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Contents

From the Editor

Brant W. Ellsworth

I am proud to present the thirty-eighth volume of *Children's Folklore Review*, a special issue honoring the distinguished career of Simon J. Bronner, who, among many other accolades, is a prolific scholar of cultural history, psychological ethnology, material culture and folklife; a master educator and program builder; a tireless public heritage consultant; a past convener and long-time executive board member of the Children's Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society; and, to those who have contributed to this issue, a colleague, a mentor, and a friend. The essays found within this issue were penned by those who know Simon and his scholarship best: his colleagues and his students, past and present. Each essay is illustrative of the tremendous influence his scholarship continues to have in shaping the theoretical orientations and methodology within the study of children's folklore. It is a great honor to pay tribute to his career, legacy, and, most importantly, to his character.

It is this last part—character—that I wish to address in this introduction as the contributors do a splendid job illustrating the import of his "career" and "legacy." I first met Simon—er, Dr. Bronner—about ten years ago when I was a newly enrolled graduate student at Penn State Harrisburg. He was the director of the graduate program and was leading a summer seminar in folklore. One night the class gathered at a nearby historic building to conduct hands-on field work. After the work had ended, Simon pulled me aside happy to announce he had found funding to award me a graduate assistantship that would cover my tuition and provide a meager monthly stipend. Simon did not know me well enough to know that I was newly married, my wife was expecting, and that I was prepared to sacrifice everything in pursuit of my dream of becoming a college professor. He did not know that this offer financially paved the way for me to pursue this dream. I was Simon's student and, as I have learned over the past decade and my colleagues in this issue can attest, Simon frequently goes out of his way to find or create opportunities for his students that they may become successful in pursuit of their academic and professional goals. He arms his students with the knowledge and tools requisite for success and then ensures they have opportunities—as instructors, researchers, and writers—to apply them. On behalf of your students, past and present, I thank you for caring.

This volume has been a tremendous undertaking, simplified by the authors' outpouring of interest and willingness to meet impossible deadlines. Given a short window, the authors dropped their individual projects and enthusiastically accepted the opportunity to pay tribute to Simon. Some of the authors—Wolfgang Meider and Libby Tucker—even volunteered to subvent the costs of publication and shipping when concerns arose about the size and cost of the issue. Wolfgang and Libby: thank you for making this volume possible.

After making your way through this issue, remember that back issues of *Children's Folklore Review* are available through our digital repository, hosted by

Indiana University's ScholarWorks. I invite you to go back and read through some of Simon's publications over the years, including "The Shooter has Asperger's": Autism, Belief, and "Wild Child Narratives" (2014), "Fathers and Sons: Rethinking the Bar Mitzvah as an American Rite of Passage" (2009), and "Expressing and Creating Ourselves in Childhood: A Commentary" (1992).

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation for Trevor Blank, who, under extremely challenging circumstances, needed to relinquish his editorial position with the journal this past year. During his two-year tenure as editor of the *Children's Folklore Review*, Trevor tirelessly endeavored to promote scholarship in children's folklore and propelled the journal forward into the digital age (rightfully so). He is a rising star in the field, though I am not sure how much longer we can or should use that qualifying adjective. I am confident the *Children's Folklore Review* will continue to benefit from his scholarship, vision, and leadership for years to come. I would also like to express my immense gratitude to Elizabeth (Libby) Tucker, who has been so incredibly kind and helpful in providing advice, insights, and encouragement as I transitioned into my new role as editor of the journal. Her correspondences exude positivity and never fail to make me smile. Thanks, too, are due to Kathy Buchta, Sheridan Press, Priscilla Ord, the CFR editorial board, peer reviewers, and contributors.

Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow: Upsherin, Alef-Bet, and the Childhood Navigation of Jewish Gender Identity Symbol Sets

Amy K. Milligan, PhD

But these hairs, all and singular, radiate into four hundred and ten worlds. (Zohar vii:67)

In my first semester of my doctoral program, Dr. Simon J. Bronner, my academic idol, agreed to do an independent study course with me on hair. Acutely aware that the great folklorist's time was valuable, I selected Charles Berg's *The Unconscious Significance of Hair* (1951) as our first reading. This seemed fitting, as it was one of the earliest comprehensive hair studies texts. At our first meeting, I sat across from Simon in a nervous sweat. What I hadn't realized was that the book was largely about the phallic motivations of men who shave their heads. Simon ran his hand over his shaved head, a twinkle in his eye, and said, "Well, where do you want to start?"

Years later, Simon remains my most trusted and cherished mentor, and I am lucky to also count him as a friend. As I have established myself as a bodylorist working in hairlore, Simon has been an unwavering voice of support and encouragement, reminding me time and again that if the research isn't there that I need to write it. As I worked on this essay for this journal commemorating his retirement from teaching—because we all know that it does not mark his retirement from writing—I emailed Simon to ask if, in his encyclopedic memory, he could recall any studies mentioning *upsherin* (a ritual in which an Orthodox Jewish boy's hair is cut for the first time at the age of three) that I might be overlooking, as my research was turning up scant results. His response? He encouraged me to get writing. Truly, a finer mentor has never been. Simon, I continue to learn from and be inspired by you. Thank you for believing in me and my crazy *hair*-brained ideas (and for sharing a mutual love of word play); I can only hope to make you proud and to build my students up as you taught me through your example.

In this essay, I introduce the theoretical framework of hairlore, discussing its challenges when applied to the hair of infants and very young children. I contextualize the ritual of upsherin, reviewing its history, describing contemporary applications, and discussing variations of the practice. Finally, I offer an analysis of upsherin, considering its role in the shifting relationship between mother and son, as well as in the maintenance of a gendered Orthodox symbol set, and discuss the possibility of egalitarian parallels for young girls. I ultimately argue that upsherin is ripe for adaptation by liberal Jewish communities in its celebration of Jewish core values.

Theoretical Basis for Childhood Hair Studies

Bodylorists and hairlorists tend to focus their attention on the adult body (Crane 2000; DeMello 2000; Farrell 2011; Grosz 1994; Hagen and Giuntini 2007; Luciano 2002; Pitts 2003; Thompson 2015; Young 1993). In many ways, this makes sense: adults are able to make choices about their self-presentation and engage autonomously with their bodies in ways in which children are unable. Attention is also given to teens and young adults, who interact with their bodies as they cultivate their identities, often in contrast to parental wishes, but this consideration tends to have a health and medical scope (Montgomery and Parks 2001; Carroll, Riffenburgh, Roberts, and Myhre 2002; Benjamins, Risser, Cromwell, Feldmann, Bortot, Eissa, and Nguyen 2006; Silver, Silver, Siennick, and Farkas 2011). Other body studies of the pubescent and pre-pubescent body focus on general body image satisfaction (Ballentine and Ogle 2005; Tiggemann and Slater 2014; Malachowski and Myers 2013; Coffey, Budgeon, and Cahill 2016). However, small children and babies also warrant the attention of bodylorists. While their engagement with their bodies is different than that of adults, indeed, it is this very difference that merits consideration. Children's bodies are a canvas for parental or cultural decisions, whereupon they are marked by external factors that exist outside of their control, including body modifications like circumcision, ear piercing, scarification, female genital mutilation, neck or lip expansion, and foot binding (Silvester and Wilson 2009; Rush 2005; Fan 1997; Skaine 2005).

Hairlore, a subset of bodylore, considers specifically the role that hair has in the presentation of self (Berg 1951; Byrd 2002; Leach 1958; McCracken 1995; Obeyesekere 1984; Prince 2010; Simon 2001; Weitz 2004). The analysis of the hair of infants and children poses three significant hurdles not faced when considering the hair of teens or adults. First, as infants and children grow hair, the rates and ways in which it grows are unpredictable. This seems an obvious truth, but not all small children have hair, and when they do, it is of various lengths and thicknesses. Second, baby hair is fine and difficult to style. Texturally, baby hair is not like mature hair. As many caregivers[1] will attest, at best they can simply attempt to wrangle their small child's hair into "looking presentable" by slicking it down or using hair accessories to tame it. Third, when considering the hair of small children, the analysis does not probe the decisions of children. Rather, the hairlore reflects the choices made by caregivers, as they maintain and groom the children's hair. While it is true that after a certain age small children can voice their opinions about their hair, their corporeal decisions still rest with their caregivers.

Hair analysis of youth is limited and has concentrated on pubescent or post-pubescent youth (McCracken 1995). It is, of course, at this age that young people generally start to make their own decisions about their body, whether it be fashion, hair, or other external manifestations of identity. Before puberty, hair is under-analyzed, as it is attributed to marking only young age and, therefore, is not theorized as a conscious manifestation of the self. Although this explanation is tempting in its simplicity, the hair of children is fertile ground for the roots of identity. There are multitudes of ways in which our community, ethnic, cultural, and religious identities are worn on our heads beginning at a young age.

Examples of this include the long, unshorn hair of Old Order Anabaptist girls, often worn in braids until it is pinned up under a prayer covering after baptism (Reynolds 2001; Scott 2008); the uncut and carefully wrapped hair and turban of a Sikh child; twists and braids with bright beads worn by African American girls (Byrd 2002; Leeds Craig 2002; Prince 2010); a Muslim infant's first haircut on the seventh day of his life; or, as discussed in this essay, the creation of *payot* (sidelocks or sidecurls worn by Jewish men, sometimes also referred to as *payos* in Yiddish) for Jewish boys during their upsherin.

The changing of hair to mark a life change finds voice in a variety of ways across cultures. Examples include Amish men growing a beard after marriage (Scott 1998); the donning of head coverings after baptism in Old Order groups (Reynolds 2001; Scott 2008); Orthodox Jewish women covering their hair after marriage (Milligan 2014a); the creation and maintenance of mystical matted locks (Obeyesekere 1984); the shaving of the heads of prisoners (Weitz 2004); military recruits getting particular hairstyles after enlisting; or cancer patients shaving their heads prior to chemotherapy. All of these examples demonstrate how hair and its manipulation represent a way of controlling our appearance, especially in times of transition.

Some hairstyles are attributed especially to young children, including pigtails and bowl-cuts. Thickly cut bangs come in and out of fashion for small girls, as has the spiking of little boys' hair. For babies, the use of large headbands, hats, and even stick-on bows serve as gender identifiers. When young girls do not have long enough hair to put into pigtails or braids, they are marked as female by hair accessories or headwear. Young boys often have haircuts that typify their youth, including slightly longer cuts that do not use hair styling techniques like tapering or blending. In recent years, it has also become fashionable to put male babies in baseball caps, fedoras, and other hats as a gender marker.

There is historic precedence for the creation of "little adults" in the styling of children (DeMause 1974; Fass 2013; Greenleaf 1978). The same can be said for the creation of "little adult" hairstyles. The practical office-friendly bob, for example, has a certain charm on a little girl. Likewise, a military style buzz cut is not only practical for little boys, but it is also considered charmingly impish. Other adult styles, though, like a French twist for girls or slicked and parted hair for boys, are generally considered too mature for small children.

As children transition from infancy to childhood, hair serves as one of the most important signifiers of maturity. Small children's appearances are constantly evolving, whether it is physical growth or eternal signifiers of age like diapers. Along with these changes, hair serves an important role in marking the stages of early childhood. At an age where a child is still being bathed by someone else, the maintenance and care of a child's hair rests with an adult. Many caregivers express that they cannot wait for their little girls to have long enough hair to style, creating a bonding ritual and level of intimacy between child and caregiver that extends beyond the shampooing and drying of hair. Likewise, caregivers also voice sadness when their children have their first haircut, as it marks the transition between baby and child. Similarly, another important rite of passage for children is getting their first school haircut, marking their transition from toddler to school aged

child, often also coinciding with a child's ability and responsibility for bathing and dressing herself.

The first haircut is a celebrated milestone for many families. The event can happen in the intimate setting of the home or in a barbershop or salon. There are even hairstylists and shops that cater exclusively to children, including offering first haircut experience packages. Typically, caregivers will keep a lock of their child's hair in commemoration of the event. This hair, often a curl, is a different texture and often a different color than the hair an individual will have as an adult, representing the short-lived phase of infancy. Likewise, the first haircut also symbolizes independence. Although the child is not yet autonomous, the absolute dependency of an infant is replaced by the stubborn independence of a toddler. A baby enters the hair cutting ritual, and she emerges a child.

The first haircut milestone is particularly striking in the transformation of young boys. More often than not, young girls have their hair grown long. In doing so, the first haircut is delayed and, even when trimmed, does not dramatically change the overall appearance of the little girl. For young boys, however, the first haircut can drastically alter the way they look. In clipping off the wispy baby hair and shaping the remaining hair into a more mature style, he is transformed from a baby to a child, or, as parents will often exclaim, "He looks like a little man!" The impact of this moment is even more profound when the transformation of the young boy also coincides with an externalization of religious affiliation through the creation of payot and the boy beginning to wear a *yarmulke* (the traditionally male skullcap worn by Jews, also known as a kippah in Hebrew) and *tzitzit* (the knotted ritual fringes traditionally worn by observant Jewish men, typically attached to a four-cornered garment), as is experienced during the upsherin ritual.

Contextualizing Upsherin

Upsherin is commonly practiced only among the most religiously observant[2] Jewish communities, typically among the Hasidic, Haredi, and other Orthodox communities.[3] Upsherin, also sometimes transliterated from the Yiddish as upsherin, opsherin, or upsherinish, literally means "to shear off" and includes both a haircutting ritual and, as will be discussed, a school initiation. This section begins by offering a brief history of the practice of upsherin followed by a description of the ritual in contemporary practice. Finally, it concludes by discussing some of the variations of the practice.

Not only has upsherin been underanalyzed by scholars—indeed, Yoram Blau (2003) offers the only other theorized analysis of the ritual—it warrants little mention even in examinations of Jewish Orthodoxy (Diamond 2000; Gurock 2009; Heilman 1999; Heilman 2006; Heilman and Cohen 1999; Landau 1992; Mintz 1998; Poll 1962). Because of this, upsherin is a ritual largely unrecognized outside of the Jewish community, unlike circumcision or bar/bat mitzvahs. Despite this lack of wider recognition, upsherin is familiar to most contemporary Jews, even among more liberal Jewish movements who do not engage with the practice.

It is difficult to trace the exact origins of upsherin, in part because it encompasses two distinct rites of passage: the physical haircut and the education

initiation. The haircut alone also amalgamates two distinct practices: the cutting or shaving of the hair and the creation of payot.[4] There is historic religious precedence for childhood ritual haircutting, including the Hindu and Muslim customs of shaving the hair of children. In Hindu tradition, the *chudakarana* (when a child receives his or her first haircut) takes place to remove the birth hair which is associated with past lives, and is, when possible, cast into the holy river Ganges. Similarly, many Muslims shave the heads of infants on the seventh day of life to demonstrate submission to God as part of the *aqueeqah* ritual, where a sheep is sacrificed in order to ensure the child's safety from harm (two sheep for a boy and one sheep for a girl). The hair is weighed and an equivalent amount is given to charity. Sometimes this hair shaving ritual takes place in conjunction with *khitan* (circumcision, which can take place up until puberty and often is performed on the seventh day of life or on the seventh birthday).

Childhood haircutting rituals first were embraced by Palestinian Jews in the Middle Ages. The Musta'arabi Jews were Arabic-speaking Jews living in the Middle East and North Africa prior to the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492. After the Ladino-speaking Jews settled in the same area, they would merge together to form what is now referred to as the Sephardic community (referring to Jewish communities with roots in Spain and North Africa, pl. Sephardim) (Barnett and Schwab 1989; Dobrinsky 2002). The practices of the Musta'arabi Jews likely influenced Rabbi Isaac Luria Ashkenazi (16th Century) in his writings, which ascribe mystical qualities to payot (Blau 2003, 185). Prior to the 1800s, ritual haircutting remained a Sephardic practice. It would not be introduced into Ashkenazic (referring to the Jewish communities with roots in Germany and Eastern Europe, pl. Ashkenazim) practice until the 1800s (ibid.).

In contrast, education initiation developed among the Ashkenazic community. School or education initiations became prominent in Europe during the 12th and 13th centuries, particularly in Germany and northern France (ibid., 187). Blau contends that the education initiations of young boys were gradually replaced with the bar mitzvah (ibid.), blurring the historical continuity between these medieval school initiations and contemporary. The fact that these two ceremonies evolved independently in different diasporic communities (hair cutting among Sephardim and education initiation among Ashkenazim) and now have converged into one unique blended ritual indicates that it is only in the last two centuries that upsherin, as is practiced today in conjunction with education initiation, has codified into a modern hybrid Jewish ritual. Unlike other practices that find their roots in *halakha* (referring to Jewish law, may also be used to refer to individual Jewish laws or commandments)—for example, keeping kosher—upsherin and education initiations are part of *minhag* (modern Jewish traditions or customs that have evolved into expected community norms). That is to say, there is no Jewish legal imperative for upsherin; rather, it has become an accepted cultural custom such that it has taken on particular significance.

Contemporary upsherin events are comprised of two rituals: the boy's haircut (the upsherin itself) followed by the education initiation ceremony. This second ceremony is an extension of the upsherin and does not have a distinct ritual name; however, many refer to it as the *alef-bet* (the first two letters in the Hebrew

alphabet; the phrase used to refer to the alphabet as a whole) to distinguish this part of the ritual from the hair cutting. This is an important distinction because, although it is common for the two ceremonies to happen together, that is not always the case, as will be discussed later in variations of the practice.

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In the United States, the upsherin typically takes place in the family home, although it can also occur in the synagogue. The boy's hair is sometimes adorned with ribbons or pulled into a ponytail, and he enters the ritual space wearing a yarmulke and tzitzit for the first time. Depending on the family, the boy may sit by himself or on his father's lap (or, in rare cases, on the mother's lap) for his haircut. The forelock is snipped first by the father, symbolizing where the boy will one day lay *tefillin* (leather boxes holding scripture that are bound to the forehead and left arm). Sometimes the honor of the first snip of hair is afforded to a rabbi or a *kohen* (a member of the priestly tribe (direct patrilineal descent from Aaron) who has special duties in the synagogue). This first lock of cut hair is typically preserved, often pressed in a *Siddur* (a Jewish prayer book). The boy's remaining hair is cut, frequently with the mother making the next cut and then by allowing those in attendance to each snip off one lock of hair. In some families, the hair is collected and weighed, and a donation is made in that amount to charity, paralleling the Muslim rituals discussed earlier. Others will make a donation matching the total number of locks trimmed. Some boys are given a *tzedakah* (charitable giving or donations, considered a moral obligation in Jewish practice) box to hold and with each snip will deposit money, usually given to them by each person cutting their hair. Families often will select a charity related to education like a *yeshiva* (an institution of Jewish education that focuses on the study of religious texts) or library. Although less common, some families additionally donate their son's hair to be made into a wig for cancer patients, and others choose to hide or bury the hair (Pinson 2010, 48).

During the upsherin, the hair is carefully cut to ensure that payot remain. At the end of the ritual, some families shave their son's head, making the payot even more prominent. The child is showered in sweets representing sweetness raining down from angels in Heaven. The sweets are distributed to guests in *pekalach* (small bags of sweets). The tradition of throwing sweets has Ashkenazic origins and also appears at other major Orthodox male life cycle events, including *Vach Nacht* (the night before the circumcision); when a groom is called for *aliyah* (reciting a blessing over the Torah) the Sabbath before his wedding; and at bar mitzvahs.

In the United States, it is customary for the alef-bet ritual to immediately follow the upsherin. The boy is wrapped in his father's *tallit* (the prayer shawl traditionally worn by Jewish men, also known as tallis in Yiddish), to symbolize purity and to demonstrate the father's protective role. The boy is carried in his father's embrace to the teacher. The alef-bet usually occurs in the same location as the upsherin, although sometimes the boy is brought to a yeshiva or synagogue. The boy is placed in the lap of the male teacher or rabbi, and a laminated card or tablet of the Hebrew alef-bet is placed in front of him. Mimicking the teacher, the child reads each Hebrew letter aloud, starting from the beginning to the end, and then again in reverse. The alef-bet tablet from which the child reads is sprinkled with honey, and the boy is encouraged to dip his finger in the honey on each letter and to lick his finger or sometimes even the tablet. In doing so, he is given his first taste of the sweetness of learning. The teacher also recites several textual passages, which the child is encouraged to repeat.[5] In some communities, the child is also given a hard-boiled egg with Torah verses engraved on it. Sometimes a special honey cake, often decorated with a Torah verse, is served to the child or to those in attendance.

As with any ritual, there are variations of upsherin and alef-bet. Each Hasidic court, as well as other Haredi and Orthodox communities, has its own minhag. Those cultural variations are compounded by the variations experienced by a multi-national diasporic religious community. Blau's consideration of upsherin, for example, focuses on the experiences of Israeli Jews (2003). In contrast to American Jews, who hold the upsherin on a boy's third birthday or on Lag Ba'Omer if the boy's birthday falls during the Counting of the Omer,[6] many Israelis deliberately wait until Lag Ba'Omer to cut their sons' hair so that they can do so in conjunction with a pilgrimage to the tomb of Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yohai[7] in Meron, or, less commonly, in Jerusalem at the grave of Shimon Hatzaddik (ibid., 183-185). In recent years, it has also become popular to conduct upsherin at the Western Wall.

When upsherin is done in this Israeli context, its maleness is multiplied. Women's roles are further sidelined while they wait in gender-segregated areas, unable to enter into the ritual space. As such, they peer into the area, often with their view blocked by screens, to see the dancing, celebration, and upsherin. The celebrations at Meron are drastically different than the smaller home-based upsherin of the United States because of the large crowds and simultaneous celebration of Lag Ba'Omer. In Meron, boys sit on their fathers' shoulders, swirling

in a milieu of mystic maleness, and clutching alef-bet flags and bags of sweets (ibid., 184).

