africa,* however, reminds me that this is not the case: Folklore scholarship is full of human sufferings and ambitions. The book examines four tricksters from different cultures. Ananse, the Ashanti trickster-spider, weaves tales that delight and enchant as they release tensions. The Fon Legba maintains the peace between the ever present dualisms of culture. Eshu, the Yoruba trickster, helps write destiny with divination, and Ogo-Yurugu, the Dogon trickster of Promethean stature (p. 165), creates randomness to further life and order. Each trickster, in his own way, has a role that involves irony and humor.

Pelton uses a great variety of ethnographic source material to describe these characters in their contexts and then attempts to synthesize "a theory of the trickster . . . without freezing them into an abstraction or blurring their differences" (p. 223). He then uses three theoretical approaches, Jungian psychology, Levi-Strauss's structuralism, and a "neo-Durkheimian" sociology, to try to grasp the trickster's essence; each theory fails in some respect, and Pelton attempts the task himself. The trickster, he concludes, "names the nameless" and always employs irony as his first tool (p. 251). Irony, based primarily on the tension between the struggle for life and the omnipresent threat of death, permeates the trickster's behavior and social role: His wit transforms death and presents society with new opportunities. He is "the exemplar of wit in action" and thus produces a symbolic language and logic of irony (p. 282). Although his

Jim Wafer. The Taste of Blood: Spirit Possession in Brazilian Condomblé. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. xiii + 219, glossary, bibliography, index. $29.95, cloth; $12.95, paper.

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Since the publication of Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography (1986), much scholarly attention has focused on the realities and problems of "doing ethnography"; the essays in this volume offer a myriad of critiques of ethnographic research and suggestions for its amelioration. This year has brought the publication of two significant works that reflect the new environment in which the writing of culture transpires. Karen McCarthy Brown's Moma Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn represents an important attempt at this work. The book explores an Afro-Haitian woman's life as she "serves the spirits" of Vodou. Each chapter focuses on a major spirit; these chapters are framed by longer, fictionalized versions of stories told in Moma Lola's family. Thus, while the introduction describes the book as an "intimate spiritual biography" (p. ix), the weaving together of the stories and the more descriptive chapters create a fascinating and informative text: a biography of Moma Lola, a portrait of her family as they serve the spirits, and an exposition of the Vodou pantheon.

Based on almost twenty years of research, the book does offer many intimate portraits of the interaction between Moma Lola and the spirits. For example, Chapter Four explores the male spirit called Ogou. For Brown, the self-assured and determined Ogou is a metaphor for the ways in which Haitians adapt to life in the United States; the chapter presents the details of Moma Lola's family life as it copes with a major disruption. Moma Lola's adult son, William, suffered brain damage during a childhood bout of meningitis; in 1981, he was arrested for purse snatching. First, the family became listless and withdrawn, but, as time passed, Moma Lola and her daughter Maggie developed strategies to cope with this crisis. Despite their fear of the government, instilled during years of life in Haiti, both women used Ogou to address the problem at hand. Together they worked Ogou for William's release. Brown unfolds this instance of Ogou's power among a series of other interesting examples of the spirit's personality and potential, including songs sung in his honor and a description of her own ritual marriage to the deity in 1980. Extremely personal