

(1982) supports Coles's argument. Though Jackson points out differences between the individualistic novel and the community-oriented folktale, he, like Coles, considers literature in general to be a mode of moral inquiry; and he considers Kuranko oral narratives to be a form of discourse facilitating resolution of ethical problems. Jackson posits that "the storyteller, like the writer, reveals people to themselves and to their possibilities" (1982:2). Thus, Jackson argues, tales do not simply perpetuate extant beliefs but also call into question beliefs and values ordinarily taken for granted. Jackson also writes that through narratives, "people recognize themselves and their own lives within the fixed forms of things and of laws" (3). There clearly are connections between folktale studies and Coles's work on literary fiction.

Folklore, like the novel and short story, can inspire people to think through pertinent moral issues or dilemmas in their lives, when they perceive a correspondence between a particular tale and real life. Just as some people read the same book several times because it addresses issues which concern them, so certain folktales are requested again and again or are told repeatedly by the same teller. Coles's *The Call of Stories* is engaging and filled with intriguing case studies. The author's writing style presents a very readable book. It is recommended to anyone concerned with function and meaning in narrative forms.

Mariella Glenn Hartsfield. **Tall Betsy and Dunce Baby: South Georgia Folktales.** Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987. Pp. xxi + 190, notes, appendices, type and motif indexes, bibliography, index. \$22.95 cloth, \$11.95 paper.

J. Russell Reaver, ed. **Florida Folktales.** Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1987. Pp. xvi + 179, notes, selected bibliography, motif and type indexes. \$19.97 paper.

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Tall Betsy and Dunce Baby is a small and attractively produced collection that includes fifty traditional tales and an account of storytelling practices from the author's native Grady County in southern Georgia. Mariella Hartsfield tape-recorded the tales from six elderly white storytellers. Another narrator contributed four tall tales, which he preferred to write down.

Apart from three variants of AT 326, "The Youth Who Wanted to Know What Fear Is," and three migratory legends about witches, almost all

the texts in *Tall Betsy* are short, humorous tales containing single incidents. In the notes Hartsfield assigns type and motif numbers and compares European and American variants. She identifies three new tale types and ten new Georgia subdivisions of motifs.

In addition to the texts of migratory tales, the book contains an account of the "dumb-bull," an instrument made by attaching a length of rosin-covered string either to a hollow log with a goatskin stretched over one end, or to the side of a house. When fingers slide along it, the dumb-bull produces an eerie noise. A number of stories recount how it was used to play jokes on friends or to scare people. Hartsfield suggests that the instrument is not very common; however, I have collected information about its use as a children's prank in the Midwest in the early 1960s, although in that case the instrument was not named.

In addition to the texts of the tales, the book contains some information about the general context of storytelling, but not about the specific contexts in which the tales presented here were recorded. Hartsfield and her assistant photographed the storytellers during their performances, recorded information about the time and place of each recording, and took notes about the makeup of the audiences; however, none of this information is included in the book, which folklorists must consider a loss.

On the other hand, Hartsfield does describe the former contexts of storytelling in Grady County. I was particularly interested in her information about the annual three-day pilgrimage residents made the Florida coast to buy salt fish, during which they told tales and listeners voted on which stories were the best. Storytelling also used to occur during the tedious work of processing tobacco or making cane syrup, and in the communal road repair gangs. Since these storytelling occasions rarely present themselves today, this information is invaluable, especially since many of the narrators were in their seventies.

The life stories of the narrators are almost as interesting as the tales themselves, and Hartsfield has included a biographical sketch of each storyteller, along with a brief description of his or her repertoire. In an appendix she discusses the oral style of Alan Womble and William Robert Glenn, the most outstanding narrators in the collection. After comparing each narrator's version of a single tale, she discusses each narrator's repertoire and use of opening and closing formulas, settings, and sound effects.

Five of Alan Womble's six tales published here concern the supernatural, whether in a humorous tale ("The Open Grave"—Motif X828), Märchen (AT 326), or three legends about witches, including "The Horse-Shoed Witch." The last text recorded from Womble is a lengthy tall tale about a monkey trained to shoot raccoons with a gun. Hartsfield assigns

this tale to a new type, GA 19201. Womble's tales are the longest and most detailed in the collection, and they reveal him as an outstanding storyteller.