For the boys who have their first haircuts in Meron, school initiation ceremonies are typically delayed and performed at a different time. Although the boys symbolically clutch alef-bet flags, the two-fold ceremony is split, sometimes with the alef-bet ritual occurring months later on the first day of school with the entire class and their fathers' present (ibid., 185-186). Similarly, some boys will have a private alef-bet ceremony near their birthday or Lag Ba'Omer and then engage with the ritual again on the first day of school. This difference in practice is undergirded, of course, by the fact that Israeli youth engage with Hebrew differently than their English and Yiddish speaking American counterparts.

There are two other ritual variations that are important to note. First, the reason upsherin occurs at the age of three is based on Leviticus 19:23, where it is forbidden to eat the fruit of a tree for the first three years. Hasidic thought has interpreted this metaphorically to mean that a three-year-old child with uncut hair will grow tall and fruitful, growing in knowledge and goodness as a man (Pinson 2010, 3-4). However, some Hasidic groups—including Skver, Chernobyl, and Gur—perform upsherin at the age of two. While they are in the minority, they look instead to Genesis 21:8, where Abraham prepares a great feast for Isaac's birthday.

Second, among some Sephardic communities, upsherin is delayed until the age of five. In this context, the ritual is referred to as *chalaka* (from the Arabic lakya, a haircut). Done without a school initiation ritual, the chalaka ritual is a reverse parallel to Muslim customs. In this Sephardic context, Jewish boys are circumcised at eight-days-old and have their hair cut at age five, an inverse mirroring of Muslim boys having their hair cut on the seventh day and their circumcision at the age seven. The chalaka is done independently of a school initiation, reflecting the practices of Musta'arabi Jews and the Sephardic communities prior to Ashkenazic influence (Blau 2003, 1989; Pinson 2010, 52).

Analysis of Upsherin

This essay contends three primary points of analysis. First, upsherin represents a gendered divide between a young boy and his mother. Second, upsherin finds voice as a unique childhood ritual within the Jewish male life cycle, gaining importance because of its role in teaching gendered performance through the creation of a specifically Orthodox male identity kit. Finally, upsherin is without sufficient egalitarian parallel, which will be addressed through a discussion of candle lighting and Jewish feminist engagement with upsherin.

Upsherin marks an important moment in the life of a young Orthodox boy in terms of his relationship to his mother. As an infant, the boy was reliant on his mother, either through a literal dependence on breast milk or an intimate reliance on the comfort of a mother figure. His upsherin marks a moment when he is figuratively removed from his mother, transitioning into the maleness of the Orthodox Jewish world. Prior to his upsherin, his mother was primarily responsible for his care, but this ritual marks a transfer of power. The boy will

now be educated and raised under male leadership (including his father, rabbi, and teachers) and among male peers.

Blau contends that upsherin functions as a secondary circumcision, whereby the boy is once again physically marked and sanctified as a Jew (Blau 2003, 187-193). Unlike his circumcision, at the conclusion of which he is returned to his mother's care and, as Blau aptly notes, is in direct contact with her postpartum "impurities" (ibid., 180), his upsherin marks a point of purity where a boy departs from his mother and enters the world of Jewish masculinity. In this way, upsherin is not the first marker of maleness for a Jewish boy, as his circumcision represents the first gender affirming ritual in his life, but rather it indicates a new expectation of his navigation of Orthodox gender roles.

Blau's approach to upsherin considers the anthropological and psychological implications of the ritual with a careful rhetorical eye (for example, the move from *milah* (circumcision) to *milah* (the word), offering a compelling rhetorical and anthropological argument for the upsherin representing a secondary circumcision (ibid., 176-183). However, by bringing the tools of folklore to bear on upsherin, the ritual reveals itself to be less about repurification through a secondary circumcision and more about addressing the parental anxieties experienced in the transition of authority from the mother to the father. This is a familiar theme for folklorists, who see ritual often used to ease transition periods and anxieties. Likewise, this folkloric understanding of a ritual easing periods of transition is replicated in the other anthropological examples Blau identifies in Sambia (ibid., 193-198), further strengthening his argument for their parallels.

The transition away from mother and into the gendered world of Orthodoxy is literally reenacted during the upsherin. The boy appears wearing a yarmulke and tzitzit, both traditionally male garments. It is the father who holds the boy on his lap while hair is being cut and the father who is given the honor of cutting the first lock of hair. In Meron, the boys sit on their fathers' shoulders as they dance on Lag Ba'Omer in a space into which only men may enter. It is the father who wraps the son in his (male-encoded) tallit and carries him to a male rabbi or teacher who guides the boy through his alef-bet. In these ways, the sweetness of the mother's milk is replaced when the boy is given his first taste of the sweetness of the Torah and of Orthodox masculinity.

Contemporary gender theory identifies that gender is performative (Leighton 2012; Miller 2010; Askew 1998; Butler 2006). Bodylore undergirds this theoretical framework by demonstrating the cultural malleability of gender, especially in how bodies are used in both common and discursive contexts (Hollis, Pershing, and Young 1993; Radler 1993). Blau contends that upsherin represents the repurification of the young male body by physically marking when a boy begins his journey in learning secondary male identity (Blau 2003, 177; see Kimmel 2009; Goldberg 1987; Bronner 2005). In this way, the body of the young boy can be theorized both through gender theory (as he learns the ideals of masculinity within his community) as well as bodylore (as his body is physically modified so that he might engage in this gendered performance).

Learning and maintaining appropriate gendered performance, then, is central in the upsherin experience. In a religious world where gender roles are distinct and

specific, this marks the moment when children are guided clearly down different paths. For the young boy, his physical transformation, coupled with his change in dress, indicates his maleness. He will be sent to yeshiva; he will begin to regularly attend synagogue with his father; he will be responsible for upholding certain laws and commandments; and his body will eventually count toward a *minyan* (the quorum of ten men required for certain religious events or rituals). No longer an infant, he must now learn how to modestly interact with the opposite sex. His upsherin marks the moment when the boy enters the gender-segregated world of Orthodoxy and will begin to learn the particular responsibilities of Orthodox men.

If viewed through a broader lens, upsherin features the performance and maintenance of gender for all participants. The significance of the male body and maleness is highlighted by the centrality of the boy and his father, further underscored by the roles of the male teachers, rabbi, and other men at the scene (including the other fathers, for example, at Meron). As such, the centrality of maleness, both within the family and as leaders in the Jewish community, is strengthened.

The role of women at the upsherin is markedly different. For mothers, as previously mentioned, the ritual signifies the shift of the infant's care. However, the location of female bodies during the ritual underscores several important aspects of Orthodox gender expectations, highlighting the non-central role of women in public religious life. During the upsherin, women are sidelined as observers, particularly when the ritual takes place in locations like Meron where women are literally divided from their son and husband by a physical barrier. Even in the American context, they are secondary voices to the ritual script, as further demonstrated by their place second in line to cut their son's hair. In these spaces, young girls are similarly sidelined, reinforcing their non-central role in public religious life.

In these ways upsherin functions just as much as a ritual to mark a change for the boy as it does a community ritual, affirming the gendered roles and expectations of Orthodox Jewish life for all in attendance. Upsherin fulfills several of the primary functions of folklore as identified by William Bascom (1954). First, it is a pedagogical device to reinforce cultural values, in this case through teaching the young boy. Second, it justifies culture, including the rituals, institutions, and practices ascribed to a particular group. This justification of culture is critical in the maintenance of distinct community identity, and the upsherin reinforces Orthodox identity for all in attendance.

Finally, Bascom also identifies that folklore is a means of applying social control. This theory can be woven into hairlore through an understanding that loss of hair is often congruent with submission. Examples of this include the shaving of gang members' heads as part of initiation; buzz cutting soldiers' hair at their enlistment; the shearing of nuns' hair; the tonsuring of monks' hair; or the forced shaving of prisoner's heads. In each of these cases, the loss of hair indicates a literal or symbolic submission to a greater authority or force. Upsherin, when viewed through this lens, is an extension of the same theme. Not only is the boy literally submitting to his parents' will, but he is also physically marked as submitting to the greater authority of his Orthodox community.

Hair removal, when viewed in this context, is reflective of how hair can be viewed simultaneously as a marker, a symbol, and an object (Milligan 2014a, 7-13). Blau's psychological approach alludes to upsherin's potential symbolic link to Charles Berg's work (1951) and the association of shaved male heads and the phallus (Blau 2003, 190-191); whereby Blau expands on this idea to consider the creation of two phallic payot also to be significant (ibid., 188, 190-191). Using a psychoreligious approach (Milligan 2014a, 117-128) informed by Erich Fromm's distinction between rational and irrational ritual (1950; see Reik 1931), it is pertinent to consider the implications of the symbol set and identity kit (Goffman 1965) given to the boy during upsherin and how the maintenance and cultivation of these symbols will follow him throughout his maturation both as a man and as a Jew.

At his upsherin, the boy is given a symbolic identity kit comprised of tzitzit, a yarmulke, his new short hair, and payot styled and shaped in a way that represent his affiliation within Orthodoxy. Unlike the hidden symbol of his circumcision, this symbol set is carried externally, and his upsherin signifies that he is mature enough to properly engage with the symbols and, as such, begin to navigate both religious and cultural gendered performance. Payot, tzitzit, and yarmulkes are symbols of rational daily ritual, not attached to penis envy or outgrowths of religious crises; rather, in line with Fromm's analysis of rational ritual (1922; 1950), they reflect a human need to feel included and rooted in community. Externally marking himself as a Jewish male creates a space within Orthodox life for the young boy, ensuring that he feels attached and rooted in his community.

In addition to the symbolic inventory of the body afforded to the boy at his upsherin, he is also taught several hallmarks of Jewish practice by engaging with tactile symbols. He learns the sweetness of learning and Torah study by dipping his fingers in honey on the alef-bet. He is taught the importance of halakha and completes his first *mitzvah* (a commandment of divine origin, a good deed) in the creation of payot and by wearing his first tzitzit and yarmulke. Likewise, placing money in a tzedakah box for each lock of hair cut is a physical engagement with the virtue of charity. By using tactile symbols in these ways, the lessons of upsherin are tangible for a child. Much of what we try to teach children is theoretical—for example, why it is good to be truthful and moral. However, upsherin allows a boy to embody the abstract in a multi-sensory context by using a nuanced symbol set, engaging taste, touch, sight, hearing, and speech.

Moreover, in line with Bascom's assertion that folklore grows out of our need to validate culture (1954), upsherin engages those attending to also interact with the same symbols. Whether or not the child himself remembers his upsherin does not diminish the importance that the ritual has in reinforcing the religious cultural identities of those attending. The ritual highlights central tenets of Orthodoxy (gendered roles, learning, charity, family, community) and strengthens community identity by refreshing the boundaries established by Orthodox Jews to negotiate the pressures of assimilation and diasporic dilution.

If upsherin marks one of the ways in which Orthodox Jews use folklore in the maintenance of community boundaries, it is important to also consider how little girls in this same context are also taught to avoid assimilation and engage

with gendered symbol sets. Within Orthodox Judaism, the closest female parallel to upsherin is candle lighting. There are three gender-specific commandments for Jewish women (lighting Sabbath candles [nerot], breaking off a portion of the bread [*challah*], and sexual purity laws [*niddah*]). Within the Orthodox community, it is typically around age three that little girls begin helping to light Sabbath candles. Nerot is an interesting parallel to upsherin because, although it underscores the gendered divide of the Orthodox world, it simultaneously affirms a girl's maturity and ability to perform Jewishness. Likewise, through her preparation of the Sabbath, the young girl is given her own gender-specific symbol set to learn, helping her to navigate her gender both in the home and in the larger Orthodox community. Her childhood domestic education enables the girl to mimic her mother, helping her learn the lessons that she will use as a woman who is expected to cultivate a Jewish home and raise an Orthodox family that will stand strong against pressures of assimilation.

When viewed through this lens, upsherin is linked to the beginning of formal Jewish education for boys the same way that nerot is linked to domestic learning for girls. Despite occurring at roughly the same age, there are several significant differences between upsherin and nerot. Although both rituals can take place in the home, only the upsherin is attended by those outside of the immediate family. Likewise, although coupled with a physical transformation, upsherin is a one-time event, in contrast to nerot, which occurs weekly. Finally, the analogously gendered parent is responsible for the instruction of the ritual and thereafter for the education of that child. In this regard, the little girl never departs from her mother or the home; whereas, the little boy transfers into the care of his father, rabbi, teachers, the yeshiva, and the synagogue.

As discussed in this essay, upsherin has found voice almost exclusively within the Orthodox community. Other gendered lifecycle events, on the other hand, have developed analogous egalitarian rituals and are practiced across Judaism (including within Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Reform movements). Examples of these rituals include bar and bat mitzvahs, *pidyon ha-ben* and *pidyon ha-bat* (redemption of the first born), and *bris* and *bris bat* ceremonies (circumcision and baby naming ceremonies). While these egalitarian practices for girls have not gained traction in Orthodox circles, they have resonated with non-Orthodox Jews. Similarly, other historically gendered body practices (wearing yarmulkes, tzitzit, and tallisim, or laying tefillin) as well as worship practice (counting men and women for a minyan or allowing women on the *bimah* [the platform area or altar of a synagogue]), have been adapted by non-Orthodox Jews. Why, then, has upsherin remained largely ignored when other Jewish practices have been made egalitarian and adopted by non-Orthodox Jews?

There are three primary reasons why upsherin has not been reconceptualized and implemented outside of Orthodoxy. First, the ritual itself creates payot, which mark the child as religiously observant. At the same time, the child is given tzitzit and a yarmulke. For more liberal Jews, who themselves do not have payot or wear a yarmulke and tzitzit, the ritual seems decidedly Orthodox. Second, as minhag, upsherin has gradually increased in popularity among the Orthodox community. Because of this, there is no familial precedence set in non-Orthodox communities.

Unlike a circumcision or a bar/bat mitzvah, there is no external familial impetus to engage with the ritual, making it easy to ascribe solely to the Orthodox community, undergirding an "us and them" dynamic. Finally, upsherin has strong ties to religious learning, particularly to the Hebrew alef-bet. For caregivers who themselves may not read Hebrew, this ritual can seem foreign. Likewise, the ritual affirms that a child will engage with Jewish religious education. Because of this, caregivers who intend to send their children to public or non-religious schools may feel like this is an empty promise. Even if they intend for their child to attend Hebrew School and become a bar/bat mitzvah, if they are a family unlikely to send their child to a Jewish day school, this ritual may not resonate with them.

Within feminist Judaism, there are numerous examples of women reclaiming patriarchal practices in rich and meaningful ways, both for themselves and their daughters. Whether it is through the reclamation of yarmulkes, tallisim, tefillin, or tzitzit—or historically, in finding voice on the bimah, inclusion in minyanim, or the bat mitzvah—Jewish women have been innovative in their transformation of Jewish practices (Adler 1972; Alpert 1998; Elper 2003; Fishman 1995; Heschel 1987; Hyman 1995; Levitt 1997; Milligan 2014b; Plaskow 1991; Plaskow 1997; Ruttenberg 2001). Although upsherin has not taken on the same significance for feminist Jews as other practices, it has not been entirely ignored. There have been small movements among non-Orthodox Jewish women to claim upsherin—but in an interesting twist, as a ritual for their daughters. This decision is particularly striking because there has been little non-Orthodox movement to engage with upsherin for boys, begging the question, why, as a feminist Jew, would you claim the upsherin for your daughter?

The practice itself has not been formally well documented, as it remains uncommon and a very grassroots and progressive practice, happening primarily in the home and not in formal Jewish settings. The number of "clarifying" responses found online by Orthodox rabbis explaining that upsherin is only for boys (with the explanation that payot are only for men and that women get their own hair ritual upon marriage) suggests that an increasing number of individuals are at least asking about the practice for girls, even if they are not enacting the ritual. In personal interactions with women and in reviewing some women's written reflections on this practice (Gechter 2017; Cooper 2014), there seem to be two primary motivations. First, there is a desire to mark the transition from baby to child, especially when it comes from a bodily reliance of a baby on the mother (for example, needing breast milk or soothing physical touch like rocking or cradling) to a child's reliance on a mother for moral and cognitive development. The mothers describe that, like non-Jewish mothers, the first haircut is symbolic of this transition from infancy to childhood. However, they have opted to claim the first haircut rite of passage and infuse it with Jewishness. As women who are passionate about their own Jewish observance and engagement with Jewish life, it seems only fitting to take this developmental milestone and view it Jewishly.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, by having an upsherin for their daughters, the mothers acknowledge that this is a moment where they commit themselves to raising a Jewish daughter. This is a positive feminist statement, whereby they celebrate the Jewish female potential through affirming their

daughters' access to progressive and spiritual Jewish education. Through their daughters' upsherin, the mothers take on the responsibility for ensuring that their daughters have equal opportunities not only to grow and learn as children and Jews, but also to engage in the full spectrum of Jewish practice. For their daughters, upsherin teaches the same lessons that Orthodox boys glean—a love of learning, the importance of charity, and the embodiment of Jewishness. Moreover, it also teaches them gendered performance—that they, as female Jews, are equal, deserve respect, and can have their voices centered in public Jewish practice.

Upsherin among non-Orthodox Jews is not necessarily exclusionary of Jewish boys, but the feminist application demonstrates a deeply intimate moment between generations of Jewish women. As women who are acutely aware of the patriarchy that exists even in liberal Judaism, they are reclaiming and reinterpreting a practice to reflect their commitment to raising a daughter who will have equal opportunities afforded to her in celebration of—rather than despite—her female body. Although this is as much a political statement as a religious statement, for the mothers, it is reflective of an unwavering commitment to raising their daughters Jewishly.

Conclusion: The Potential Egalitarian Future of Upsherin

As a ritual, upsherin demonstrates the malleability of Jewish folklore and practice. From its blending of Sephardic and Ashkenazic rites of passage to its implementation in two seemingly conflicting religious contexts, upsherin embodies the potential plurality of the contemporary Jewish experience. By taking something as ordinary as a haircut and encoding it with Jewishness, upsherin is a moment of ritual sweetness. Like the literal honey in which the children dip their fingers, upsherin celebrates familial joy, the children's growth, and the hope for their future, as Jewish adults.

Although it is easy for liberal Jews to dismiss upsherin as part of patriarchal Jewish tradition, it is only because the ritual has not yet been reconceptualized in a mainstream egalitarian way. If other life cycle events like circumcisions/baby namings and bar/bat mitzvahs can achieve widespread practice, an egalitarian upsherin has potential for acceptance. Like these other events, an egalitarian upsherin focuses on the family, a critical anchor for the maintenance of childhood Jewish identity. Moreover, upsherin celebrates several central tenets of Jewishness: charity, family, community, and education. Although the gendered performance roles taught in the Orthodox practice of upsherin are unlikely to find voice within more liberal communities, the other commitments are universally shared.

As a diasporic culture, one of the hallmarks of American Jewishness has been its emphasis on both secular and Jewish education. The alef-bet school initiation ceremony could find voice in liberal Jewish contexts, especially if it is tied to a celebration of all forms of education. In this way, the ceremony is broad enough to welcome a variety of Jewish and secular practices, family structures, and differently abled children, celebrating their collective potential and future. In the same way, although liberal Jews are unlikely to create payot for their children or expect them to wear yarmulkes or tzitzit after their upsherin, the practice can be

adapted to mark the milestone of the first hair cut without engaging these other symbols or where, for example, both boys and girls are given yarmulkes.

In a world where much of our focus is external, upsherin reminds us to look inward at what values and principles guide us, especially as we decide the lessons we teach our children. Simultaneously, upsherin reinforces cultural and community connections that extend outside of the family, situating both children and their caregivers in relational contexts with others. As families and communities gather together to commemorate this moment of blossoming childhood, they celebrate the infinite promise of a child's ability to learn, recognizing her as a vessel waiting to be filled with knowledge. Upsherin reminds us of the best of our childhoods – that we are loved, that we have wonder and whimsy, and that we should embark upon the sweetness of learning with joy.

NOTES

1. I recognize that not all children have parents or a parent. Because of this, I have made the rhetorical decision to refer to the caregivers of a child, allowing for various legal and biological relationships. Later, in the discussion of Orthodoxy, I utilize the gendered terms of mother and father, reflecting the community norms of the group and ritual.

2. I use observant here to refer to Modern Orthodox, Orthodox, Hasidic, Ultra-Orthodox, and Haredi Jews. In this colloquial usage, it refers to those who would label themselves as "Torah Observant." I recognize, though, that this label is problematic for non-Orthodox Jews who view themselves to be observant and religious, albeit in various ways and levels.

3. Throughout this essay I will refer to these groups collectively, either as Orthodox or observant Jews. When their practices diverge, I parse the group labels accordingly.

4. Religious texts offer little historic guidance for when or how payot should be groomed, leaving groups to develop various interpretations of Leviticus 19:27, which instructs "you shall not round off the side-growth of your head or destroy the side-growth of your beard."

5. These include, but are not limited to, Deuteronomy 33:4, "Moses charged us with the Torah as the heritage of the congregation of Jacob," the Talmudic phrase "May the Torah be my occupation and G-d my aid," and the Shema.

6. Hair cutting is not permitted between Passover and Lag Ba'Omer, a holiday commemorating the death of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and the day when the central mystical text, the Zohar, is believed to have been revealed. It is also worth noting that some Orthodox Jews will refrain from hair cutting until Shavuot, extending the prohibition through for the entire Counting of the Omer.

7. Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yohai is reported to have written the Zohar, the central text of Jewish mysticism. Because of this, his tomb has particular meaning and importance to Hasidic Jews.

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"There's an App for That"®: Ghost Hunting with Smartphones

Elizabeth Tucker

Almost everywhere we go these days—airports, subways, highways, stores, and classrooms—we see people using cellphones. Many of these qualify as "smartphones": tiny computers that perform an amazing variety of functions. With smartphones, we can send and receive messages, check the Internet, take pictures, and make videos. Because of their fantastic versatility, smartphones have their own kind of magic. Jeff Stahler's widely-circulated cartoon shows the wicked queen from "Snow White" holding a smartphone on a selfie stick and gazing at its surface, asking "Smartphone, smartphone on a stick, who has the fairest profile pic?" (Stahler 2015). This cartoon wryly recognizes the smartphone as an arbiter of status and places it in the long tradition of oracle consultation that scholars have documented for many years (Stoneman 2011).

