novelist's reputation is a good summary of the criticism of Trollope's work during his lifetime and in the century since his death, although the final section on the modern reassessment is insufficiently specific.

The material in the book is for the most part well chosen and organized, but there are some significant lapses. A few arguments are superficial and unsubstantiated. On the subject of realism, MacDonald comments: "Shakespeare . . . and most writers before the nineteenth century depicted extremes of high life (kings, nobles) or low life (clowns, rustics), the former being the subject of tragedy, and the latter of comedy. By the nineteenth century, novelists had begun to focus more on the middle ranges of society" (16). This ignores the importance of Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, and Austen in the development of realism. Elsewhere, MacDonald asserts that during the early 1860s Trollope began to write novels with a darker view, but she fails to say why. The study also has some major omissions. It is understandable that the author should ignore the early Irish novels; however, one may query why the short chapter entitled "Love and Money" contains no discussion of Trollope's criticism of materialism and of his most rapacious, manhunting antiheroine, Arabella Trefoil, in The American Senator (1877).

This is a brief but satisfactory overview of Trollope's work. The book could be a valuable introduction for undergraduates, and it also offers some helpful material for specialists who may be familiar with only a part of Trollope's work.

Bernard Binlin Dadié
THE BLACK CLOTH: A COLLECTION OF AFRICAN FOLK TALES
Trans. Karen C. Hatch
Reviewed by Gerald Moore

The appearance of Bernard Dadié's le Pagne Noir in 1955 was an important event in the development of African narrative prose. Alongside the rise of the African novel in those same years came successive attempts by literary artists to give new life to traditional folk narrative, adapting it to a new type of market (that for printed books) and a more miscellaneous readership. Many of that invisible readership would be quite unaware of the sort of conditions in which these tales were originally performed, rather than merely told, in an atmosphere warmed with music, handclapping, laughter, dancing, and singing. The task of the prose narrator, faced with the silent page, was, then, not just to retell the stories in bare form, stripped of all their beauties, as many of the early collectors had done. It was to find new ways of embellishing and enriching his narrative, which might serve as equivalents for the oral art of the original performers.

Birago Diop had preceded Dadié in this attempt, with his celebrated les Contes d'Amadou Koumba of 1947. But Diop had concentrated on the tales of a single oral artist of known identity and location, and was generally more
faithful to his originals for that reason. Dadié felt free to develop his stories in
his own way, and even to invent some new ones. He dispensed with the open-
ing and closing formulas which are almost invariably found in the storytelling
of particular cultures. He also eliminated many of the choral responses which
would be contributed by the audience in a live session, but he did keep many
of the songs, in their original Nzima language, and the onomatopoeic effects,
such as Tortoise walking: Clouk! clakl or Kakou Ananzè sharpening his
matchet before the terrified squirrel: Kochio! kochio!

That redoubtable trickster ("when they thought they had him by the arm
they had hold of only one leg") figures in most of the stories, overreaching him-
self as usual and actually being outwitted by Iguana-son in one episode. Karen
Hatch's welcome translation preserves most of the felicities of Dadié's
descriptive style. Here is the opening of "The Yam Field": "The field stretched
as far as the eye could see. And it belonged to Kakou Ananzè. The yam shoots
gracefully twined round their supporting stakes and sprawled lazily over the
ground like fat women in a king's harem . . ."; and here is a passage from the
story of the stepchild who is sent to replace the broken pitcher—the Mother
Holle motif found also in the Grimm brothers' stories: "Tufts of grass, like trav-
ellers looking for asylum in a village at evening, latched onto some reeds whose
heads were in the water . . . A kingfisher, on the watch, scarcely beat his wings.
The small fry navigated in squadrons; shellfish dragged along their thick, spiny
bodies and staggered about as though they were burdened with a cross. A spi-
der sat poised on a leaf and floated with the current . . ."

In the thirty years since this collection first appeared, great strides have
been made in the faithful recording, filming, transcription, and comparative
analysis of traditional tales, in Africa and elsewhere. But that process is pri-
marily academic in aim and impact, though the results may occasionally in-
spire the work of a poet, as Kofi Awoonor was inspired by some lines from The
Myth of the Bagre and J.P. Clark by The Ozidi Saga. But the task set them-
selves by Birago Diop and Bernard Dadié, or by Daniel Fagunwa and Amos
Tutuola for that matter, was very different. It was the search for a new channel
of literary art, adapted to the times, through which the great riches of the
African narrative imagination could continue to flow.

James G. Watson
WILLIAM FAULKNER: LETTERS AND FICTIONS
Reviewed by Sally Wolff

With William Faulkner's own admonition firmly in mind that "people who
will open and read another's private and personal letters . . . deserve exactly
what they get," James G. Watson undertakes in William Faulkner: Letters and
Fictions a profitable comparison of Faulkner's own personal and public corre-
spondence with the fictional letters that occur in his stories and novels. Faulkner's letters are not a promising resource for those who seek a clear por-

Book Reviews