William Robert Glenn, the other narrator singled out in the essay on oral style, contributed over half of the tales in the book, most of them humorous and, in contrast to Womble's stories, quite short. Since Glenn's repertoire matches the one that Hartsfield attributes to her father in the preface, I surmise that the two are the same man. Hartsfield also alludes to a family tradition of entertaining children by impersonating two ghosts—the "Tall Betsy" and "Dunce Baby" of the title. Given Glenn's apparently large repertoire and this hint of a lively family storytelling tradition, we are left begging for more information.

Such minor criticisms aside, *Tall Betsy and Dunce Baby* is a well-produced collection of the traditional tales of a particular region. The indexes, comparative notes, and especially the additional information on the storytellers and the storytelling occasions, all considerably enhance its value for folklorists.

In *Florida Folktales*, J. Russell Reaver presents over ninety folktales collected in Florida. The tales are divided into five sections, followed by comparative notes, type- and motif-indexes.

The first section contains the twenty-one tales which Reaver identifies as variants of Aarne-Thompson tale types, including animal tales, ordinary folktales, and jokes and anecdotes. For three of these tales we are presented with two versions by different storytellers. The notes to these tales contain lengthy summaries of international variants of the same type, most of which are drawn from the *Folktales of the World* series (University of Chicago Press).

The largest division in the book is devoted to historical and local legends of Florida, followed by a selection of tall tales, and stories of trickery and wit. The section on "ghost and horror stories" includes memorates of personal encounters with revenants, folk ruminations on the nature of the soul, and campus horror legends. The final section contains Reaver's summaries of urban belief tales that he found circulating among colleagues and friends, such as the baby in the microwave and the choking doberman.

While I have criticized Hartsfield for not providing more information on storytellers and storytelling contexts, Reaver provides even less. He names the storytellers, and sometimes also the person from whom his informant heard the story. He also names the towns where they live or used to live, and identifies the year in which the tale was obtained. Reaver collected some of the tales himself; others were collected by informants, including his students. Beyond the names and the dates, however, we are told nothing about how the tales were recorded or in what circumstances. Hartsfield describes her fieldwork methods in some detail, but Reaver does

not even clearly indicate which tales were tape-recorded, and which taken down by hand. He seems to recall some tales entirely from memory, such as "The Surprise in the Elevator" (114).

Reaver's silence about his collection methods is accompanied by an apparent disregard for the value of verbatim transcripts. He offers us urban legends in summary form, and recounts some tales in his own words instead of those of the storytellers—for example, "The Stolen Bus Ticket" (88). He tape-recorded a cycle of animal stories told "in a continuous pattern, one leading into the next, until they created a small animal epic" (118) and split them up according to which Aarne-Thompson number they matched. Reaver obtained very rich material, but at times his method of presenting it does not do it justice.

Nor does Reaver do his informants justice with caricatured transcriptions like the following:

Dey wuz a woman dat wan' scared o' no ghoses. She'd go t' any cemetery. Fella didn' b'lieve she wan' scared o' no ghoses, an he tol' her nex' time she go t' de cemet'ry, stick a fork in de grave an' he'ud know she'd been dere. (103)

In *Florida Folktales*, stories told by black people all contain an enormous amount of this eye dialect. Tales from white informants contain almost none, except when they are repeating tales that they heard from black storytellers, including "Learning What Fear Is" (10). There is no simple answer to the problem of representing oral texts in writing, but eye dialect is a technique that is generally recognized as inaccurate. Moreover, when the technique is used selectively, as it is here, then the folklorist is only perpetuating racist stereotypes.

Jeff Todd Titon. **Downhome Blues Lyrics: An Anthology from the Post-World War II Era.** Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990. Pp. x + 174, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth, \$14.95 paper.

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Downhome Blues Lyrics is a welcome second edition of the 1981 original of this well put together collection of blues lyrics. Its 128 song texts by blues notables such as Lightnin' Hopkins, Sonny Boy Williamson, and Muddy Waters are divided into seven thematic sections titled with phrases such as "I Can't Do It All by Myself" and "Down Home." The lyrics are attractively presented each to its own page using ethnopoetic