If the smartphone is a source of magic, its applications, downloadable programs for mobile devices known colloquially as "apps," provide a cornucopia of wondrous possibilities. Apps, obtainable from "app stores," offer access to delicious food, comfortable hotels, quick transportation, and other pleasing commodities. Unstinting in their provision of choices, they remind us of the genie that emerges from a bottle in the *Arabian Nights* (Mahdi 2008). There are apps for courtship, weddings, pregnancy, and other life crises. In 2010 the Apple Corporation registered a trademark for its slogan "There's an app for that," which appeared in its 2009 commercials. Gradually, this slogan has proved its validity. In June of 2016, Apple's app store offered two million apps and Android's app store offered 2.2 million ("Number of Apps" 2016).

Besides satisfying people's practical needs, apps respond to their spiritual needs and interests. A few examples of spiritually-oriented apps are Archangel Oracle Cards, Buddha Mantra, Wicca Spells, and Dialing God. Ghost hunting is one of the many expressions of interest in life after death. A broad range of ghost-hunting apps—Ghost Radar, Phantom Radar, Spirit Story Box, Ghost Hunter, and others—makes ghost hunting easier than ever for those who want to take legend trips to haunted places.

This essay will explore how smartphone apps have influenced legend trips during the second decade of the twenty-first century. Since the late 1960s, folklorists have recognized that visitors to legend-related sites tend to follow a certain sequence: telling stories during travel to the site; participating in ritualistic, possibly rebellious behavior; and telling stories during travel home (Dégh 1968, Thigpen 1971, Ellis 1982-1983). When smartphone technology becomes dominant, does this sequence change in any way? Because it seems important to consider both long-established and more recent aspects of legend trip behavior, both will receive careful consideration here.

All the four legend trippers whose adventure I will analyze in this essay are college students. In *Haunted Halls: Ghostlore of American College Campuses*

(2007), I explore reasons why late adolescents who are attending college may have a strong interest in taking legend trips. Intensely interested in learning, both in and outside the classroom, they may choose to enter "a mysterious realm filled with sensory stimulation and ambiguity" (2007:182). Older adolescents' reasons for visiting legend sites include "desires to understand death, probe the horror of domestic violence, confront racism, and express the uneasy relationship between humans and technology" (2007:182). But of course, college students' legend trips are not just attempts to learn; they also combine fear with excitement, allowing for thrills under safe circumstances.

Important insight into late adolescents' legend trips comes from Simon J. Bronner, whose *Campus Traditions: Folklore from the Old-Time College to the Modern Mega-University* (2012) analyzes college students' folklore in depth and detail. In the "Legend Quests" section of his chapter about "Legendary Locations, Laughs, and Horrors," Bronner notes, "On these playfully framed trips, students talk to one another about frightening scenarios under the cloak of legend, and they experience for themselves the reality of the spooky sites, even as they confront their own cloudy fears and doubts" (2012: 323). Emphasizing the centrality of late adolescents' own fears and uncertainties, Bronner reminds us that play provides a frame for trips to legendary locations. Like other forms of play that late adolescents and young adults enjoy, legend trips are spontaneous, exciting, creative, and fun. After graduating from college, people tend to cherish their memories of legend trips, as Bronner does in recalling his trip to visit a rural graveyard with friends from Indiana University on a foggy summer night (2012: 319). Both playful and meaningful, these trips offer intriguing ambiguities that provoke reflection long after the experience ends.

Hypermodern Ostension

As Linda Dégh and Andrew Vázsonyi explain in their article "Does the Word 'Dog' Bite? Ostensive Action: A Means of Legend-Telling," ostension is "presentation as contrasted to representation" (1983:6). Dégh and Vázsonyi identify three forms of ostension: pseudo-ostension (hoaxing), proto-ostension (appropriating a legend as one's own experience), and quasi-ostension (misunderstanding something that happens in a legend) (1983:18-20). In relation to Slenderman, the fictive bogeyman created on the Internet in 2009, Jeffrey A. Tolbert identifies reverse ostension, which "weav[es] together diverse strands of 'experience' (in the form of personal encounters with the creature, documentary and photographic evidence, etc.) into a more or less coherent body of narratives (2013:3). Tolbert's recognition of reverse ostension on the Internet shows that this medium of communication is making further forms of ostension possible.

According to sociologist Avery Gordon, author of *Ghostly Matters*, some of the most "dominant and disturbing" aspects of American culture are "the commodification of everyday life, the absence of meaning and the omnipresence of endless information," as well as "the relentless fascination with catastrophes" (1997:14). Gordon characterizes our information-overload era with eerie precision; during the years since her book was published, we have seen the rise of fake

news and other phenomena documented by Russell Frank in his study *Newslore* (2011). The ubiquity of Internet rumors and legends about politics, health, and other important subjects makes ostension even more meaningful than it might be otherwise.

For legend trips involving significant use of smartphone and Internet technology, a new kind of ostension emerges. In *Putting the Supernatural in Its Place: Folklore, the Hypermodern, and the Ethereal*, Jeannie Banks Thomas introduces the term "hypermodern folklore": "lore that emerges from, deals with, or is significantly marked by contemporary technology and media (including the omnipresent Internet) or consumerism (with all its accessible excesses and its ability to generate pleasure mixed with anxiety)" (2015:7-8). This term works very well for folklore related to digital technology. During legend trips influenced by smartphone apps, hypermodern ostension takes place. Presentation of legends during these trips relies upon smartphone technology and popular media, as well as consumerism.

"Accessible excesses" of consumerism appear during hypermodern ostension. People who want to use their smartphones to find ghosts can choose among a dizzying array of ghost hunting apps, including Phantom Radar, Ghost Radar, Ghost Hunter, Haunted House, Ghost Locator, Ghost Communicator, Ghost Detector, Ghost Observer, Spirit Story Box, and many others. App stores generally offer multiple versions of ghost-hunting apps that have become popular. Because such apps tend to cost very little, it is easy for people to download multiple apps to try out. Many ghost-hunting apps cost ninety-nine cents, and many are free. Evaluative articles on the Internet such as "We Tested Every Ghost-Hunting App in the Haunted Buildings of NYC" (Crowley 2014), encourage consumers to try out new apps. As a result of low prices and high praise of new products, experimentation with numerous apps has become very common. This experimentation involves both hunting for ghosts with apps and posting videos of ghost-hunting experiences on YouTube.

The first ghost-hunting app for smartphones was Ghost Radar, introduced by Spud Pickles in 2009. Ghost Radar Free, developed for iPhones, became known as Phantom Radar later; Phantom Radar was the app that the four students used in the ghost hunt analyzed in this chapter (Phantom Radar 2017). Ghost Radar has an "FAQ" (Frequently Asked Questions) page that gives consumers helpful information. The question "Is Ghost Radar real?" is followed by the reply, "It is as effective as an EMF detector or a KII [electromagnetic frequency detector]. The theory of what is happening is that intelligent energy can be made aware of their ability to influence the sensors of the device. You must decide for yourself if the readings are indicative of actual paranormal activity" (Ghost Radar® 2016). It is important to note that the app developer encourages the consumer to trust his or her own judgment. As Linda Dégh and Andrew Vázsonyi demonstrate in "Dialectics of the Legend" (1973), a wide range of beliefs keeps legends alive; skepticism is one reaction that keeps both narratives and descriptions of legend trips circulating.

Ghost Radar's developer, Jack Jones, welcomes questions submitted online. When I asked him how successful his apps have been, he answered, "The apps

have simply been more successful than we ever anticipated. The Ghost Radar® apps have been downloaded tens of millions of times." Jones also mentioned that this app appeals to "people of all ages" (Jones 2016). He did not, however, answer my question about the role of stories in usage of Ghost Radar. Although his website does not emphasize app users' stories, the websites of many other ghost-hunting apps do. For example, Spirit Story Box's website encourages app users to submit stories about their own experiences. Spirit Story Box's homepage includes a running feed of users' personal experience stories that describe their successes using the app (Spirit Story Box 2016). As Lynne McNeill notes in "Contemporary Ghost Hunting and the Relationship between Proof and Experience," placement of personal experience stories on ghost hunters' websites can make the website seem more persuasive (2006:105).

No personal experience stories appear on the download page for Phantom Radar, the app chosen by many college students I know. Available on iTunes and in other app stores at no cost, this app has been popular among young people. Its developer, Inner Four, Inc., understands the appeal of easy availability. Phantom Radar has received enthusiastic reviews in YouTube videos (e.g. Blast Process 2014).

There are, of course, other factors besides cost. How much does use of ghost-hunting apps depend upon narration of legends and personal experience stories? Answers to this question vary according to the app and its user or group of users. People can use ghost-hunting apps anywhere, not just in places known through legends, but legends attract visitors to promising places and encourage hope for having a similar experience. In "The Commodification of Culture," Diane Goldstein observes that in belief tourism, "the *real* sought-after experience [is] the potential for one's own supernatural encounter" (2007:197). Although using one's own smartphone to hunt ghosts is not the same as participating in belief tourism, the goal is the same: experiencing something supernatural that can become an exciting story to share with others.

Roots in Nineteenth-Century Spiritualism

Ghost hunting with smartphone apps derives from American Spiritualism, which began in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1848 two teenaged sisters, Margaret and Kate Fox, claimed that spirits were contacting them by making rapping noises in their home in Hydesville, New York. News of their claim spread rapidly through the media of that period: telephone, telegraph, and newspaper. The Fox sisters gave many lectures and psychic readings, becoming international celebrities. Even though Margaret admitted in 1888 that the spirit rappings had been a hoax, she recanted her confession afterwards, and most of the sisters' followers remained loyal to them (Weisberg 2005:1-4).

By the 1870s there were Spiritualist churches in both the United States and Great Britain. Members of the Spiritualist church believe that the dead can send messages to the living through psychic mediums and by other means. Lily Dale Assembly in western New York, founded in 1879, is one Spiritualist village that has remained active up to the present. Visitors to Lily Dale consult psychic mediums, attend lectures, and view paintings and writings said to have been generated by spirits.

They also hear stories about the Fox sisters' experiences in Hydesville and see pictures of early mediums' contact with spirits through table tipping (Tucker 2015).

The first efforts to record spirits' voices involved long-playing records in the 1940s; in 1982, Sarah Estes founded the American Association of Electronic Voice Phenomena. Frank Sumption created the Ghost Box, also known as Frank's Box, in 2002. This box generates white noise and captures bits of sound from an AM radio receiver. Smartphone apps that are supposed to respond to sound patterns and electromagnetic frequencies belong to the tradition established by Frank's Box. Through generation of words and symbols such as dots of different colors, these apps offer messages from nearby spirits.

Legends of Old Dickinson

Users of ghost-hunting apps tend to bring them to places that have a reputation for being haunted. Old houses and hotels make especially good legend trip sites, as do cemeteries hospitals, schools, colleges, and universities. Institutions whose existence began some time ago have an intriguing connection to the past. For college students, haunted places have a particular appeal. While pursuing their educations and preparing for future careers, students may feel a heightened sense of their environment's possibilities. Legends that tell of statues coming to life and students walking through a gate that marks the mouth of hell or flunking out because they have stepped on the wrong spot contribute to the impression that the college campus is a strange, enchanted place. Many campus legends tell of hauntings in residence halls, viewed as liminal places because students both study and sleep there. In the liminal zone between alertness and sleep, ghosts become non-living residents of the campus environment. As I discovered when doing the research for my book *Haunted Halls* (2007), it is common for each campus to have its own haunted places. Simon J. Bronner's *Campus Traditions* documents an intriguing range of haunted locations on college campuses (2012: 277-332).

A well-known haunted place on the campus of Binghamton University inspired the legend trip that four of my students took on May 2, 2014. Mike, Amy, Jack, and Simon, all of whom were residents of Newing College, decided to venture into the dark, semi-deserted basement of Old Rafuse, a former residence hall that now holds administrative offices and a couple of classrooms. Old Rafuse is part of Old Dickinson, a complex of eight former residence halls that has gradually begun to serve other purposes. Across the street from Old Dickinson stand the current Dickinson Community and Newing College.

Old Dickinson no longer functions primarily as a residential area at Binghamton University, but it has an invisible network of legends about which students quickly learn. Many of these legends focus on the sub-basement, where a student supposedly hanged himself back in the 1970s. Students have told the story of this suicide with minor variations, including the names of two residence halls in which the suicide took place. In *Haunted Halls*, I explore several variants of this legend, one of which describes a female student seeing the face of a male student in the mirror of her room. After going down to the sub-basement with a friend to try to

figure out what she has seen, she realizes that this was the face of the student who committed suicide by hanging from a pipe many years ago (Tucker 2007: 98-99).

There have also been legends about a cleaning lady fainting in the sub-basement and refusing to clean there again. This legend is based on an upsetting experience that a member of the custodial staff went through. When she was reaching up to clean a light fixture, she fainted and fell off a stepladder. Upon awakening from the faint, she declared that she had felt the spirit of a student named Michael pass through her body. Both students and staff members were troubled by the report of this incident, but staff members did not worry about it for long. Students, however, found stories about what had happened to be very intriguing. Some of them brought Ouija boards down to the sub-basement to see if they could find any ghosts there. Once a small group of students tried to summon spirits in the sub-basement with a Ouija Board and claimed that handprints of little baby ghosts had appeared on the surface of windows there. This claim would sound familiar to anyone who had heard a legend about a "gravity hill," including the one that Carl Lindahl examines in his "Ostensive Healing: Pilgrimage to the San Antonio Ghost Tracks" (2005). As Lindahl explains, legend trips to the San Antonio train tracks inspire a sense of wonder; similarly, students who explore Old Rafuse's sub-basement approach their destination with excitement and awe.

When Old Rafuse still functioned as a residence hall, the sub-basement contained a room full of washers and dryers. One legend tells of a demonic face appearing in the glass windows of washing machines, frightening students who had nervously come down to the subbasement alone, late at night, to do their laundry. A small room that contained an incinerator did not inspire legends while students still lived in the building but gained a reputation for being haunted once the students moved out. When people perceive a building as abandoned or semi-abandoned, ghost stories tend to multiply. The comforting routines of daily life no longer make the place seem familiar, so legends about ghosts become more common. Such was the case at Mansfield University, when a temporarily abandoned building inspired many rumors and legends (Glimm 1983:120-22).

Down to the Depths of the Sub-basement

At the beginning of their adventure in Old Rafuse on May 2, 2014, Amy, Mike, Jack, and Simon felt excited and curious. Their first attempt to enter the building failed, because the doors were locked when classes were not in session. On their second try, however, they entered the building holding two smartphones: one for making a video of the trip and the other for using the Phantom Radar app. Bright-colored dots appeared on the screen as they walked down the two flights of stairs that led to their destination: the sub-basement. Simon shouted, "We got a shiny blue dot and a big red dot! Oh, yeah! Red, that means something!" On Phantom Radar, red means a strong ghostly presence; yellow means the presence is less strong, and blue means it is weak. Going beyond those explanations, one of the male students wondered whether the color red showed how the ghost was responding to their visit: "Red on the thing, I saw it! Maybe it's angry!" His mention of anger coincided with their arrival in the dimly lit, shadowy sub-basement,

where they saw pipes protruding from the walls. Mike said, "There's a story about a guy hanging himself on a pipe" and Simon replied, "Oh God, creepy!" Then they took a quick look at the laundry room, where students had seen scary faces. With these reminders of the building's invisible, inherited story structure, the legend quest moved forward.

As dots appeared on the screen, words also came up. The first two words, "Height" and "Introduce," got no reaction from the students, but the next, "Maria," fully engaged their attention. "Are there any stories about a ghost named Maria?" Amy asked. The others shook their heads as they entered one of the sub-basement's storage rooms, which contained old music stands, books, boxes of old clothes used by a group of performers, a few compact discs, and other castoffs jumbled together.

Mike plunged his arm into a box of women's clothes and blankets, shouting, "Oh, my God, it's some girl's bed stuff! It *smells*!" His reaction reminded me of a visit to the boys' unit of a camp with my Girl Scouts in the late 1970s in southern Indiana; the sights and smells of the boys' tents and bathrooms at the camp fascinated the girls. Although this group of students was much older, three out of four of them were young men who seemed eager to find clues about a mysterious female ghost, so gender was a factor in their quest.

One of the clues they discovered in the storage room was a video, "The Little Princess," which Jack pulled out of the bottom of the box of clothes. Holding the video up, Jack asked, "Could this be Maria?" Amy had seen the movie, but the three male students hadn't. As I watched their video I remembered that the 1995 film *A Little Princess*, based on the 1905 novel by the same name by Frances Hodgson Burnett, shows the quasi-magical transformation of a dreary boarding school bedroom into a luxurious, delightful place to live. To some extent, that transformation resembled the one that these four students were experiencing: a change from a dull basement to a space haunted by significant ghosts from the building's past.

The next two words that appeared on the screen were "July" and "Sunday." As soon as they heard "July," the students got excited. "I was born in July!" shouted Jack; Amy said, "So was I!" Mike commented in a sepulchral voice, "Jack, you're going to *die*." Amy added ominously, "It's really *cold*." With a little help from Phantom Radar, they were establishing the time frame of a possible story and predicting a grim denouement for their own legend trip. Their prediction may have been influenced by *The Blair Witch Project*, the 1999 film in which all three student filmmakers die, or, more generally, by the many horror films in which visitors to creepy places do not survive. One prototype for this expectation is the legend "The Fatal Initiation," in which a fraternity initiate spends a night in a graveyard and dies of fright.

Right after Mike's prediction of Jack's demise, the four students walked into the scariest room in Rafuse's sub-basement. They could see it was the scariest room, because a few years ago someone had written a message on its door: "Rumor has it that a ghost haunts this room." Maintenance staff kept the door closed, so anyone brave enough to go into the room had to push the door open. The room was small and did not contain much: just a pile of trash, a plug surrounded by

soot, a dirty sink with a red spot that looked like blood, graffiti, and an incinerator. Part of the pile of trash was a heap of broken glass. The room looked as if it had been abandoned and left to fall apart for many years, even though students had lived in the building just a few years before.

No wonder someone had designated this creepy room with the closed door the haunted room! As Sylvia Ann Grider observes, basements of houses have a "subliminal association…with castle dungeons and torture chambers" (155). This association comes through even more strongly in the basements of residence halls, which belong to campus legend landscapes involving stories of suffering students who commit suicide, get possessed by spirits, and experience other kinds of misery. The longer a residence hall basement is left mostly unoccupied and the dirtier it gets, the better it works as a setting for a legend trip in which seekers confront decay, suffering, and the presence of a ghost. And a room within the basement that seems to be secret is particularly intriguing, as the well-known folktale "Bluebeard" suggests (Tatar, 2006).

Who was the ghost in this strange, uncomfortable room? As they stood there, the four students saw two new words pop up on Phantom Radar: "couple" and "forget." At this point they did something they had not done before: they started talking to the smartphone as if it were a Ouija board. Jack asked, "What does Sunday mean, and who is Maria? Are you Maria? Do you have anything to do with a Sunday in July?" Mike asked, "What do you want us to forget? What does this word mean?"

No more words appeared on the smartphone, but something else happened: the students heard noises that scared them. Some of them heard water dripping, and others heard broken glass crunching on the floor. Maybe a ghost was signaling its presence, as it did in so many folktales, including those that contained the motif E402, "Mysterious ghostlike noises heard." "Run!" said Jack. "Run for your lives!" They scrambled up the two flights of stairs and exited the building.

Once they were safely outside, Mike summed up what had happened: "Looks like this was a pretty productive ghost hunt. We found out something about this girl, Maria, and a Sunday in July. It was probably in the sub-basement, where it said there was a ghost and something having to do with a couple. It could have been a summer program when they were in high school. Maybe Maria was a girlfriend with a boyfriend. That's all we know. There were a bunch of noises in that room. It sounded like water dripping, something on the floor. There was a lot of broken glass. We are NOT going back there!" Feeling good about having made it through their descent to Rafuse's sub-basement, he and the other students posted their video of the trip on YouTube (Old Dickinson 2014).

Conclusions

This exciting ghost hunt followed the classic legend trip sequence identified by Dégh, Thigpen, and Ellis in many respects. The four students discussed Dickinson legends before choosing Old Rafuse Hall and making their way down into its dark, spooky sub-basement. With some trepidation, they entered the laundry room, the storage room, and finally the furnace room that earlier students had identified as

a haunted place. When they heard strange noises, they got scared and ran back up the stairs, exiting the building as fast as they could. Immediately after the hunt they told a story about what had happened; then they ambled across the street to their well-lit, comfortably-furnished residential community.

There was, however, an important change in the older pattern. Besides recalling details from the stories they had learned from oral tradition, the students used a smartphone app as their guide for the hunt. Phantom Radar supplied a tantalizing series of colored dots that told them where ghosts might be; it also gave them words that became a story. To some extent, these words facilitated reverse ostension, defined by Jeff Tolbert as creation of a story through combination of digital elements. The words that appeared on Phantom Radar's screen could be recognized as a narrative, although this narrative's disjointedness made it seem unlikely to become part of Old Dickinson's enduring legends.

The most significant change was the students' use of hypermodern ostension: representation of legend elements that demonstrates reliance on the contemporary era's "accessible excess" (Thomas 2015:7). Using one smartphone to record their trip and another to run Ghost Radar, Amy, Simon, Jack, and Mike made constant use of digital technology. They used Ghost Radar as both a guide and an oracle to which they could speak directly, as people would speak to a Ouija board. They planned to upload their video to YouTube and did so immediately after their ghost hunt ended. Because of this plan, they were aware of performing for an audience throughout their search for ghosts. Their video might have "gone viral" and reached many viewers; most YouTube videos do not become that famous, but one never knows which way the fickle finger of fame will point.

