

various cultures and countries around the world have had to say about the usefulness, importance, and wisdom of proverbs. Altogether this is a most accessible and user-friendly bilingual proverb collection that will serve as a model for others to follow.

People interested in proverbs now have a solid introduction to the rich proverbial wisdom of the Turks. Yurtbaşı spent close to ten years compiling this book, and his labors have not been in vain. Since its publication in 1993 this large and valuable compendium has become the standard work on Turkish proverbs. It has also been translated into German (YURTBAŞI 1993), with an introduction by Professor Wilfried Buch. In view of the importance of the role played by the Turkish people in Germany over the past few decades, this is indeed a welcome development. It will give German readers the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the rich cultural heritage of the Turks, their codes of human behavior, and their worldview. Such knowledge might help bring about a better understanding of this influential minority in modern Germany.

According to Yurtbaşı, other translations are scheduled to appear, and I can well see this book becoming available in French, Japanese, Russian, Spanish, and other languages. By all signs so far this is a successful scholarly work, and one that deserves a place on the shelves of libraries and of all individuals interested in traditional Turkish language, folklore, and culture.

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MINTON, JOHN. "*Big 'Fraid and Little 'Fraid*": *An Afro-American Folktale*. FF Communications No. 253. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1993. 111 pages. Maps, bibliography. Paper n.p.; ISSN 0014–5815; ISBN 951–41–0701–2.

The present work, though written in a difficult style of English and concerned with a narrative type not found in most Asian and European traditions, is nevertheless something that no narrative researcher should ignore. Ambitious and diligently executed, the work contains a rich store of information in an area that has not yet attracted much scholarly interest. I personally see three main reasons why *Big 'Fraid and Little 'Fraid* deserves serious study.

First, Minton forces his readers to come to terms on epistemological grounds with the geographical-historical method and with the two kinds of index based on the Indo-European cultural context: the type index and the motif index. The author points out the problematic circularity inherent in Stith Thompson's method, but also the judiciousness,

vigilance, and caution with which Thompson carried out his research.

Second, Minton's study is a good example of a methodical type analysis. He not only dissects the texts and compares their elements, but also takes each individual text seriously as a narrative event, analyzing not only its sense and purpose but also seeking out any misunderstandings that might have caused a failure to communicate this sense and purpose.

Third, Minton's conclusions are valuable in themselves. In his words,

In our example, a story generally regarded by folklorists as an Anglo-American vestige of European paganism reveals itself as an Afro-American joke about white people and the decadent belief systems they attempt to communicate to blacks through oral narratives. Afro-American versions hardly represent the final stage in a process of progressive decay from the sublime to the ludicrous; rather, the tale occasionally digresses into near nonsense in white tradition. Knowledge of the story's origins is thus essential to, yet also dependent on, our comprehension of the meaning it held for some narrators and the puzzle it posed to others, and the evidence of its transmission discovers something of personal interactions that went unrecorded by ethnographers. (60)

This author adds a note (note 44) at the very end of his book that radically demasks our Western society. Anyone but a very careful reader would probably overlook it (which was no doubt the author's intention). The author cites an Afro-American folk-rhyme: "White man use the whip, White man use the trigger. But the Bible and Jesus made a slave of the nigger" (105).

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