Mike's summary of his group's hunt shows that he wanted it to be "productive." The students would have been disappointed if nothing much had happened and they had simply left the building. Using the Phantom Radar app helped them put together a scenario in which something exciting would take place. A name, a month, a day of the week, and other information gave them ingredients from which a narrative could grow.

Significantly, the story about mysterious "Maria" did not matter as much to the students as their own experience did. Mock-seriously predicting their own death, hearing scary sounds, and feeling uncomfortable in the dirty, haunted room scared them enough that they ran away from the basement. Although the dots and words on Phantom Radar intrigued them, what they saw, heard, and felt in the sub-basement affected them more deeply than messages received on the machine. They were proud of having experienced something frightening in that spooky place underground and enjoyed posting their video for others to view on YouTube.

Information flows constantly from Phantom Radar, Ghost Radar, Spirit Story Box, and other ghost-hunting apps that we can buy for low prices or download for free. These images and sounds not only offer guidelines for locating ghosts; they also represent our current era of semi-reliable electronic communication. At the center of each college ghost hunt stand young people whose eagerness to confront their own fears motivates them to move forward. As long as they keep daring to undertake such quests, their stories deserve to be told.

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"Little Pitchers Have Big Ears"
The Intricate World of Children and Proverbs

Wolfgang Mieder

The titular proverb from the 16th century, not particularly current these days, used to be employed by parents to signal each other that their little children (pitchers) were listening in on something that was not meant for their ears (handles on the pitchers). The assumption was that children could not possibly understand this metaphorical message and, judging by some experiments I have conducted with youngsters as well as my university students, it is indeed a proverb whose hidden meaning is difficult to comprehend. But the proverb also implies that the children are good and keen listeners to what adults are saying, and sooner or later they will catch on at decoding the metaphors of proverbs whose imagery is less obscure. This begs the question at what age children become comfortable in processing proverbs in their mind, whether it is worthwhile to teach them some of the most popular proverbs, and what educational tools exist in addition to normal discourse to aid in this developmental process. Once children are introduced to metaphorical proverbs that relate to their very existence, their interest in dealing with this type of indirect language is awakened. There is no doubt that children can handle proverbs at an earlier age than has long been thought possible, but much more study needs to be undertaken on how children employ proverbs once they have become part of their natural vocabulary.

Ever since the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget published his seminal study on *The Language and Thought of the Child* (1926) with its influential chapter "Some Peculiarities of Verbal Understanding in the Child Between the Ages of Nine and Eleven" (Piaget 1959: 127-161), scholars have struggled with the question at what age children are capable of processing, understanding, and employing metaphorical proverbs. There are those who maintained with Piaget that youngsters are incapable of dealing with proverbs until at least twelve years of age (Billow 1975, Cometa 1976, Douglas and Peel 1979), but this view began to be questioned by the end of the 1970s by primarily psycholinguists employing various innovative research methods, such as placing proverbs in a pictorial context (Honeck, Sowry, Voegtle 1978) or asking children to choose an appropriate proverb from a list of ten to end a vignette, to pair proverbs of similar meaning, and to paraphrase them rather than confronting them with a multiple choice proverbs test (Resnick 1977 and 1982). Especially Marilyn Nippold and her colleagues have advanced such developmentally oriented studies on proverb comprehension by children and adolescents, arguing that it is of paramount importance that proverbs are presented in a contextualized form (Nippold 1985 and 1988, Nippold et al. 1988 and 1998). Such carefully executed investigations of various proverb tasks with statistical analyses have amply shown that children by the age of ten (fourth graders) are certainly ready to comprehend proverbs, that is at least two years earlier in their development than what Piaget had postulated.

The same has been shown to be true for the related proverbial expressions or general idioms (Gibbs 1987, Lodge and Leach 1975, Prinz 1983)

While psycholinguists have done impressive work in advancing knowledge about how children's minds process and understand metaphorical proverbs, they have basically ignored the question of when children begin using proverbs once they have become acquainted with them. Folklorist Catherine Hudson, in her short paper on "Traditional Proverbs as Perceived by Children from an Urban Environment" (1972), tried to deal with proverbs in actual use, but she was able to observe only that while her fourth and fifth graders could deal with proverbs cited by adults they "never reached the point where they used proverbs in their conversation" (Hudson 1972: 17). But in this regard it is important to point to Judith Pasamanick's unfortunately ignored dissertation *The Proverb Moves the Mind: Abstraction and Metaphor in Children Six-Nine* (1982) with folklorist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett being on the thesis committee at Yeshiva University in New York City. She took the time to set up discursive situations with 48 children in which she, as the investigator, would discuss a given proverb to the point that they understood its meaning, were able to talk about it, and also put it to use. It took many weeks of serious transcription work and detailed analysis to show by realistic verbal exchanges that these youngsters could manage proverbs. Altering the proverb that "Talk does not cook rice" for a summary of sorts to "Talk *Does* Cook Rice: Proverb Abstraction through Social Interaction" (1983), she used a most fitting metaphor for her seminal work that shows that a narrative approach to proverb understanding and use is better than employing proverbs tests without contexts. It was a special pleasure and privilege for me when Judith Pasamanick and her husband visited me in Vermont. Our discussions resulted in the publication of her paper "Watched Pots *Do* Boil: Proverb Interpretation through Contextual Illustration" (1985) in *Proverbium*. The recorded transcripts of her discussions with the children of such proverbs as "You can't have your cake and eat it too," "Talk does not cook rice," "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," "Don't count your chickens before they hatch," "You can't unscramble eggs," "You can' teach an old dog new tricks," "The early bird catches the worm," and others are most revealing of the social and ethical aspects of these discussions among young peers, and they are most certainly unique in the scholarship of children and proverbs. In this regard let me also point out the fascinating scholarship by the Finnish folklorist and paremiologist Liisa Granbom-Herranen who has investigated life stories of adults who recall in their narratives what pedagogical roles proverbs played as behavioral models once they had learned them as children (Granbom-Herranen 2008, 2009, 2011). Personal narratives can shed much light on lasting effects of proverbs encountered in youth.

Regrettably, Judith Pasamanick did not become a paremiologically oriented folklorist but rather entered the professorial profession in the College of Education at Columbia University where she invited Pack Carnes, known for his fable and joke scholarship, and me to teach a folklore summer course – an unforgettably rewarding experience. In any case, a third section of her dissertation deals with "Pedagogic Applications" (322-351) where she discusses how her social-interactional mode of proverb elicitation and employment can be used in a

constructive way in the classroom of an ethnically diverse group of children. Without wanting to be prescriptive, she argues that proverbs can facilitate the discussion of ethical values by giving the children the opportunity to analyze their implied wisdom. And it is with gladness and appreciation that I acknowledge here the influence that the pioneering work of my friend had on my own involvement with proverbs and children. She was correct more than thirty years ago, and she will remain so since there is absolutely nothing wrong with teaching children at least the most commonly known proverbs. The question is, of course, how to accomplish this task that ought to include Pasamanick's open-mined discursive approach.

As luck would have it, I received a generous grant from the Templeton Foundation in 1999 to develop teaching strategies for acquainting fourth-grade students with wisdom in the form of proverbs. I teamed up with their teacher, Deborah Holmes, and we put together a number of teaching units that proved most beneficial to the youngsters who reacted with spirited enthusiasm that perhaps only children of the age between nine and ten are capable of exhibiting in a classroom situation. For the *Character Development and Ethics Unit*, we covered proverbs like "Where there is a will, there is a way," "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again," "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," and "Actions speak louder than words." During the *United Nations' Unit*, we employed proverbs like "The pen is mightier than the sword," "Different strokes for different folks," "Love thy neighbor as thyself," "United we stand, divided we fall," and "A house divided cannot stand." And during the *Science/Math Units* we dealt with such proverbs as "A stitch in time saves nine," "Two heads are better than one," "A rolling stone gathers no moss," and "A miss is as good as a mile." Altogether we covered 150 proverbs during the school year chosen from the established paremiological minimum of 300 Anglo-American proverbs (Haas 2008, Mieder 1992). It was important to us to teach only those proverbs that are definitely current in our modern society, and we made sure that we included modern proverbs like "Garbage in, garbage out," "There is no such things as a free lunch," and "One picture is worth a thousand words." One of the criticisms that I would level at some of the psycholinguistic studies is that they at times use proverbs that are not particularly current, to wit "Scalded cats fear even cold water," "A caged bird longs for the clouds," "The restless sleeper blames the bed," "The pretty shoe often pinches the foot," and "A mouse may help a lion" (Duthie et al. 2008: 162-163).

In any case, I traveled to the Elementary School at Milton, Vermont about every three weeks with my slide projector for a number of school years, telling my university students before going that they better be well prepared for the next lesson if they wanted to come even close to the excitement and eagerness of these wonderful young learners. They loved my slides from art, cartoons, comics, advertisement, headlines, etc., and they had absolutely no problems understanding so-called anti-proverbs, i.e., intentional humorous or satirical manipulations of the proverbs they had learned. There were also exciting projects for the children like writing essays about a proverb, translating the proverbial metaphors into drawings, acting out proverbs, etc. We have described all of this in our book "*Children and*

Proverbs Speak the Truth": Teaching Proverbial Wisdom to Fourth Graders (Mieder and Holmes 2000). Our joint efforts with these incredible youngsters got into the papers, and we also had a half-hour interview with NPR that aired numerous times over the years as part of its "Humankind" series. But speaking of the book that includes forty proverbial drawings, perhaps the most exciting aspect are the answers of the students to the following questions of a questionnaire handed out at the end of the school year. Let me cite some of the questions with but a couple of answers here:

> *What is your favorite proverb?*
> Actions speak louder than words.
> Every cloud has a silver lining. (p. 197)
>
> *Describe a situation when a proverb you learned this year helped you make a good decision.*
> Don't judge a book but its cover helped me read a great book. It had an ugly green cover and a boring name but "The Lost Bear" was a great book.
> My little sister and I were about to cross a street without looking and I stopped and said look before you leap. (p. 198)
>
> *Which proverb would help you if there was trouble on the playground?*
> Two wrongs don't make a right.
> Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. (p. 204)
>
> *Which proverb would you like to remember for the rest of your life? Why?*
> Time flies because you have to make life the fullest because it is so short once you think about it.
> There is no such thing as a free lunch. Because we need to learn that if we want something we have to work for it or earn it. (p. 205)
>
> *Did learning and discussing proverbs change your thinking or behavior in any way? Yes – No.*
> Yes. Learning and discussing proverbs changed my behavior in how I thought. I think with more maturity now that I have learned proverbs.
> Yes. It changed my thinking about the way everything works. (p. 207)
>
> *Would you like to continue to learn proverbs? Yes – No.*
> Yes. Because they are very interesting and can help you in life.
> Yes. Because proverbs are like morals. The more you know the less you make bad decisions. (p. 208)

Our book has seventeen such answers to these and other questions, and in my International Proverb Archives, I have many more from other years of teaching these kids. This is material that the psycholinguistic studies mentioned above—

except for those by Judith Pasamanick—do not have and thus do not consider. There is no doubt that much more contextualized field research is necessary to really understand how children at a young age relate to proverbs.

The fact that proverbs can be taught and that they might have a positive influence on the character development of youngsters is nothing new. They have long been taught as ready-made bits of wisdom or at least as generalized expressions of experiences and observations as can be seen from early educational collections, school-books from the Middle Ages, translation exercises in foreign language classes, etc. (Mieder 2009, Orkin 1978). And let us not forget Benjamin Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanacks* (1733-1758) and his infamous essay "The Way to Wealth" (1758) that ushered in the Puritan ethics with its 105 proverbs! Can't you just imagine those children during the past two centuries who sat at the breakfast table and drank their milk out of a cup standing on a plate that both are inscribed with such proverbs as "Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise," "Laziness travels so slowly, that poverty soon overtakes him," or "He that by the plough would thrive, himself must either hold or drive"? In addition to such proverbial inscriptions these dishes often carried the label "Franklin's Maxims" – no wonder that his name became attached to so many proverbs when in fact he only coined very few, to wit "There is sleeping enough in the grave" and "Three removes are as bad as a fire" (Mieder 2004b: 216-224). These Franklin mugs and plates have long since become collector's items, and my wife has spent up to $300 a piece to assemble a dozen of these rare curiosities for me as very special and much-appreciated presents (McClinton 1980, Riley 1991). We have modern lists of proverbs that serve similar educational purposes, as for example the one in *The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (Hirsch et al. 1988: 46-57, Mieder 1992: 195-197). E.D. Hirsch has also published *What Your Fourth Grader Needs to Know* with a list of sayings and phrases (Hirsch 2005: 57-65) that are explained by way of short statements and concise educational dialogues, as for example:

> *Birds of a feather flock together*
> We use this saying [proverb] to mean that similar people, or people who have similar interests, like to be with each other.
> "Those guys always eat lunch together," Jenny said, nodding toward a group of boys in the cafeteria.
> "Yeah," said June, "They're on the same baseball team and they love to talk about mitts and bats and home runs."
> Jenny nodded. "Birds of a feather flock together!" (Hirsch 2005: 58)

But nowhere in these two books does he explain how these texts were chosen. It certainly would have been appropriate to have consulted proverb scholars to help select those texts (old and modern) that are current today. Jay Mechling has dealt with the issue of oversimplifying the educational and cultural value and significance of proverbs in his eye-opening article on "'Cheaters Never Prosper' and Other Lies Adults Tell Kids: Proverbs and the Culture Wars over Character" (2004). As he points out, there are plenty of inappropriate proverbs, and the mere

memorization of "good" proverbs – even they can be put to negative use due to their polyfunctionality, polysituativity, and polysemanticity (Mieder 2004b: 132) – does not make a good child let alone adult. And yet, at least some knowledge and understanding of proverbs is part of cultural literacy and there is no harm in acquainting children with them without making absolute rules out of their all-too-human limitations, as is immediately obvious from such contrasting pairs as "Absence makes the heart grow fonder" vs. "Out of sight, out of mind" and "Look before you leap" vs. "He who hesitates is lost." A proverb at the right time in the right place is just fine, but the proverbial caveats "Nothing in excess" and "Everything in moderation" also apply to the use of proverbs.

Now that educational books have been mentioned, it is time to take a look at richly illustrated small books for children that have been published over the years to serve as enjoyable early introductions to the rich treasure trove of proverbs (Mieder et al. 1992). They are clearly intended to teach children proverbs, just as other children's books acquaint youngsters with fables, fairy tales, legends, myths, etc. as part of cultural literacy. Judging by my university students who enroll in my lecture course on "'Big Fish Eat Little Fish': The Nature and Politics of Proverbs" every fall (Mieder 2015), I can honestly and without riding my proverbial hobby-horse state that they would well have benefitted from one of these charming books. It is always amazing to me at the beginning of the course that they have plenty of difficulties filling out a questionnaire with fifty common proverbs for which I ask them to complete either the first or the second half. Even though I have selected especially common proverbs from the Anglo-American paremiological minimum, many students cannot complete the partial queues for such standard proverbs as "A stitch in time saves nine," "Cobbler stick to your last," "A miss is as good as a mile," "There is nothing new under the sun," "You never miss the water until the well runs dry," and "A burnt child dreads the fire." But they all know the "fish"-proverb used in the catch-title of my course as becomes clear during the introductory lecture that deals with a diachronic survey of this proverb with references from literature, politics, the mass media, and about fifty slides of illustrations from Pieter Bruegel all the way to modern cartoons and advertisements (Mieder 1987: 178-228, and 2004b: 34-43). At that time I also show them that ever popular children's book *Swimmy* (1963) by Leo Lionni that on a few beautifully illustrated pages first shows how a big fish swallows little fish, then how a special little fish starts organizing his peers into the shape of a large fish – I call it the solidarity fish – and how that unified creature chases the big fish away. More than fifty years after its first appearance this book is still on the market in numerous languages, and many of my students remember it from their childhood. In comparison to other children's books on proverbs that I have collected over the years, this is particularly memorable since it is basically a pictorial story with but little writing that teaches youngsters about just one important proverb about power, greed, rapacity that unfortunately is part of human nature that can, at least at times, be overcome by unified efforts.

My interest in children's books on proverbs – besides my obsession with collecting everything proverbial for my ever expanding International Proverb Archives – began when, some thirty years ago, I came across the sixteen-page

booklet *Old Proverbs with New Pictures by Lizzie Lawson* published without a date by the Merrimack Publishing Corporation in New York City. Realizing that this treasure of beautifully illustrated children depicting the proverbs "Little boats keep near shore, big ships may venture more," "Half a loaf is better than no bread," "There's many a slip twixt the cup and the lip," "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," "It's an ill wind that blows no body good," "You may lead a horse to water but you cannot make him drink," "The more haste, the less speed," "Birds of a feather flock together," "Never buy a pig in a poke," "Out of the frying pan into the fire," "Too much of a good thing is good for nothing," "Tis a poor heart that never rejoices," "The greatest strokes make not the sweetest music," Too many cooks spoil the broth," and "Coming events cast their shadows before." I never succeeded in finding out more about this slender publication, but I have discovered the fabulous book from which these illustrations were taken. It is *Old Proverbs with New Pictures* (London: Cassell, Petter, Calpin & Co.) that on 64 pages contains 35 proverb illustrations by the British children's book artist Lizzie Lawson (1867-1920) and little explanatory poems by the unknown British poet Clara Mateaux that were deleted from the small reprint. Here is at least one example, albeit without the illustration:

It is no use crying over spilt milk
Do not fret
    For fretting ended,
Never bowl
    Or platter mended,
Bind that finger,
    Wipe that tear,
Next, more careful
    Step my dear,
And remember
    What I say,
Milk, once spilt,
    Is spilt for aye. (p. 22)

Admittedly, such verses would not come across to today's children, and the illustrations are also dated for modern youngsters. Nevertheless, it is one of the most splendid children's proverb books that definitely deserves to be reprinted as a unique curiosity with plenty of entertaining value. And paremiologists like myself will, of course, also enjoy the fact that Lord John Russell's famous proverb definition "The wit of one, the wisdom of many" (1823) appears – albeit in reverse order – underneath the cover picture of five children.

For the past three decades, I have searched for other proverb books intended for children by spending time in the children's section of bookstores, asking shopkeepers for possible leads, and also trying the internet. While I am excited about the ten additional books that I have been able to purchase during the past decades, it is a regrettably small harvest. Proverb collections as such – popular and scholarly – can actually be found in general bookstores, and I would think that

well-illustrated children's books on proverbs could conquer their market as well. And it would be desirable that such books would include particularly popular traditional proverbs as well as more modern proverbs like "Go big or go home" or "The second mouse gets the cheese" (Doyle et al. 2012). In any case, what follows is a short survey of the children's proverb books that I possess:

Hughes, Shirley (ill.). 1977. *Make Hay While the Sun Shines. A Book of Proverbs.* Chosen by Alison M. Abel. London: Faber and Faber. 48 pp.; rpt. London: Faber and Faber, 1998. 40 pp.

The book with its proverbial title includes 33 pen and ink drawings of children acting out standard proverbs like "Many hands make light work," "Don't swap horses in mid-stream," and "Let sleeping dogs lie." The proverbs are cited at the bottom of the page with very short explanatory comments. I was especially pleased to see the proverb "A stitch in time saves nine" illustrated together with the concise explanation: "If you put something right as soon as it goes wrong, you won't have so much trouble later" (p.7). This is one of the proverbs that not a single student in my proverb class this past fall knew! Little wonder perhaps, since nobody appears to be mending clothes any longer. I personally have fond memories seeing my mother stitch the holes in our socks when we grew up after the Second World War. Since the proverb obviously need not refer only to mending clothes, it still has plenty of good use in our modern society and could well still be taught and learned.

Hughes, Shirley (ill.). 1980. *"Over the Moon": A Book of Sayings.* London: Faber and Faber. 48 pp.; rpt. London: Faber and Faber, 1998. 40 pp.

Having had success with her first proverb book, Shirley Hughes brought out a companion volume depicting 47 proverbial expressions in pen and ink drawings (sometimes two on a page). The proverbial expressions are once again printed at the bottom of the page with a very short explanatory comment beneath. Some of the depicted phrases are "up the creek with a paddle," "a bull in a china shop," "casting pearls before swine," and "hitting the nail on the head." Such metaphorical expressions literally call out to be illustrated, and I was especially interested to see that Shirley Hughes included the proverbial expression "Being a dog in the manger" that I have traced back to classical times (Mieder 2011). The pen and ink drawing makes its meaning perfectly clear, but the explanatory comment "Refusing to give up something you don't really want to someone who needs it" (p. 6) helps to understand the metaphor. None of my university students knew this expression and not surprisingly so, since fables, where the metaphor comes from, are not covered much in school any longer. And yet, it is such a great image, and I wish we could maintain it since it still fits perfectly to human behavior in the modern age.

Fraser, Betty (ill.). 1990. *First Things First: An Illustrated Collection of Sayings – Useful and Familiar for Children.* New York: Harper & Row. 32 pp.

While the two books by Shirley Hughes probably would not appeal to youngster these days because of the lack of colorful illustrations, this book by

Betty Fraser presents plenty of them with children from various ethnic groups. It includes two dozen well-known proverbs for which it explains in words and pictures what they mean and when to use them. The pictures are full of good humor, and they are entitled by an introductory statement with one or two possible proverbial answers interspersed on the page, as for example:

> *What to say when you are the first*
> The early bird catches the worm.
> First come, first served.
> First things first. (p. 14)

The accompanying picture shows a bird outside of the kitchen eating a worm and a child sitting at the table as the first family member being served breakfast by the mother. There is also a little dog wanting to eat and thinking to himself "First things first". This book is clearly meant to teach children proverbs, and my proverb students would be able to explain to the little girl that the proverb "First come, first served" is actually a medieval Latin legal proverb that relates to the miller. The customary law was that the farmer who would arrive at the mill first would have his grain ground first. The proverb was translated into the vernacular languages, with Geofrrey Chaucer still alluding to this practice with "Whoso that first to mille comth, first grynt". But by 1599 the truncated variant "First come, first served" already appeared in England and it has long displaced the longer version (Mieder 2004b: 43-52). A child does not need to know this, of course, but this example shows that there is much to learn about proverbs for the inquisitive mind, even at a young age. I am not sure if I would have included "A trouble shared is a trouble halved" that is not really current, but I am glad that there is a two-page spread on the golden rule "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The twice repeated text and the two series of three pictures each make the meaning of this basic rule of civil and humane behavior perfectly clear to the young readers and viewers.

Kneen, Maggie (ill.). 1992. *"Too Many Cooks ..." and Other Proverbs*. New York: Green Tiger Press. 26 pp.

This is a beautifully illustrated book with all the characters being animals. It presents twenty-five very well-known proverbs, with some proverbs like "Birds of a feather flock together" getting a two-page illustration, while another two-page spread presents a horse and buggy at a stable with five proverbs written next to appropriate place: "If wishes were horses, beggars would ride," "Never look a gift horse in the mouth," "Don't put the cart before the horse," "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink," and "Don't lock the stable door after the horse has bolted." The first and last proverb might be a bit difficult for a small child to grasp. For parents who might have difficulties there are two pages at the end of the book with short explanations, to wit for the "stable"-proverb: "It is useless to take precautions after an accident has happened when they should have been taken before." In any case, this is a charming and entertaining book for very

young children, but it is, as the others mentioned thus far, unfortunately out of print.

Hurwitz, Johanna. 1994. *A Word to the Wise and Other Proverbs*. Illustrations by Robert Rayevsky. New York: Morrow Junior Books. 32 pp.

As stated on the dust cover of this book, its author Johanna Hurwitz was inspired by an oil painting called *The Dutch Proverbs* (1646/4) by David Teniers II that depicts 45 proverbs and proverbial expressions on a large canvas very much in the tradition of Pieter Bruegel's famous painting *The Netherlandish Proverbs* (1559) with its over 100 proverbial scenes (Dundes and Stibbe 1981, Mieder 2004a): "A picture is worth a thousand words, but sometimes words can inspire a picture. On a trip to England, I saw a large painting at Belvoir Castle [at Grantham]. It depicted many proverbial scenes together on a single canvas. That painting sparked the idea for this book." As my wife and I did on our pilgrimage to Belvoir Castle some years ago, Hurwitz too must have bought a postcard of the picture at the museum shop that lists the proverbial phrases. In turn she showed it to the children's book illustrator Robert Rayevsky who adapted the 17th-century small-town painting to the metropolis of New York City with Teniers' small river becoming the East River. Altogether his picture is comprised of twenty proverb scenes, with the actual texts printed around the outside borders. The left side includes proverbs like "Don't cry over spilt milk," "Birds of a feather flock together," and "Too many cooks spoil the broth," while the right side features such proverbs as "Where there's smoke, there's fire," "An apple a day keeps the doctor away," and "Don't look a gift horse in the mouth." The proverb picture appears twice on the front and back inside cover pages, clearly entertaining children and adults alike in searching out the proverb scenes and gaining some understanding of their traditional wisdom. The inside of this oversize book (9x11) includes 22 proverbs with some of them like "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" and "When the cat's away the mice will play" covering two whole pages. The proverbs are printed at the top or the bottom of the page in relatively small lettering without any explanations. This surely is a book that is intended primarily for viewing pleasure while at the same time introducing children to very well-known proverbs, with the one about "The pen is mightier than the sword" showing Benjamin Franklin at a lectern with a quill in hand and surrounded by children. This illustration serves as the introduction and is accompanied by a short preface that quite correctly states that Franklin is "known of having recorded many proverbs in a series of books called *Poor Richard Almanack*. Benjamin Franklin was aware that there was much for us to learn from the simple truths of proverbs" (p. 3). In other words, Hurwitz refrains from perpetuating the falsehood that Franklin coined dozens of proverbs that one hears and reads to this day, something that is especially the case for the apocryphal attachment of his name to the beautifully illustrated proverb "Early to bed, and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise" (pp. 24-25) that actually dates back to a late medieval Latin proverb (Barbour 1974, Mieder 1993: 98-134)

Brennan-Nelson, Denise. 2003. *My Momma Likes to Say*. Illustrations by Jane Monroe Donovan. Chelsea, Michigan: Sleeping Bear Press. 32 pp.
Brennan-Nelson, Denise. 2004. *My Teacher Likes to Say*. Illustrations by Jane Monroe Donovan. Chelsea, Michigan: Sleeping Bear Press. 32 pp.
Brennan-Nelson, Denise. 2007. *My Grandma Likes to Say*. Illustrations by Jane Monroe Donovan. Chelsea, Michigan: Sleeping Bear Press. 32 pp.

These somewhat oversized (10x10) books are proof of the proverb that all good things come in three! The collaborative work between the author Denise Brennan-Nelson and the illustrator Jane Monroe resulted in the poetic, prosaic, and pictorial explanation of about a dozen proverbs and proverbial expressions in each book. The children learn that they most likely have heard them from their mother, teacher, or grandmother. On a two-page spread the proverb is written in large letters at the top followed by some verses and in smaller print a few explanatory comments, with the wonderful colorful illustrations bringing it all to life. The first book presents proverbs like "Money doesn't grow on trees" and proverbial expressions like "It's raining cats and dogs" (the illustration of animals tumbling through the rain is also on the cover), and I was pleased to see a modern proverb included that might serve as an example of the *modus operandi* of these books:

> *"When life hands you lemons, make lemonade,"*
> My momma likes to say.
> I'm not sure what she means
> But I like it anyway.
>
> If life gives me lemons
> I'll squeeze them good and hard,
> Then add some sugar, stir it up
> And sell it from our yard.

All of this is surrounded by several children preparing lemonade in a front yard to be sold to passersby, but in the upper right corner, in small print, is this additional information:

> Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919) first said, "When fate hands us lemons, let us try to make lemonade."
> Lemons are very sour and yet they are used to make something very sweet and delicious – lemonade! This idiom suggests that we should take a difficult situation and turn it into something good.
> Can you think of a time when you took a bad situation and turned it into something good?
> [this is followed by eight lines of a lemonade recipe] (24-25)

All of this is written in such small print that I doubt that children would enjoy reading it. But perhaps this is meant for the parents to read and discuss with the children. I should also add that none of the books state anywhere what the age-

range of the children is that are being addressed. Finally, calling Andrew Carnegie the originator of the proverb is stretching things a bit. He helped to popularize it, with the earliest reference thus far being from 1910 (Doyle, Mieder, Shapiro 2012: 140). By the third book proverbial expressions and comparisons like "growing like a weed," "a horse of a different color," "being no spring chicken," and "hit the hay" outnumber proverbs like "When the cats away the mice will play" and "Where there's a will there's a way." One of my favorites is the verbal and pictorial treatment of the proverbial comparison "like a bull in a china shop" (16-17) that has been shown to have an international distribution from classical times to today in a number of variants including an elephant instead of the bull (Trokhimenko 1999).

Gregorich, Barbara. 2006. *Waltur [sic] Buys a Pig in a Poke and Other Stories*. Illustrations by Kristin Sorra. Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin. 54 pp.
Gregorich, Barbara. 2007. *Waltur [sic] Paints Himself into a Corner and Other Stories*. Illustrations by Kristin Sorra. Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin. 48 pp.

These two books are very different from the others in that they teach or exemplify proverbs by stories with many colorful illustrations showing how Waltur the bear in company with his bear friends finds out the truth behind them. The first volume treats the three proverbs "Don't buy a pig in a poke," "Don't count your chickens before they're hatched," and "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink." Here are a few of the short prose lines printed as if they were poems of the first story:

A Pig in a Poke

The three friends went to the fair.
"I will go on rides," said Darwin.
"I will play games," said Matilda.
"And I will buy a pig," said Waltur.

"Be careful," said Matilda.
"Do not buy a pig in a poke."

"What's a poke?" asked Darwin.
"A poke is a bag," Matilda answered.
"You cannot see through a bag.
You should not buy what
You cannot see," she said.

Matilda went to play games.
Darwin went to go on rides.
Waltur went to buy a pet. (6-7)

And on it goes for more pages as Waltur finds his understanding and appreciation of the proverb. The second volume presents stories around "Don't put the cart before the horse", "Don't paint yourself into a corner," and "Let sleeping dogs lie" of which the first two would normally be considered as proverbial expressions that are rendered into proverbs of sorts by adding the negative imperative "Don't" element to them. But to be sure, the stories and illustrations are educational in an entertaining fashion, and children would surely enjoy having them read to them or reading them on their own while glancing at the pictures.

These then are the books that I have been able to collect over the years, leaving examples of similar books in German, Russian, and Spanish aside for now. Of course, there are other ways to teach proverbs to children bringing to mind a large framed colorful poster of a painting by the British artist William Belcher with the title *As the Saying Goes* (1973) that hangs in my office in our home. It contains 51 proverb scenes with captions for the obvious delight and edification of children. As in *The Netherlandish Proverbs* by Bruegel, a house is placed into an open landscape with a river running through it, with the various scenes and captions bringing to life such proverbs as "Cleanliness is next to godliness," "Too many cooks spoil the broth," "A rolling stone gathers no moss," "Look before you leap," "You can't have your cake and eat it too," and, befitting an English poster, "An Englishman's home is his castle" which is nowadays usually cited more generally as "A man's home is his castle." My wife and I remember fondly how our nephews and niece would stand in front of the picture enjoying the proverbial messages.

Observing children deal with proverbs can indeed be a lot of fun for adults. As they learn and understand them, it is of developmental interest to hear them utter them correctly in different contexts. But there are also those perennial lists prepared by elementary school teachers where children have been asked to complete truncated proverbs that they often do not yet know. We have all received such humorous lists via the internet, and I have quite a collection of them. Two of my favorites are "A rolling stone plays a guitar" and "A bird in the hand is warm" that clearly have some truth to them. And children also come up spontaneously with proverb-like statements that might just have it in them to become new proverbs, to wit such wisdom as "Parents have eyes in the backs of their heads," "You can't hide mashed potatoes in your hat," "Popping popcorn without a lid isn't smart," and "You can't trust dogs to watch your food" that H. Jackson Brown has collected in his richly illustrated book *Wit and Wisdom from the Peanut Butter Gang. A Collection of Wise Words from Young Hearts* (1994: 25, 52, 63, 64, see also Gash 1999, Knox 1925, Stark 1992). Adults throughout the world have coined plenty of proverbs about children and child-rearing (Palacios 1996, Reinsberg-Düringsfeld 1864), and so why should we not also look more seriously at children's very own proverbs? It certainly behooves folklorists and others to pay much more attention to children and proverbs not only from the dominant psycholinguistic approach but also by way of rigorous field research to find out when, how, and why children employ proverbs that they have learned in actual verbal communication. Teaching them traditional and modern proverbs,

not so much as moral maxims as was done in former times but rather as culturally relevant generalizations, still makes a lot of sense as they develop into responsible citizens with at least a little bit of help from the insights of the experienced wisdom of proverbial common-sense.

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Wrestling with Masculinity

Andrew Delfino and Jay Mechling

Once you've found the gym at a high school you've never visited before the Saturday morning of a wrestling match, you pay a modest entrance fee and enter a world of thuds and whistles and cheers and boys' locker room smells. Depending upon the size of the meet—on how many schools brought teams and how many brackets—there will be one or more large mats laid out on the gym floor, mats marked with large boundary circles and a small center circle. At any moment, matches are at different stages—some beginning, some in progress, and some just ending with the victor's arm raised by the referee. There is a din of shouting—teammates urging on a wrestler, coaches shouting advice, whistles screeching, timers buzzing, parents and friends shouting, cheering, clapping. Wrestlers with their match coming up next have shed their sweats and loose-fitting basketball shorts, have pulled on the shoulder straps of their wrestling singlets, have donned the protective headgear, and are bouncing in place, pacing, or otherwise getting their bodies and minds ready for the match. Other wrestlers, between matches, are in their loose clothing walking around, talking, or off alone listening to an iPod in a corner of the gym. The scene resembles a cross between a three-ring circus and a high school quad at lunch time. You can almost smell the testosterone.

What, at first, might seem to be the most primal and brutal of male contact sports is far more complicated, civilized, and mental than one might think. Jay had only seen one college wrestling match before his grandson joined his high school wrestling team, and as a scholar of masculinity Jay saw immediately that the high school wresting he was observing every weekend for months was a remarkable, often paradoxical, display of masculinity. Jay did not expect to see young women wrestling with the young men, but they were at every match in the lower Sacramento Valley circuit he observed in the 2008 and 2009 seasons. Sometimes the woman beat the man. He was unprepared to see the blind young man wrestling for one of the high schools, and unprepared to see him win his matches. He was surprised by a story told by a fan sitting near him of a one-armed high school wrestler who was amazingly good, and he was surprised to see on YouTube a video of a wrestler with no legs. Clearly wrestling is about more than brute strength.

Andy, the first author, comes to this collaboration with extensive wrestling experience, first as a high school student and later as a wrestling coach at a prep school in Atlanta's suburbs. The authors share an interest in studying the social construction and performance of masculinity in American culture, and the combination of Andy's insider knowledge and Jay's outsider knowledge seemed like the perfect combination for studying high school wrestling. We aim to understand how this particular form of playfighting-become-sport displays and performs masculinity. The presence of female wrestlers now complicates some generalizations about the sport, and we do address that gender issue, but here our attention is primarily on the young men.

With high school wrestling as our focus, we encounter the drama of the interaction of the formal organizational culture controlled by the adult coaches and adult volunteers and the informal adolescent folk culture of the wrestlers themselves. As Mechling says about the California Boy Scout troop he studied for decades (Mechling 2001), the culture created at a Boy Scout camp or on a wrestling team is a *tertium quid*, a third thing, which is neither the culture created by the adults nor the culture created by the adolescents but a culture that results from the dynamic interaction of the two, a hot "border culture." The culture of a wrestling team is nowhere near the "total institution" (Goffman 1961) of a two-week Boy Scout encampment, where the boys and men eat, sleep, play, and work together. But the members of a wrestling team spend a lot of time together and, if all goes well, they create a strong adolescent male friendship group, a male folk group. As folklorists we have a broader understanding of the significance of the everyday "practices" by the young participants. We seek to understand the expressive functions of the everyday folk cultures of the young wrestlers as well as the instrumental functions that sociologists tend to emphasize.

The existing scholarship on scholastic (high school) and collegiate wrestling in the United States tends to be by sociologists interested in the role of the sport in the social construction of masculinity, and with that goal in mind those scholars place the masculinity learned and performed in wrestling within the larger context of the construction and performance of gender in American culture. That topic interests us, too, but when we approach scholastic wrestling as folklorists we are as attentive to the expressive aspects of the wrestling experiences as to the instrumental aspects. We bring to this inquiry a strong focus on play, particularly Bateson's (1972) theory of play and fantasy, an approach and perspective missing in the other scholarship on scholastic wrestling. As folklorists we are more attuned to the informal folk culture of the adolescent wrestlers, an informal culture often at odds with the formal culture of scholastic wrestling. Nowhere is this difference more pronounced than in the folk practices of hazing new members, an aspect of adolescent male group culture the social science scholarship on scholastic wrestling generally ignores.

We begin with the most genuinely folk aspect of this study—namely, the informal playfighting that is so much a feature of the socialization of boys and young men in American culture. We then establish the importance of the central symbol in this sport—the male body—and then we get to our central thesis about the paradox of both informal and formal Rough-and-Tumble (R&T) playfighting: wrestling both is and is not combat, wrestling both is and is not sex. We consider the complexity of scholastic wrestling for the performance of normative masculinity, and throughout our discussion we pause to speculate on what wrestling means to the increasing numbers of women who participate in the sport at both the high school and college level.

From Playfighting to Organized Sport

Formalized male wrestling is very old and nearly universal in human history and cultures. No doubt this physical form of Rough-and-Tumble (R&T) playfighting has

some roots in evolutionary biology and psychology, as humans are not the only mammalians to engage in playfighting from an early age (Groos 1898, Burghardt 2005). There is also no doubt that playfighting serves cultural functions, and the many people who have written about the rise of male cultures and customs—from Bettelheim (1954) on initiation rites to Ong (1981) on male contest to Dundes (1997) on football and more—note how men have created cultural institutions to compensate for their lack of direct procreation and as substitutes for the lethal male combat so common in the animal world. Many of the features of performed masculinity, including the stylized violence that replaces real violence, can be understood as serving some very deep need in men for direct combat. Civilized society masks this urge in the games and sports it provides men as a safer, sometimes symbolically displaced, alternative to real male violence. Playfighting and real fighting, just as play war and real war, dance dangerously on the razor edge of controlled violence.

As folklorists we see the expressive functions of playfighting as well as the instrumental ones posited by psychologists (Pelligrini, 1988, 1993), sociobiologists and sociologists. As Sutton-Smith (1998, 2017) says, too many scholars neglect to acknowledge the main reason why we play—it is fun. The play frame, especially the frame for R&T playfighting, requires a level of trust, so paradoxically that play frame signals strong bonds of affection. Brown (2000) found in direct observation

Fig. 1 – Boys' wrestling practice 1940s (Mechling personal collection)

and in interviewing primary school-age boys (ages 6-9, ethnically diverse) that the R&T playfighting was "a means by which boys express care and intimacy for one another" (Brown 2000). Watching the game of Smear (short for Smear the Queer, see Dundes 1987), Brown observed many instances of "care" of one boy by others, including care for boys who fall and might be injured. The boys understood, as they said in the interviews, that the game frame permitted them to touch friends intimately in ways they could not outside of that play frame. Mechling discovered the same intimacy and bonding in the R&T playfighting he observed over several summers at the Boy Scout summer encampment he studied, including versions of Smear the Queer and Capture the Flag (Mechling 2001:73, 152-62). These expressive dimensions of playfighting for boys and young men are the sources of their enjoyment, pleasures probably more important to the boys than the "problem" of constructing a performance of normative masculinity.

Unlike informal R&T playfighting, formal amateur wrestling, from the required clothing and headgear to the rules, aims always at creating a fair fight, that is, a contest that protects (as much as possible) the wrestlers from serious injury and that makes for a real contest. Like boxing, wrestling is a weight class sport. Wrestlers compete against others roughly their same weight. Occasionally two wrestlers in a weight class will be very different heights, but height is not much of an advantage when one considers that the important element is the center of gravity. Wrestling moves and holds rely on balance and leverage. One of the paradoxes of wrestling is that the stronger wrestler does not always win. When a heavily muscled wrestler faces off against a less muscled one, or when a young man faces off against a young woman, we have learned not to assume that the stronger wrestler will win the match. Speed, balance, skill (knowledge of holds, escapes, and so on), strategy, and endurance count for more than sheer strength. Less talented wrestlers sometimes try to muscle their way through a match; it almost never works. A young woman who knows holds, leverage, and strategy will beat a strong young man who does not have mastery of those techniques and strategies.

Scholars sometimes have divided games into three sorts—games of chance, skill, and strategy—recognizing that many games combine these elements (Roberts, Arth, and Bush 1959). In ball sports, the ball provides a large measure of chance in the play. Wrestling involves very little chance. The first face-off is from the standing position, but the second round in a high school or college match (2-minute rounds in high school, 3-minute rounds in college) begins with a "coin toss" (actually a circle of cardboard, red on one side and green on the other, representing each wrestler) to determine who gets to decide his position in the prone start. In the third round (if there is a second or third round—a pin ends the match) the wrestler who lost the toss in the second round or deferred the choice in the second round gets to choose his place in the starting prone position. Skill and strategy drive this sport.

As promised, our aim here is to analyze the meanings of male wrestling in the performance of masculinity. Before presenting that structural analysis and its conclusions, though, we want to pause here to comment on the male body in wrestling.

The Male Body in Wrestling

There is no escaping the presence of the male body in wrestling. The original Greek Olympic games were played in the nude. When the modern Olympic games were revived in 1896, the athletes were clothed. Clothing in the games required and still require unrestricted movement, but the additional issue in wrestling is that clothing should not provide an opportunity for a competitor to grab, hold, and pull an opponent. Nude wrestling would be ideal for that goal, so the clothing worn by wrestlers has always clung to the body to some extent. The modern singlet made of form-fitting materials (like Lycra) is the next best solution to being nude, as it provides the required modesty. But the singlet provides an odd brand of modesty, clinging tightly to the male genitals and buttocks. The thin arm straps on most singlets make visible the muscles of the arms and chest, while the short legs of the singlet expose the muscles of the leg. There can be no doubt that the male body is on display in wrestling, even before the match begins.

Wrestlers have all sorts of male bodies, thanks largely to the organization of the sport by weight class. Small, thin boys can wrestle their counterparts, and the heavyweights can be quite successful and admired with male bodies far from the cultural norm.

The organization by weight class introduces an unusual element into the individual wrestler's relationship to his body. Scholars make the point that men and women, thanks to both biology and culture, tend to have different relationships with their bodies. Women are more likely than men to experience themselves *as* a body, whereas men are more likely than women to experience themselves as *having* a body. Men tend to have an instrumental view of their bodies, and the folk speech men use to describe their body parts and actions support that view (Murphy 2001). Men's distance from their bodies has many consequences (ask any physician), and one is the sense of disappointment and anger when the body fails. A true man "plays through the pain," often not telling a coach or a team medic about an injury until the game is over.

Wrestlers, though, bear an added burden. Their workouts for strength and endurance, for flexibility and balance, may resemble the workouts of other athletes, but "making weight" always looms as a worry. The weight classes are pretty narrow, so the goal of a wrestler is to keep his weight in that range. The "moment of truth" is the weigh-in just before a meet begins. A wrestler can be disqualified if his weight is over or under the class he has been registered as. Weight becomes a wrestler's obsession.

Normally we talk about "eating disorders" in women, but Bordo (1999) and others write about the male equivalent, a medical category called "muscle dysmorphia" (Bordo 1999, 221). Put simply, most young men are dissatisfied with some aspect of their bodies, often believing they are not muscular enough. Wrestlers have that additional worry that they are too fat or too thin, so their obsession with food and fluids comes to resemble the obsessions medical and psychological professionals see in women with eating disorders. Male wrestlers often make themselves sick by avoiding food and drink to "make weight," and in the wake of some deaths of high school wrestlers the wrestling establishment modified the

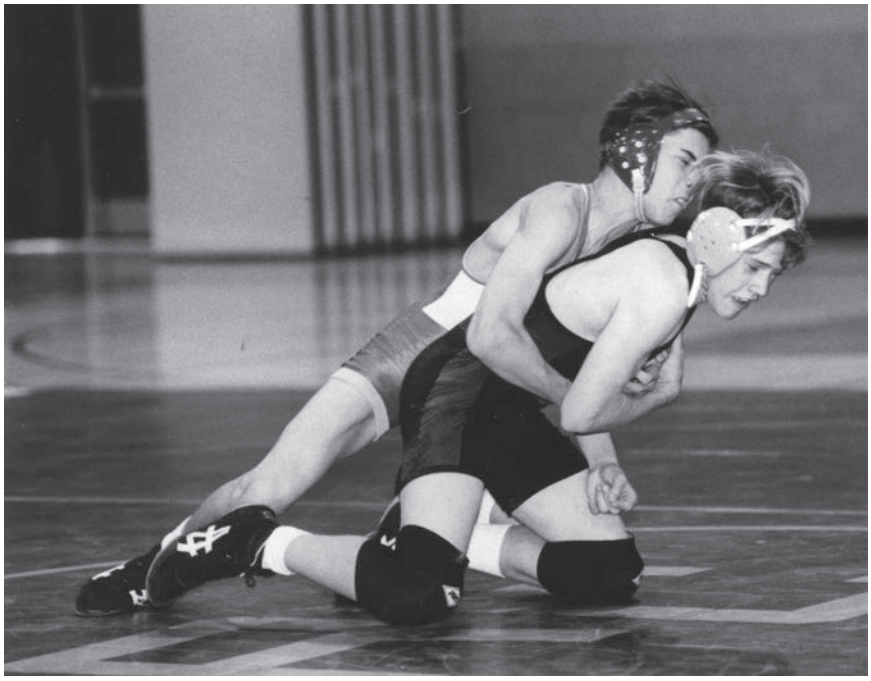

Fig. 2 – High School wresters (Mechling personal collection)

weight categories and insist upon hydration tests at the weigh-in. So even before the wrestler sheds his sweats to step onto the mat in his singlet, he has had a long history of trying to shape, condition, and control his body.

Once on the mat, the two wrestlers' bodies are on display. They shake hands, take their stances facing each other, and when the referee's whistle blows their bodies come together in a stylized, choreographed, physical combat. The match is won either by pinning the opponent's shoulders to the mat for two seconds or by points awarded for holds, escapes, falls, near-falls, and a few other moves. Despite appearances, the match usually is not a "mixup" or "free-for-all"; rather, the wrestlers have learned and practiced moves, holds, and escapes, each with its own name, and the wrestler needs a strategy for combining these skilled moves to score points or even pin the opponent. Andy's coach called this aspect of the sport "physical chess."

A wrestling match looks primal, two bodies locked in holds, rolling, twisting, spinning, sometimes bending in ways limbs and torsos don't seem designed to bend without breaking. So what is happening when these two young men wrestle? What are the meanings of the event?

The Paradox of Play in Male Wrestling

It amazes us that on each rereading of Bateson's remarkable 1955 (1972) essay, "A Theory of Play and Fantasy," we see something new. It is well known that in this formulation of the "play frame" Bateson is struck by the paradox of play, that (as he puts it using an animal playfight as his example) "not only does the playful nip not denote what would be denoted by the bite for which it stands, but, in addition, the bite itself is fictional" (1972, 182). That's the well-known part, but Bateson then goes on to say that sometimes this paradox has an odd effect, and he uses some examples from action films to show how some images "did not denote that which they seemed to denote, but these same images did really evoke that terror which would have been evoked" by a real event or threat (1972, 183). Bateson turns to some examples of films which encode sexuality. Since Bateson's view helps understand both Dundes's controversial analysis of football and the analysis of wrestling we are about to present here, it is worth quoting Bateson directly. In the film *Hans Christian Andersen*, writes Bateson (1972 183-4),

> The hero starts out accompanied by a boy. He tries to get a woman, but when he is defeated in this attempt, he returns to the boy. In all of this, there is, of course, no homosexuality, but the choice of these symbolisms is associated in these fantasies with certain characteristic ideas, e.g., about the hopelessness of the heterosexual masculine position when faced with certain sorts of women or with certain sorts of male authority. In sum, the pseudohomosexuality of the fantasy does not stand for any real homosexuality, but does stand for and express attitudes which might accompany a real homosexuality or feed its etiological roots. The symbols do not denote homosexuality, but do denote ideas for which homosexuality is an appropriate symbol.

Bateson's stunning insight here is that play engages "a special combination" of primary (unconscious) and secondary (conscious) processes. "In primary process," explains Bateson, "map and territory are equated; in secondary process, they can be discriminated. In play, they are both equated and discriminated" (1972, 185).

Bateson's insight helps us see the unique meanings of wrestling. Everything Dundes (1997) says about football and other ball sports applies in some ways to wrestling, but wrestling distills the symbolism. In wrestling, there are no distancing, mediating symbols; the male contact is as direct and as intimate as a sport can get. For the wrestlers, but also (we think) for the observers, wrestling combines primary and secondary processes. Put differently, *wrestling both is and is not combat. Wrestling both is and is not sex.* It looks and feels like combat, and it looks and feels like sex, but the peculiar, paradoxical genius of the wrestling play frame is that it both is and is not either of these.

Wrestling Both Is and Is Not Combat

We begin with the informal R&T playfighting that seems to be such a constant element in the folk cultures of boys. Girls sometimes engage in playfighting, and scholars of play have chronicled how girls' play has become increasingly like boys' play, especially after Title IX began giving girls and young women access to the team sports that are part of the upbringing of boys and reflect the male friendship group.

Males are capable of injurious violence, so to sustain the bonding of the male friendship group, most boys learn how to perform "stylized" violence, violence in the play frame, violence that has the look and sound and feel of real violence, but keep in mind that what is signified in the play frame is "not real."

The stylized violence can be verbal, as in ritual insulting, or can be physical. Wallis and Mechling (2015:278-9) begin their inquiry into the puzzle of warriors' R&T playfighting in the combat zone (Iraq and Afghanistan), a puzzle because it seems so risky, with a look at the scholarship by psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, and folklorists on playfighting in children. Without reproducing that survey here, we can say briefly that boys' playfighting (elementary school age) helps develop social competence in the male friendship group (Pellegrini 1988, 1993). Boys often "script" their playfighting using popular culture narratives from television, movies, even video games (Jarvis 2006:273, 277; Jordan 1995:76; O'Donnell and Sharpe 2004; Botvin and Sutton-Smith 1977; Sutton-Smith, Gerstmeyer, and Meckley 1988). R&T playfighting in the boys' group teaches them about hierarchy in the male friendship group and experience with playfighting in the play frame teaches them the difference between fantasy violence, stylized violence, and real violence (Jones 2002). It also teaches them that what happens in the play frame means nothing outside of the play frame. Boys also learn that you can play fiercely and competitively in the play frame, but once you leave that frame you are still friends. In fact, the stylized combat in playfighting actually functions to reinforce the male bonding, as boys can participate in the frame of playfighting only if they trust each other.

This last point lets us comment briefly on R&T playfighting in girls and young women, as this is relevant to our speculating below on what scholastic wrestling means to young women. Scientific studies find playfighting in mammals as common in young females as young males, so culture rather than biology overly determines gender differences in human play. Through the 20th century girls' play in the U.S. has become more and more like the play observed in boys of the same age, though ethnographers rarely observed girls engaging in R&T playfighting for most of the century. That changed by the 1990s, when ethnographers began to observe elementary school girls playing as aggressively and as competitively as the boys on the playground (Thorne 1993; Hughes 1993, 1999; Beresin 2010). Wallis and Mechling (2015:295-299), based on their reading of the war memoirs by female veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, note that many of those veterans report their own "tomboy" upbringing among brothers and male playmates, an upbringing that made them more comfortable as members of the very masculine cultures of the military folk group (platoons and smaller units). Even

these warriors could not engage in the R&T playfighting so common among the men; female warriors have to negotiate a difficult identity project so as to not be perceived as sexual objects. The female warriors, especially those raised as "tomboys," were confortable with the stylized aggression of the male friendship group, often in the form of insults, teases, even practical jokes, forms of stylized violence involving less intimate body contact than male R&T playfighting. In this regard the female warriors could avoid what female wrestlers cannot, for female wrestlers in high school are engaged in the intimate body contact of wrestling. We return to this point below.

What had changed by the 1990s to make girls' play more like boys play? In part the women's movement of the 1960s created a generation of parents determined to raise their daughters in less stereotypical ways, buying them fewer Barbie dolls and more baseball mitts. Young women entered youth sports more easily in the 1970s, and the passage of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 opened up for women of all ages access to the team sports that had been the realm of boys and men. Several of the female warriors studied by Wallis and Mechling (2015:297) had been athletes in high school and college, and they attributed to team sports not only their physical fitness for the military but also their easy familiarity with male folk cultures (Solaro 2006:243-44).

Scholastic wrestling takes the folk play of R&T playfighting and turns it into a more formal activity. The pleasures of formal, scholastic wrestling lie in the more basic drives and needs in both young men and women. Biology starts out making no gender distinctions regarding playfighting, but culture and history worked on making those gender distinctions, making the pleasures of R&T playfighting out of the reach of young women. It is only in the past two decades that American culture has made it possible for women to engage fully in everything valuable in R&T playfighting.

R&T playfighting both is and is not combat. As such, it creates a frame for stylized combat, as need felt (apparently) by both males and females, and provides the pleasures one experiences in stylized combat—the pleasures of the contest (Ong 1981). The novelist John Irving always writes and talks about his love of writing and his love of wrestling. His long autobiographical essay, "The Imaginary Girlfriend," traces these two threads in his life, and the essay explores the meanings of wrestling from the viewpoint of a wrestler. Irving says that "wrestling is not about knocking a man down—it's about controlling him" (Irving 1996, 36).

Another paradox of this play is that wrestling doesn't seem to suffer from the usual symptoms of the "trouble with testosterone" (Sapolsky 1998). Wrestlers tend to be exceedingly polite and civilized on and off the mat. You do not see in wrestling the stylized, performed masculine aggression you might see in football, basketball, and baseball, for example. Before a match wrestlers are too busy preparing themselves mentally for the match (some pace, some listen to music or inspirational recordings on their iPods, some sit in quiet meditation) to puff and swagger, and after a match they are too exhausted to waste any energy on male foolery. Moreover, you can't wrestle angry; that's a sure path to losing a match. As primal and seeming violent as a match is, wresters need cool concentration to succeed.

R&T playfighting offers another set of pleasures, as well. We turn now to exploring the second truth about framed playfighting, namely, that wrestling both is and is not sex.

Wrestling Both Is and Is Not Sex

In speculating on the psychological functions of the structures of male contests, from verbal dueling to football, Alan Dundes (1997) uses the folk speech of the contestants to argue that the key theme in these contests is the male's proving his masculinity by feminizing the male opponent, by "putting down" the male opponent (that is, down into the female, submissive and receptive position in conventional Western intercourse). "Typically," continues Dundes, "the victory entails some kind of *penetration*" (Dundes 1997, 27; emphasis in original), and he argues that the fear of symbolic anal penetration, the ultimate feminizing act for a male, energizes the contest. Football players drive toward the opponents' "endzone," basketball players put "balls" through ringed holes, hockey players slap the puck into the "crease," and so on. Dundes borrows from Ong (1981) to point out that the Latin roots of the word *contest*—*con* (with) and *testis* (testicle)—confirm these sexual meanings. Feminist psychoanalytic theory (e.g., Chodorow 1978) provides the understanding that masculinity is a fragile construct, needing proof every day, and that the act of feminizing another male through words or physical actions is a favored strategy for distancing oneself from the feminine (Mechling 2005).

Heterosexual men's touching each other, from hugs to pats on the butt, has to be framed and performed carefully to be read as non-sexual, hence non-feminizing. Horan's (1988) ethnography of the folk culture of a group home for boys concludes that the playfighting among the boys is the only carefully framed, permissible touching in their lives, satisfying even minimally their human need to be touched and solving the problem that for the abused boys touch is a highly problematic experience. The lesson beyond Horan's particular ethnographic site is that American boys and adolescents need to be touched and need to touch each other, but only under carefully framed circumstances. Playfighting and wrestling provide those cultural frames.

The playfight frame, including formalized wrestling, permits men to embrace and touch each other in ways otherwise forbidden or carefully framed to maintain heterosexual performance. Some of the holds themselves resemble sexual positions (true for male-female wrestling, as well). The folk speech of wrestling, including the formal names of the holds, sometimes reflects these sexual resemblances. For example, a wrestler may be "on top" or "on bottom" in a given hold or moment, language similar to the common references to "topping" and "bottoming" in gay sex. In fact, to be "on bottom" in wrestling clearly means to be dominated, to be in the passive, submissive position, in short, to take the feminine position in sex. A wrestler lying face-to-face on another wrestler is in the top, male position, but holding another wrestler around the waist from behind is also a dominant position, in that case symbolizing a threat of anal penetration. Sometimes a wrestler with such a grip on another will be on his own back and technically on

the bottom, but in that position he can bring the opponent's shoulder's back down upon the mat for a pin, a dominant male move.

Other language reinforces the sexual symbolism. Coaches talk about aggressively "penetrating" the opponent from the standing position. Wrestlers look for the "takedown" (another version of putting the other male "down" into the female position). In John Irving's wrestling memoir he talks about another wrestler as a "rider"—"he could ride me" (1996, 51)—language that could be used to describe sexual intercourse. One hold, the "double grapevine," is also called the "Saturday Night Ride" (www.urbandictionary.com).

The t-shirt vendors are hard to miss at wrestling meets. Many of the sayings on the shirts traffic in sexual double entendres (e.g., " Other sports play with them, wrestlers have them"). Delfino reports that the most common t-shirt he has seen at matches announces the "Ten Reasons to Date a Wrestler":

10. Always wears his headgear
9. Will eat anything
8. Knows when to push and pull
7. Endurance, Endurance, Endurance
6. Goes hard from start to finish
5. Can work a two-on-one
4. Knows how to use his hips
3. Can score from any position
2. Never stalls on bottom
1. KNOWS HOW TO RIDE

The homoerotic dimension of male wrestling is lost on neither the participants nor the fans. As Brian Pronger notes in his study of sports, homosexuality, and sex, a common genre of gay pornography features athletes, including wrestlers (Pronger 1990, 145). In his interviews with gay and straight amateur athletes, Pronger found that the homoeroticism in wrestling was a recurring topic. For the gay men, it was their first, safe, framed "opportunity to explore, unwittingly, the homoerotic potential of masculine physical contact" (1990:183). "Boys and teenagers are intuitively aware of this kind of fun," writes Pronger, "and wrestle with their friends. Some are content with the subtle, nongenital expression of the paradox…" (1990:184). As for Dundes (1978), Pronger sees "territorial domination" as the key objective in male contests (Pronger 1999:376).

Young male wrestlers report worries about getting erections, which would be all too obvious in their singlets and might signal something more serious than playful homoeroticism among heterosexual males. Actually, the physiology of erections means that it is highly unlikely that a wrestler in a real match would get an erection; the demand for blood for other muscles in use is too great. But some of the young men interviewed by Pronger did mention unwanted erections while playfighting with teammates between matches (1990:185). And, as Pronger notes, the lack of erections does not diminish the homoeroticism in wrestling any more than the absence of erections in nude male hazing negates the homoeroticism of those events and customs (Mechling 2008, 2009).

For some wrestlers and observers, the male body in pain may be erotic. Wallis and Mechling (2015) found many references to the eroticization of pain in the memoirs by war veterans and in commentary on experiences in Basic Training and in the combat zone (see Zeeland 1996, for example). Snyder (2012) sees "hard work" as a phrase male wrestlers use in their construction of a hard, tough masculinity, a rhetorical defense against the perception by others that male wresting is "gay," and we read this as a celebration of pain.

Please note that we are *not* arguing that male wrestling is a form of homosexual behavior or that straight-identifying wrestlers are repressed homosexuals. Rather, if we understand and take seriously Bateson's point about the paradox of play, then we can see that male wrestling does not stand for real homosexuality, but it does stand for the unconscious need for male intimate touching with other males, touching that can be an important component of the emotional bonding with other males in the group. Some male sports mask these meanings with far more indirection and symbolic displacement than does wrestling.

Wrestling and the Performance of Masculinity

For good reasons, many adolescent males worry about their performances as males. Although high schools now are the sites for a broad range of performances of masculinity, in general adolescent males continue to experience strong pressures to perform a normative (hegemonic) heterosexual identity, regardless of their actual sexual identity. Masculinity is always a fragile construction, and young men in high school encounter daily tests to "prove" their masculinity.

The sociologists who have studied scholastic wrestling hone in on the problems of "impression management" (Goffman 1959, 1963) for young men who wrestle. The "problem" facing these wrestlers is the outsiders' too-often held view that "wrestling is gay." All of the wrestlers interviewed by Fair (2011:492) mentioned the homophobic teasing they endure among their high school peers. The young men, in most cases, want to bolster the impression that they are heterosexual, even though some teams (e.g., Michael 2015) practice "inclusive masculinity" and will accept gay wrestlers in their folk group, so long as the gay teammate does not "hit" on a straight member of the group.

Fair argues that "wrestlers achieve normative masculinity by symbolically framing sexual relations as acts of domination" (2011:492), and it is easy to see how domination in wrestling (putting the opponent "down" in the female role, as we have said) bolsters the performance of normative heterosexuality. Fair also found a second male wresters' strategy for constructing and performing normative masculinity: "the way in which wrestlers' use of 'pussy' parallels how other adolescents typically deploy the epithet 'fag'" (2011:492). Andy experienced this same pattern in his own high school wrestling team, where the coach often sang "pussy… pussy…" in a falsetto voice while making a simulated vulva with his fingers. The boys got the message; wrestle hard, wrestle tough, wrestle like a man.

Fair's explanation for the common use of "pussy" and not "fag" or "faggot," the latter terms so often deployed in adolescent male culture (Pascoe 2005), centers on penetration, taking Pascoe's (2005:329) point that faggots "represent a penetrated

masculinity," the greatest threat to masculinity. "It is precisely this specter of penetrated masculinity," writes Pascoe, "that functions as a regulatory mechanism of gender for contemporary American adolescent boys" (2005:329).

Fair develops his own argument about "penetration discourse." The team he studied had a folk term, "Girly D," short for "girly defense," to describe "a defensive wrestling maneuver that is deemed somehow 'girly' or feminine," especially when the move is in defense against "an offensive attack on the opponent's legs… called the 'penetration step'" (Fair 2011:499). The homophobia and misogyny so common in adolescent male folk groups mix and reinforce each other in all this discourse. And if in male sports a major source of anxiety is fear of symbolic "penetration" by the opponent (Pronger 1999), a feminizing act, then wrestling intensifies that anxiety in both its bodily actions and folk speech. The figurative penetration in wrestling becomes literal in some hazing practices, as we shall see.

Baker and Hotek (2011) discovered in their ethnographic study of a high school wresting team more evidence of the "inclusive masculinity" other researchers have found. The authors observed a range of behavior the young men employed to perform masculinity. Some body practices were stereotypically masculine ("being strong, taking pain"), while others were more androgynous ("making weight"), and others even stereotypically feminine ("physical intimacy"). They see the same spread of gender performance across "performance practices" and "emotion practices" (Baker and Hotek 2011:53-60). In short, as physically aggressive and combative as wrestling seems, the male adolescent wrestlers actually construct, maintain, and repair, if necessary, their performances of masculinity across a range of folk practices, from orthodox masculinity through androgyny to some practices stereotypically feminine.

Women Wrestlers

We titled this article "Wrestling with Masculinity," realizing at the same time that an increasing number of women are wrestling at the high school level and necessarily are wrestling as a sexual minority on male wrestling teams (Lewin 2007). As folklorists interested in the social construction, maintenance, and (when necessary) repair of masculinity in American culture, most of our examples and discussion reflect the experiences of young men. The presence of young women in scholastic wrestling (and, later, in the military) raises some interesting issues and puzzles as we attempt to understand the multiple meanings of wrestling.

We have not interviewed high school women who wrestle, and we have not found any ethnographic accounts of the experiences of those women. Hall (2015) provides some insight, having both wrestled and coached collegiate women's wrestling, and it makes some sense to read her study as applying to high school women, though a significant difference is that women wrestlers at the collegiate level wrestle only women. We are in dire need of ethnographic accounts by folklorists of the experiences of high school women who wrestle.

That caution aside, we have some clues signaling the sorts of issues and questions that ought to guide the ethnographic work with young women on high school wrestling teams. For example, men and women have different "body

issues." There are some high school and collegiate sports that require physical conditioning producing musculature in women similar to that of athletic men. In her senior thesis on a collegiate women's rowing (crew) team, Bosworth (2000) notes that many of the women were self-conscious about the non-stereotypical musculature the women were building in their physical training, and these women often changed quickly from their tight-fitting rowing uniforms into loose-fitting sweatshirts and pants at the end of a race. Similarly, women wrestlers face issues with their clothing, from their tight wrestling clothes (for obvious reasons, not cut the same way as are the men's singlets) to the clothes they should wear during team workouts (Hall 2015:6-7, 18, 20). The folklorist can assume, reasonably, that the women on a sports team might muster folklore to allay the social and psychological anxieties surrounding their bodies.

We expect that the paradox that wrestling both "is and is not combat" and "is and is not sex" would create a different social and psychological drama for the women wrestlers than the ones we found with the young men. First, as we indicated above, girls' play in the U.S. slowly became more like boys' play through the 20th century. Traditionally girls were less likely to engage in R&T playfighting than were boys, but the access to team sports Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 created for girls and young women seems to have accelerated the movement of girls' play toward the way boys play. One might say, for example, that team sports began to teach young women the framed, stylized aggression boys learned on the playing field. So the observation that wrestling "both is and is not combat" should apply to how young women understand the playfighting as well as do the young men. Folklorists and other ethnographers should be able to find increased "stylized" aggression and violence in the folk groups that include women.

The second point we take with Bateson in mind—namely, that wrestling "both is and is not sex"— is that wrestling becomes more problematic when one of the wresters is a young woman. A young man facing a match against a young woman often is reluctant to wrestle and will sometimes even forfeit a match, facing (in his mind) a lose-lose situation. Beat a woman, not so impressive; lose to a woman, you are less than a woman. For boys wrestling boys, the play frame usually sustains the "both is and is not sex" fiction. Without any evidence, we have to speculate that the dual nature of the playfighting frame is even more fragile and difficult to sustain for male-female matches.

Wrestling Haze

Most of the scholarship on scholastic wrestling steers clear of discussing a folk practice that lives mainly underground in the folk culture of wrestlers. Hazing is common in all male folk groups, and over the past 20 years highly publicized hazing incidents, some resulting in injury and death, have led to efforts to ban hazing in the military, fraternities, and sports teams. Some of the publicized hazing incidents were on university women's sports teams, though we will not deal with the issue of scholastic wrestling and women's experiences of hazing for lack of any evidence. Instead, we focus on the young men and their hazing customs.

Hazing on male wrestling teams does not surprise us. Nor does it surprise us that efforts to ban and suppress hazing have largely failed, driving the practices further underground. The urge to haze and initiate members into the male group is strong. Anthropologists long ago recorded and analyzed male initiation rites across many cultures, and in most cases those are rites created by adult males to mark the transition of a boy into manhood. In contrast, many scholars of the social construction, maintenance, and repair of masculinity in American culture (e.g., Kimmel 2008) note that our culture is more a fratiarchy than a patriarchy, so it is peers who do the initiation into manhood. Lacking more formal male initiation rites in American culture, these folk groups of young men must "invent" ways to initiate neophytes into the group, invent tests of manhood that must be passed to prove a masculinity free from feminine traits (Raphael 1988, Bronner 2012:251-67). Hence the misogyny and homophobia in these male folk cultures (Mechling 2005).

Delfino witnessed no hazing in his own wrestling days, nor did he get a hint that the team he was coaching hazed the new members. We do not mean to suggest that hazing on scholastic wrestling teams is widespread; it is common, but it is likely that hazing is mild on most teams. Curiously, the serious cases of hazing on scholastic wrestling teams seem, from reports, not to involve alcohol, as do some many serious hazing events (some fatal) on the collegiate level (Nuer 1999, Nuer ed. 2004). Most of the high school wrestling team cases that reach the newspapers take place in locker rooms, showers, and on team buses.

Lundeen (2013) reports the 2012 cases of three Iowa high school wrestling teams discovered to be hazing new members. Public details were few, but the hazing involved "humiliation" and nudity (2013:55). In one case, the hazing involved sexual assault with a jump rope handle (2013:59-60). An ESPN (2002) list of hazing incidents on athletic teams just from 1997-2000 describes hazing incidents on high school wrestling teams in California, Connecticut, South Carolina, Utah, Michigan, and Nebraska, many of them involving sexual assaults using mop handles, brooms, and (again) a jump rope handle. These cases appeared in newspapers so usually there is not much detail so as to protect the victims, but the account of a Hilton Head, SC, hazing of younger wrestlers by older includes reference to specific practices—"trademarking," which involves hitting the wet body to raise welts, and "dinking," which involves placing a finger on or near the rectum, a move sometimes used even during a practice match to startle the opponent. The "butt drag," a permissible move in wresting which involves one wrestler's grabbing an opponent's butt for leverage, lends itself to "dinking," and a 2010 court case in Modesto, California, opened a public debate about the "butt drag" hold; the allegation in that case was that one wrestler sexually assaulted an opponent in practice by "ramming two fingers into a teammate's anus" (Anteola 2010).

None of the scholarship on scholastic wrestling (Baker and Hotek 2011, Fair 2011, Snyder 2012, Michael 2013, and Hall 2015) discusses hazing, possibly because it is an aspect of adolescent male folk groups that the scholars worry would cast a negative light on the sport. On the contrary, we think that hazing in scholastic wrestling teams expands our understanding of the unique meanings of the sport for the young men, a formal sport which, as we noted, actually is a formal

extension of folk R&T playfighting. R&T playfighting requires the play frame, of course, which is fragile and can be broken easily by the wrong acts or words.

The formal version of R&T playfighting—scholastic wrestling—satisfies the wrestlers so long as the play frame remains in place. That is, the wrestlers experience the practice matches and the competition as "both is and is not" combat and sex, satisfying the adolescent male's need for stylized aggression and permissible intimate touch of another male. That formal play frame in scholastic wrestling seems to us less fragile than the play frame of informal R&T playfighting, as the wrestling holds are more formally planned and policed by the referee.

What strikes us about the hazing practices in the cases made public is the absence of a play frame, which has many consequences. One problem with Bateson's theory of the play frame is that he seems to assume that everyone in the play frame is there voluntarily and has equal power in the frame. Goffman (1974) corrected that romantic view of the play frame by showing how players in the frame can be there with hidden motives, using the frame to manipulate others. Goffman thought all of socially constructed reality was, in essence, a confidence game, with the actions aimed at convincing others in the frame that everyone was there voluntarily and had equal power. Sutton-Smith and Kelly-Byrne (1984) also draw our attention to "the masks of play," to the ways people will mask other motives with the play frame ("it's only play").

Hazing can be consensual, of course. Mechling (2009) argues that hazing most often takes place in a play frame and that most times those being hazed experience the humiliation and other elements (nudity, mild pain) as "not real" (see, also, Bronner 2006). Hazing becomes abusive when, for example, alcohol destroys the inhibitions of the members hazing the neophyte or when one or more members of the group use the play frame of hazing to "mask" other motives, most often a streak of sadism. These are the ingredients that too often result in injury and fatalities in hazing.

The publicized cases of hazing on wrestling teams complicate the meanings of the R&T playfighting of scholastic wrestling. Recall that formal and informal wrestling appeals to adolescent men precisely because the play frame of playfighting is a "safe" frame for expressing aggression and even symbolic sexual contact, all in a frame that affirms the strong male bond between the members of the male folk group. There are some things that can break that play frame, like an unwanted erection, but in general the play frame of both formal and informal R&T playfightng serves well the psychological and social needs of the young men.

The cases of hazing on wrestling teams, hazing practices that go beyond mere humiliation (which can be executed in the play frame) and involve sexual assault, actually threaten the male bonding that both wrestling and less violent hazing cements. For example, several of these cases involved sexual assault with jump rope handles, broom handles, mop handles, and in one case a brush handle, all inserted in the anus, symbolic sodomy which, apart from the significant pain involved, humiliated the young man being hazed by feminizing him. In his analysis of the custom of paddling in fraternity and some collegiate sports team hazing, Mechling (2008) notes that it is important to the male bonding that the paddling involves the buttocks and the potential of sodomizing the initiate without actually doing so. Not

so when the members actually penetrate the victim's anus with a symbolic phallus; that actual penetration destroys the trust and the bonding, which can remain intact when the penetration is symbolic and potential, never enacted.

Although we know that women's sports teams sometimes haze the new members, we have no ethnographic evidence or direct testimony from participants to make any solid generalizations about the specific hazing practices or their meanings for the participants. The anecdotal evidence from college women's sports teams, evidence gleaned from publicized cases, suggests that women's hazing practices often reproduce the male traditions, which puzzles us. We see clearly the social and psychological functions of those folk practices for the dynamics of a male folk group; how those same practices serve the women is unclear. As Bosworth (2000) and the memoirs of female warriors make clear, though, one major aim for women in sports and in the military is to prove to each other and to men that they are as "tough" as men, that they can work and play "through the pain" as well as any man.

Conclusion

Of all the team sports played by adolescent men, wrestling poses the greatest challenges to the young man as he attempts to perform a masculine identity. Adolescence is a precarious stage of life in American society, in any case, but young men often count on organized sports as a venue for "proving" their normative masculinity. Most sports young men play, from football and rugby to soccer and lacrosse, provide rather easy ways to demonstrate the physical toughness, emotional control, and ability to withstand pain that are among the qualities Americans consider signs of masculinity. The unique nature of wrestling provides a much more precarious stage for the construction of adolescent masculinity.

Our Batesonian analysis of some of the meanings of male wrestling based on its structures and folk speech suggests the usefulness of the paradoxes of play for male wrestlers as they experience the pleasures wrestling brings, especially the pleasures of R&T playfighting boys learn from a very early age. The two paradoxes—that wrestling both "is and is not combat" and "is and is not sex"—address the social and psychological needs of the adolescent boys in a "safe," symbolic frame. And the male body, so central in the performance of normative masculinity, is on display in wrestling as it is in few other sports. Like all play frames, wrestling's frame is fragile, sometimes accidentally broken by accident (e.g., an erection or an accidental touch of the opponent's anus) and quickly repaired, but we also see in unauthorized hazing practices on some teams the cost of violating the play frame.

What the fields of folklore studies and play studies need now are ethnographic studies of female wresters in high school to understand better the gender revolution sparked by Title IX and by other forces in the last half century. And to make the matter of wrestling and the social construction of gender even more complicated, even as we write this essay a female-to-male transgender high school wrestler in Texas is causing turmoil in the world of scholastic wrestling (Babb 2017).

Also on the subject of rapid cultural changes regarding gender, gender identification, and the performance of gender in folk groups, the near-full integration

of women into the armed forces of the U.S. becomes the testing ground for this gender revolution. Wrestling seems like a framed play setting ideal for socializing women into the formal institutions, especially the military, that still are extensions of the informal male folk group. If, as the Duke of Wellington is said to have intoned, "The battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton," then perhaps the battle for women's success in previously all-male organizations such as the military will be won, at least for some, on the wrestling mat.

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Growing Little Traditions: Baltimore's Little Miss Hon Contest

David J. Puglia

Baltimore's HonFest festival draws folkloristic attention because it is one of the few urban public festivals to celebrate a folk group not based on any particular ethnic, religious, or occupational affiliation. The Little Miss Hon contest is one popular part of the two-day HonFest festival.[1] Recognized as a "Baltimore" tradition, 60,000 festivalgoers attend HonFest each year. These range from neighborhood locals to out-of-state revelers. Many hail from in between: the Baltimore metropolitan area, but not the city proper. Some of the notice the festival receives derives from its controversial depictions of longtime, blue-collar, local residents, especially apparent in the two featured stage contests: the adult's Best Hon Contest and the children's Little Miss Hon contest. The performed "Hon" image is perceived by some as a buffoonish characterization, while others see it as an exaggerated celebration of strong women based in an accurate historical past. Additionally, the festival—and particularly the stage contests—raises folkloristic questions of the invention of tradition in urban America as a means of battling an inferiority complex. Baltimore, a once great city, lives in the shadows of New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. Elaborating on this urban issue, the Little Miss Hon contest reveals a devotion to a tradition, a tradition that itself is devoted to the image of a white, blue-collar city. Further, in the Baltimore context, both supporters and detractors have heightened the symbolic meaning of the "Hon" image because of the perceived connection to ideas of local identity, belonging, race, class, gender, and occupation.

There is a small body of scholarly research on or related to HonFest (Gadsby and Chidester 2007, Rizzo 2008, Shackel and Gadsby 2008, Chidester 2009, Chidester and Gadsby 2009, Rizzo 2010, Gadsby 2011, Britton and Faust 2012, Puglia 2015). In addition, it has received much attention in the local media, from the *Baltimore Sun* to the blogosphere. The event that receives the most attention is the adult Best Hon Contest. But little attention has been paid to the children's version, the Little Miss Hon contest, which takes place in advance of the Best Hon Contest and on the same stage. In some ways, the Little Miss Honest contest is the Best Hon Contest's undercard. The junior event is quicker, breezier, and receives less notice than its older sibling. But it has also become some festivalgoers' most anticipated HonFest event. The Best Hon Contest is a rhetorical attempt to reclaim Baltimore as a white, blue-collar city, differentiated by a down-to-earth, quirky, and kitsch aesthetic, in the face of Baltimore's class and racial discord—a fact that became national headline in 2015 following the death of Freddie Gray and the subsequent Baltimore protests (Berlinger 2015). But what can the Little Miss Hon contest tell us about the uses of tradition in Baltimore? One might assume the Little Miss Hon contest would portray the same message, albeit watered down to suit children's needs. In fact, the Little Miss Hon contest has a much stronger message than that. It is a continuation of the sociocultural program set forth by the Best

Hon Contest, that is, an attempt at growing and cultivating a "little tradition"[2] that boldly proclaims white, blue-collar ownership of a majority black, postindustrial city.

The Little Miss Hon contest takes place during HonFest, which is held one weekend each June. The girls, or their parents, register to participate the day of the contest. Some prepare in advance, while others sign up on a whim. This essay focuses on the Little Miss Hon contest, attempting to understand it in relation to the adult version of the tradition, the Best Hon Contest.[3] I conduct a brief ethnographic description, followed by a rhetorical and contextual analysis of the Little Miss Hon contest tradition, in the context of my HonFest and Best Hon Contest research.

The Little Miss Hon Contest

A girl bearing a number "1" walks onto the stage. She wears cat-eye glasses, a beehive hairdo, and a leopard print dress. She appears tentative, but she receives roaring approval from the large festival crowd, many of whom are dressed the same way. A woman in a similar outfit approaches the girl, microphone in hand. "Kaylee, can you say hi, hon?"

"Hi, hon."

"Where are you from?"

"Bal-ti-more."

"Yeah? And what school do you go to?"

The girl at first appears stumped. Somebody shouts from the crowd that she doesn't go to school.

"Oh, are you in school yet? Do you go to preschool?"

"I go to ballet school!"

The crowd roars with laughter. The woman sends the girl to stand on a bench at the back of the stage. And with that, the number "2" is on stage. She also has a beehive hair-do and cat-eye glasses, but in place of a leopard skin dress, she wears a flower patterned house dress.

"Julie, can you say hi, hon?"

"Hi, hon"

"Can you say how you doin'?"

"How you doin'?"

"Can you say welcome to Baltimore?"

"Welcome to Baltimore"

"And where do you go to school?"

"Pine Grove Elementary"

"And where is that?"

"In Maryland" (more laughter)

Each girl is interviewed on stage for twenty to thirty seconds, twelve in total, all between the ages of four and seven. The host asks the same questions, with only slight variations. The girls give short, direct answers, rarely approaching a Baltimore accent, some even leaving out the "hon" altogether (although one peppers everything with hons, to howls of the crowd's delight). The girls'

unpredictability and their costumes hold the attention of the crowd. When one young girl in a short leopard dress is complimented on her dress, she motions like a *Price is Right* model. Yet another whispers her answers into the hosts ear rather than the microphone. Another contestant, sporting a beehive with a long pink ribbon and dressed in a pink shirt and striped pink skirt is asked on stage "What brings you to Hampden today?" "I don't know," she replies. Each is dressed in an immaculate, exaggerated style, a combination of post-war women's wear and trash connoisseur John Waters films. As the girls line up on the bench in the rear of the stage, they create a kaleidoscope of florescent colors. This is the Little Miss Hon contest, a tradition that is part of Baltimore's ever-growing annual HonFest, a celebration of Baltimore's Hon tradition.

While on the stage of the Little Miss Hon contest, host Denise Whiting sometimes uses the rhetoric of the beauty pageant, including occasionally telling girls that they look beautiful. Bits of the performance are similar to a classic beauty pageant. The girls strut across the stage, do interviews, listen to a concluding serenade, and blow kisses. However, differentiating this contest from other child beauty pageants, many conventions are turned on their head. The blatantly amateur contestants do not so much strut as stumble onto the stage. The interviews are softball questions that last in total no more than twenty to thirty seconds, yet the girls often flub them anyway. And rather than a tuxedoed host concluding the ceremonies with a rendition of "There She Is Miss America," a four-year-old sings "Skiddy-Mer-Rink-A-Doo."

Perhaps most importantly, the Little Miss Hon contest does *not* have a winner, whereas child beauty pageants and the Best Hon Contest do. The Little Miss Hon contest holds the experience higher than winning. There is little overt competition in the contest beyond the reactions of the crowd. In fact, at the conclusion, the girls are told that they are all winners.[4] Upon closer inspection, the lack of competition between contestants makes sense under the guise of promising a future generation of a particular type of Baltimorean. It is not the winner but the approval of the crowd and the consensus of the image. The Little Miss Hon contest is *growing* a tradition.

Growing Little Traditions

What was the meaning of the Little Miss Hon contest as revealed in ethnographic observation in the opening scene? The practices I documented reveal that HonFest is a location, or "play frame"—to cite the folkloristic concept of a subaltern space in which behaviors outside that frame can be reversed and mocked, and inside the frame cultural expressions build solidarity—for Baltimoreans to create a current, idealized identity out of a romantic, nostalgic past (Bronner 2010). The local folk speech of "hon" transitions into the female "Hon" image. For some onlookers, the Hon is a folk hero who symbolizes hard-working women, strong communities, and Baltimore's idiosyncrasies. For others, it is either a mischaracterization of Baltimore's working class or an attempt to romanticize Baltimore's white, working-class past in lieu of its African American present. According to U.S. Census data, Baltimore underwent a rapid demographic shift in the second half of the twentieth

century. Baltimore was majority white from its founding through the early 1970s. Today, Baltimore's racial demographics stand at approximately two-thirds black to one-third white, and its neighborhoods remain highly stratified.[5]

How did we get to this strange scene that plays annually in modern Baltimore? Baltimore has been growing the "hon" tradition for nearly three decades: linguistically, visually, and performatively. For those Baltimoreans whose value system is rooted in an industrial economy and a working-class ethos, the collapse of the local industrial economy in the second half of the twentieth century created an existential crisis questioning whom the city and its residents are and what they stand for. The difficult discourse on identity has shifted to more manageable battlegrounds, including the Little Miss Hon contest. In fact, HonFest has been at the front of these vernacular wars.

Baltimoreans have sought to solve Baltimore's problems through the creation of public traditions for many years. Proponents of these invented traditions have attempted to bring a cohesive identity to a fragmented, chaotic city. Examples abound over the centuries. The Baltimore Sesquicentennial and its successor, the Oriole Festival, heeded the zeitgeist of uniting the city and served as the first attempt to do so through the creation of a citywide tradition. Beginning in 1880, Baltimore endeavored to capture its penchant for public display through festival. On its 150th anniversary, Baltimore attempted to bring disparate Baltimore groups together as Baltimoreans for the Baltimore Sesquicentennial to celebrate their illustrious past and to prepare for the city's future. The festival returned the following year as the Oriole Festival.[6] The Oriole Festival only lasted three years, from 1881-1883, but the acclaimed[7] festival and pageant proved that Baltimore was capable of more than ethnic and neighborhood celebrations (Ammen 1912, 255-258). Other citywide festivals succeeded the Oriole Festival, including the couth and polite Flower Mart of the early twentieth century and the civic-corporate hybrid Baltimore City Fair of the late twentieth century.

These festivals have sought to create a sense of shared identity, although some residents have contested that vision. HonFest's tradition of staged events are a powerful form of symbolic practice that residents enact in an attempt to define an authentic sense of place and identity and that participants reshape to negotiate a cognitive sense of identity and belonging. Little Miss Hon performs and exaggerates the Hon image through a self-perpetuating, self-referential, and ever-growing tradition.

Geographically, Baltimore's regional identity remains ambiguous. Neither northern enough to be Northeast nor southern enough to be a southern city, and too far east to be a rustbelt city, Baltimore is left with the lukewarm designation of Middle Atlantic. That is, the Middle Atlantic is the "remainder" or "left overs" after the stronger regions of New England and the South are identified. Folklorist Simon J. Bronner has noted that the Middle Atlantic is "the least conspicuous of America's regions, both to outsiders and to its inhabitants" (Bronner 2006, 789). It was not always so. From 1830-1860, Baltimore was America's second largest city. It ceded that honor to Philadelphia after the Civil War and never regained it. Baltimore was also once a city of a million residents (1950s), but the population has declined

ever since then. Today, Baltimore is a midsized and prosaic city, set near the rich and the powerful.

Baltimore has some legitimate reasons to feel inferior. Officially "Charm City," Baltimore has received some negative nicknames in the twentieth century, including "Harm City," "The Heroin Capital of America," "The City that Bleeds," and "Bodymore, Murdaland"[8] due to the high per capita murder rate in the city, hitting its peak of violence in 1993 with 353 slayings.[9] Baltimore ranks 33rd among the most deadly places in the United States.[10] Although the murder rate has dropped substantially since its peak in the 1980s and 1990s (a low of 196 murders in 2011), Baltimore is still two to three times the national average in all varieties of violent and property crime. In addition, residents are referred to as (and sometimes refer to themselves by) the humorous folk demonym "Baltimorons," referencing the city's slack education accolades.[11] Fifty percent of Baltimoreans have a high school diploma or less, and Baltimore's public schools are constantly mired in controversy.[12] In response to the negative publicity, energetic and optimistic mayors like William Donald Schaefer and Martin O'Malley have attempted to devise new images for the city with nicknames like "America's Comeback City," "The Greatest City in the World," and the ubiquitous park bench placard "Believe." But it is the non-institutional "Hon" image that has been the most powerful rebranding.

Baltimore is known as a "blue-collar" city.[13] But the city's easy blue-collar designation merits examination, especially with its once blue-collar workers now employed in the service and information economy at a rate of 90%. The aesthetic leaks overtly into the city's perception of its culture. Historian Kenneth D. Durr argues that Baltimore is indeed a blue-collar town, and a prescient one at that. Its blue-collar workers seem to be harbingers for working-class sentiment to come elsewhere. Durr notes particularly how "Baltimore was far ahead of the nation when it came to the era's defining conflict—one staged by policymakers but waged by working whites and blacks—over the deteriorating institutions and the economic crumbs left over in the deindustrializing city" (Durr 2003, 4). The continued deindustrialization of the city and continuing competition for cultural ownership of the city has propelled the Hon image, showcased in the Little Miss Honfest, into Baltimore's spotlight.

But why is the word "hon," heard across the United States, so closely associated with Baltimore and so dear to many Baltimoreans hearts? While "hon" is not unique or distinctive to Baltimore, it has been adopted as symbolic of Baltimorese—the local vernacular—and the related local, blue-collar aesthetic. The embracing of the term "hon" first became a citywide tradition when a mysterious gentlemen nicknamed "Hon Man" began plastering the word on the "Welcome to Baltimore" parkway sign. This word transitioned to the capitalized "Hon," a beehived, cat-eyed woman in garish or frumpy dresses and indulgent make up sporting a strong Baltimore accent (and likely to use the word "hon").[14]

An essential starting point to unpacking the Hon image and the Little Miss Hon contest is a closer look at filmmaker John Waters' most successful movie, *Hairspray* (1988). Born near Baltimore in 1946, Baltimore filmmaker Waters embraced Baltimore's quirks in a way few others had. He writes, "I would never

want to live anywhere but Baltimore. You can look far and wide, but you'll never discover a stranger city with such extreme style. It's as if every eccentric in the South decided to move north, ran out of gas in Baltimore, and decided to stay" (Waters 2005, 76). In 1988, Waters released *Hairspray*. Set in Baltimore in the 1960s, Tracy Turnblad and other beehived Baltimoreans endeavored to integrate a televised dancing show. Although never referred to as Hons, the big haired women who set the canon for HonFest are seen throughout. In fact, in many ways, HonFest is an unattributed *Hairspray* fan convention, although because the iconography has gone beyond the movie and into "tradition," attendees can reference previous HonFests rather than *Hairspray* directly.

Throughout the second half of the 1990s, "hon" continued to transition from the term of address, "hon," to a type of person, the admirable Baltimore "Hon." In 1996, for example, the *Baltimore Sun*'s fashion editor, Vida Roberts offered an elaborate, mostly positive description of how a Hon dressed. The subtitle of her article, "Treasure those Baltimore ladies who call you 'hon,' hon. Because they're a vanishing treasure characterized by hearts of gold—and some other traits you can't miss" is reminiscent of the "eleventh-hour ethnography" of folkloristics' past (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 300). Boiled down to the essentials, Roberts article listed the characteristics of a Hon (1996). In her estimation, Hons are the big-haired, down-to-earth, friendly, maternal, hard-working women of Baltimore. Roberts' article was a clear transition toward the Hon as a type of woman, although she was not yet at the point where she was ready to capitalize the word "Hon."

Roberts made an effort to add benign feminist and maternal connotations to the "Hon" phenomenon. For example, she argued "big hair alone does not a hon make; a real hon has a generous spirit as big as her beehive. It's her willingness to scrub, hug, scold and help family and her neighbors that singles her out" (Roberts 1996). This connotation of the motherly Hon seems to have been created to give the "Hon" image a positive connotation, in contrast with the "slutty" Hon that some perceived. In addition, one can see the romanticism and nostalgia at play, reminiscing back to the time when neighbors looked out for and assisted one another. This is an embodiment of the nostalgic white, blue-collar image of Baltimore's past.

Since his upset victory in 2000, Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley had made it his mission to change the perception of Baltimore. But a horrendous murder rate and a national portrayal on *The Wire* (2002-2008) as a center of drugs, crime, violence, and corruption had done little to improve the city's image. As the official commissioned report would later state, "Baltimore is plagued by negative press and harmful characterizations by the media, resulting in an *inferiority complex*" (Donovan 2005). O'Malley and the City Council brought in branding strategy experts Landor Associates to change the image of the city and improve nationwide perception. Instead of attempting to compete directly with New York, Washington, D.C., Orlando, or Las Vegas, the report encouraged Baltimore to play up its downhome, authentic characteristics, what it referred to as "the Hon factor" (Donovan 2005). This factor brings a small town feel to a big city, something not to be found in Washington, D.C., or New York. The residents surveyed had

spoken positively of Baltimoreans as "quirky," "funky," "off-kilter," "hilarious," "bizarre," and "a little-off center" (Donovan 2005). While this was never adopted as an "official" Baltimore brand, the Hon fills this need by playing precisely to these characteristics.

The "Hon" tradition in Baltimore seems to follow Dundes' inferiority complex thesis that small countries (or cities in this case) suffering from poor self images are particularly active in using folklore to promote themselves and allow them to actively reflect on and debate their identity (Dundes 1985). In Baltimore, a city with a well-documented, century-long inferiority complex, "hon" and "the Hons," best captured in the Best Hon Contest and the Little Miss Hon contest, are deployed to distinguish and redeem a location in the midst of the competing East Coast cities of Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and New York. As a little big city that has fallen on hard times since the 1970s, Baltimore is in the midst of a local inferiority complex.

Enter the Baltimore Hon. In many ways, Baltimore's Hon image is similar to the American folk heroes of yore, reminiscent of Richard M. Dorson's "American Comic Demigods": hard-working, kind, of the people, down-to-earth, and independent (Dorson 1941). While Dorson despised the commercially fabricated Paul Bunyan, Dundes pointed out that Dorson's criticism is primarily a matter of *origins* rather than *function*. As far as function, Dundes saw fakelore filling "a national, psychological need: namely, to assert one's national identity, especially in a time of crisis, and to instill pride in that identity" (Dundes 1985, 13). Further, he argued fakelore seemed to be invented "where folklore is deemed lacking or insufficient" and creative people "fill the void" by "creating a national epic or national 'folk' hero *ex niblio* if necessary" or, more common, "embroider and inflate fragments of folklore into folkloristic fabrications" (Dundes 1985, 13). That is, when needed, locals grow their own folk heroes.

When asked, the Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Association denied that "the Hon" was a Baltimore tourist draw or even on the average tourist's radar. The association claimed tourists are primarily interested in strolling through the Inner Harbor, visiting historic neighborhoods, and feasting on steamed crabs. The spokesperson told the *Baltimore Sun*, "If you do a survey with visitors and you ask them, Hons wouldn't rank…Hons wouldn't even be on the radar screen…It's not something that people think of, and it's not as if visitors come in the Visitors Center and say, 'Where's the Hon?'" (Sessa 2008). While his comment was meant to downplay the importance of the Hon phenomenon in Baltimore, it proves HonFest to be even more locally important. According to the Baltimore's tourist bureau, HonFest is not an important tourist destination. It is a performance by Baltimoreans for Baltimoreans, even if it is only organized by a select few and only appreciated by some others.[15]

As part of the land-language-lore complex (Abrahams 1993), urban American folk speech is used in an attempt to create a local tradition that connects people to place. In the face of a rapidly changing city, "hon" transitioned from a stigmatized vernacular term associated with the lower class to an esteemed vernacular term tied to local roots and city identity. "Hon" and the "Hon" image served both as Baltimore's most prominent example of the esteemed vernacular

and as a rhetorical battleground where issues of race, class, gender, and belonging clash with conceptions of identity, heritage, and nostalgia over the attempt of civic leaders to construct a citywide local tradition. The Little Miss Hon contest demonstrates a commitment to an annual performance of this tradition.

Furthemore, "Hon" seeks to create a "natural" connection between an imagined group and a recently demarcated political boundary (Abrahams 1993). If Baltimore represents the epitome of an overindustrialized, and, now, postindustrial landscape, "hon" helps redeem a sacred homeland by referring not to the vacant buildings and shuttered plants, but instead to a nostalgia for an neighborly, folksy, down-to-earth city. While there was some stigma associated with "hon" in the 1990s[16] and earlier,[17] by the 2000s, "hon" had entered the esteemed vernacular. Baltimoreans now use "hon" in speech, on merchandise, and on highway signs to make what linguist Barbara Johnstone calls "self-conscious regional identity claims" (Johnstone, Andrus, and Danielson 2006, 78; see also Johnstone 2009). In response to Baltimore's conflicted, volatile past, this esteemed vernacular tradition has been one growing attempt to connect residents to the local in a transient world.

Alan Dundes encouraged folklorists to collect not just folklore, but the meaning of folklore. These native interpretations are valuable, and I have attempted to elicit HonFest's meaning from the festival's devotees. However, crossing the "triviality barrier" has proved challenging (Sutton-Smith 1970). Most festivalgoers reiterate that the festival is fun and carefree, that they have a familial connection to Baltimore, that they want to celebrate the old way of life, or that they want their children to experience Baltimore. These native interpretations call attention to a deeper unspoken meaning that demands analytic interpretation. In such instances, Dundes hypothesized that "it is often the taboo activities and ideas which find expression outlets in symbolic form" and "if the folk consciously recognized the symbolic significance of the joke or folksong element, this element might not be able to continue to serve as a safe, socially sanctioned element" (2007, 85). Viewed in isolation, the native interpretations appear valid, perhaps even accurate. But when the festival is studied in the context of Baltimore's race relations, perhaps best exemplified by the death of Freddie Gray and the 2015 Protests, a deeper meaning emerges. The Little Miss Hon Contest, and HonFest in general, is one battle waged in the larger, symbolic campaign for cultural ownership of Baltimore. Through this annually invoked and embodied ritual, Baltimore's heritage as a white, blue-collar city is reassured for the audience and participants. The battle must be waged symbolically rather than overtly, lest the violent and chaotic Baltimore of 2015 become the constant state of the city.

Conclusion: Baltimore's Little Tradition

In Baltimore, the Hon image, taken from and symbolizing the larger local, working class dialect known as Baltimorese, became a symbolic battlefield for issues of race, class, gender, identity, and belonging. While some residents and commentators dismiss the image as trivial, the attention the issue receives coincides with the symbolic significance that Baltimoreans implicitly understood about the image. In the land-language-lore complex, the owner of the local

language has the best claim to cultural ownership of the land. The Little Miss Hon contest is not a silly diversion, but a cultural battle over who can lay natural claim to Baltimore. Its function is an extension of the function of the Best Hon Contest (see Puglia forthcoming, "The Hons of HonFest" chapter). The difficult, unspeakable, symbolic discourse on racial and class identity has shifted to this safer, more manageable, and more respectable battleground. Children are paraded as extensions of their parents who have prepared them to play a role. While the Little Miss Hon contestants lack the agency and maturity of Best Hon Contest contestants, more important than their individual motivations is the event, the city, and the zeitgeist that celebrates them.

In Baltimore, the "Hon" image's understated but understood commentary on local identity, belonging, race, class, gender, and occupation have made the "Hon" a powerful symbol. In this essay, I have attempted to show how this seemingly benign, recently invented tradition lends its support to the nostalgic vision of a white, blue-collar city of the past. In addition to the quickly changing demographics, Baltimoreans seem to have an inferiority complex, living in the shadow of New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. HonFest, and especially the Little His Hon contest and the Best Hon Contest, give folklorists ample opportunities to explore how inferiority complexes are addressed through the invention of tradition in the modern American city. Baltimore's current answer, the "Hon," is denigrated by some as a lampooning of Baltimore's working class past, but celebrated by others as a commemoration of the strong, hard-working, maternal, and uniquely stylish women of Baltimore. The "Hon" tradition seems to hold importance to Little Miss Hon and Best Hon Contest participants and the HonFests tens of thousands of attendees, who come from both Baltimore and the Baltimore diaspora. The Little Miss Hon contest is an annual celebration of a perceived traditional group, one not based on any particular ethnic, religion, or occupation affiliation, but rather a group formed purely out of the American urban experience.

Children are presented strategically as part of this growing tradition. While adults provide the framework for the annual contest, it is exclusively children who perform as the little Hons. By performing, they confirm the establishment and continuity of the tradition, showing that this is a wide-ranging, multigenerational tradition that encompasses youth and that will carry forth. Now firmly planted, the little Hon tradition has spread its roots, blossomed, and continued to grow.

NOTES

1. This is reminiscent of what Richard M. Dorson was searching for in Gary, Indiana in his classic article "Is There a Folk in the City?" (1970). Dorson yearned to find distinctive American traditions that came directly out of the American experience, rather than immigrant traditions imported from abroad.

2. My title is meant to be a double entendre, referencing both the small children who perform the annual tradition in Baltimore and the work of anthropologists such as McKim Marriott (1955), Robert Redfield (1955, 1960), Gustave E. von Grunebaum (1955), John H. Bodley (2000), and Knut Odner (2000)

who distinguished between "great" and "little" traditions. This school of thought referred to the cultural and religious tradition of nations and empires, including its art and literature, as the "great" traditions, and the local and informal traditions of the peasants as "little" traditions.

3. I chose to analyze the 2007 Little Miss Hon contest, as that year was the only time the contest was fully documented. A full recording can be found on YouTube uploaded by WBAL-TV 11 Baltimore titled "Lil Miss Hon Contest." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ari0VwXHXqA/ While it would be preferable to have a wide range of Little Miss Hon contests to observe, only one has ever been recorded in full.

4. Joel Best has written about the everyone-is-a-winner phenomenon extensively in *Everyone's a Winner: Life in Our Congratulatory Culture*.

5. As of 2011, the U.S. Census reports that Baltimore is 63.7% black or African American and 29.6% white alone. http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/2404000/. For additional demographic analysis, see Yeip (2015). Yeip points to the Baltimore's low score on the U.S. Census Bureau's "Diversity Index" as another indicator of Baltimore's stratification.

6. The Oriole Festival as sometimes alternatively referred to as the Festival of the Oriole or the Oriole Celebration. The Oriole is the Maryland state bird and one of the mascots of Baltimore, not because it is native to Baltimore, which for the most part it is not, but rather because its orange and black coloring is similar to Lord Baltimore's coat of arms.

7. It even received a September 13, 1882 write up in the *New York Times*. The author says the festival was "celebrated to-day with more than usual ceremony and display."

8. This nickname was popularized by real street graffiti featured in the opening credits of the HBO television series *The Wire*.

9. If it had the same population as New York, New York, Baltimore would have recorded nearly 4,000 murders in 1993. (New York reported 1,960 homicides that year).

10. City-Data, Baltimore, Maryland, "Baltimore on our top lists" http://www.city-data.com/city/Baltimore-Maryland.html

11. Also see Baltimore local Ernest Smith's *Hey Hon!: How to Talk Like a Real Bawlamoron*.

12. For an example of the accolades Maryland receives for its public school system, see "Maryland schools ranked number one—again," *Washington Post*, January 12, 2012. The level of individual educational attainment can be found on United States Census Bureau's Table 233 "Educational Attainment by State." More Marylanders hold advanced degrees than any state but Massachusetts.

13. "Blue collar" can at times be polite code for "dowdy" or "depressed."

14. For more on the events that led to HonFest and the Little Miss Hon contest, see Puglia (forthcoming).

15. Folklorist Regina Bendix refers to a similar phenomenon in Interlaken, Switzerland. She argues that in Interlaken, even if traditions are performed outwardly for tourists, the act of performing gives the Interlaken community the opportunity to express their culture in their own words and on their own terms.

16. There had been complaints about racial, gender, and class connotations and the general association of "hon" with diner-waitress speak. For more about the specific debates, see Puglia (forthcoming).

17. Informants in the podcast "Welcome to Baltimore, Hon: Exploring Hon as a Linguistic and Identity Marker in Baltimore" by Holly-Catherine Britton and Heidi J. Faust recall their parents attempting to eliminate their Baltimorese as a means of social advancement.

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Finding New Monsters in Old Places: A Review of the Works of Simon J. Bronner through an Age-Intersectional Lens

Cory Thomas Hutcheson

In the Fall of 2015, *Midwestern Folklore: Journal of the Hoosier Folklore Society* published a collection of essays by students from Simon J. Bronner's graduate course on the folklore of aging and the life cycle. I was fortunate enough to be among those students selected to contribute to the issue, which featured essays on Mormon baptism, life-cycle board games, and quilting traditions. My piece discussed the phenomenon of father-child "horror play," in which the adult pretends to be a monster in pursuit of the child or children. In his introduction to the issue, Bronner said "the subject of aging has been approached mostly by categorizing folklore under the heading of an age *group*, especially children or senior adults, rather than analyzed as a human-cultural developmental process in which folklore plays an instrumental role" (Bronner 2015:3). Dr. Bronner is, of course, being a bit modest in his assertion that aging has mostly been seen as a taxonomic activity rather than a scholarly pursuit of process. In fact, he has published copiously on exactly that process over the years. Even his landmark 1988 work, *American Children's Folklore*, turns to questions of linear and cyclical development in the aging stages of young people. Bronner's encouragement has led many of his students—several of whom appear in this volume—to engage with the aging process ethnographically, symbolically, functionally, and folklorically to determine how people create meaning out of the dynamic temporal structure of their lives. His work has covered aging from many angles, including two which became central to my study of father-child play: the role of "horror" in childhood (and adult) development and the intersectionality of age-related lore among generations. As Bronner passes his own life-cycle milestone and retires from the legacy program he founded at Penn State Harrisburg, we, as folklorists, would do well to take stock of his influence and re-interrogate his work in light of our own scholarship (and vice versa) to discover the vast territory he has already mapped and the many lands he is leaving us to explore.

My most natural point of departure is Bronner's chapter in *American Children's Folklore* (1988:143-60) on supernatural tales and legends, given my previous focus on the monstrous. As a way of marking children's evolving maturity, Bronner locates the transmission of folk narratives involving ghosts, witches, monsters, and other malevolent forces in the spaces between children. Even in his introduction to the chapter, however, Bronner points out that "[p]arents, camp counselors, and babysitters have helped to stock the children's world with stories in order to warn them about potential dangers and to exert some control over their wanderings" (143). Why are adults and, more importantly, teenagers and young adults, interested in scaring children in this way? A functionalist interpretation could situate these stories as educational, guarding the well-being and safety of the child by providing supernatural forces of discipline in the form of ogres and bogeymen

(Bascom 1954). Bronner's interpretive framework suggests such a reading, although it does not make that analysis definitive. Bronner specifically devotes a portion of his supernatural chapter to the discussion of "Horror Legends of Killers and Cars," although even in tales more generically labeled as "Ghost Stories," automobiles make repeated appearances:

> "This man and lady were riding down *the street*, and they had a *car wreck* in this one place…"
>
> "The *street* in front of a school had been covered with tar and cement…One gloomy, muddy day, a man was carelessly *driving down this road*…"
>
> "One day a little boy was playing near *the street*. He was sitting on *the curb* near *a car*. The little boy was playing with something he found *in the street* and did not hear a lady get in *the car*…" [All italics mine]

Children emphasize cars, Bronner demonstrates, because of the association of automobiles with "maturity and arrival into society," but their lore also warns of the "dangers" posed by that change (147). Similarly, the impetus to work for money and join adult society informs legends of babysitters, who, being left alone, fall prey to killers and monsters. Camp counselors share traditional tales that mingle humor and horror in an environment "[a]way from the restrictions of parents and teachers" where children "far [outnumber] counselors" and "feel a streak of independence and mischief" (152). Given the deep anxieties children may feel about their growing self-reliance and maturity, supernatural legends do manifest a degree of what longtime Bronner-friend and associate Alan Dundes labels "projection" in folklore. Dundes perceives as the transference of an unconscious and symbolic understanding of the world to external actions, beliefs, narratives, and behaviors in a way that characterizes supernatural legends as functional projections of fear and externalizations of powerful internal anxieties rooted in the life cycle process. Children, through projection, face their fears. What, then, are those who disseminate the tales to younger children getting out of the exchange? Is this merely a case of deploying the monstrous to keep children from wandering away from camp or into the street?

Approaching Bronner's research with an eye towards generational intersectionality might tell us a bit more about the motivations of the tellers. In my paper on father-child monster play, I drew upon psychoanalytic interpretations of fairy tales by Sheldon Cashdan, who asserts that "fairy tales are not for children, do not teach moral lessons, and…[point] to a psychodrama of anxieties played out in narration" (Hutcheson 2015:40). Cashdan is overzealous and ignores the intersectional ways in which children can make meaning out of hearing fairy tales while adults simultaneously make meaning out of telling them, but he does raise the question of adult use of folklore. Cashdan believes that adults see the deployment of folklore as primarily educative, a narrative performance that reinforces the values teachers and parents wish to see develop in their children,

as well as a social control to outline taboo behaviors (Cashdan 1999:15). Cashdan emphasizes that children experience lore on a psychological level despite the best intentions of adults, of course, but fails to give enough psychological agency to grown-ups who engage with children through fairy tales, urban legends, and monstrous performances. When adults, here construed as anyone aged above their mid-teens, share lore, they do so expecting a response from their listeners. The negotiation between audience and performer has been well-explored by others (Bauman 1974; Dundes 1980; Toelkein 1996; Blank 2009), but many explorations of lore transmission frame the exchange as a two-way dynamic. Bronner has addressed the inadequacy of that transmission model recently by emphasizing the ways traditional expression operates at, what he terms, a "purposeful activity with a repeatable, multi-layered message that can be called *phemic*" as opposed to a more functionally, "*phatic*" expression (Bronner 2016). When camp counselors transmit lore, for example, the children who hear the tale are certainly a target audience, but so are the other counselors listening. A parent engaging a child in a ghost story may be performing both as an "adult" and as a "husband" or "friend's dad" at the same time, creating multivalent channels of communication that situate the narrative transmitter as a person belonging to myriad life-cycle stages simultaneously. The children hearing the tale validate the challenges of those who have passed through young adulthood with their awed or stricken responses. Similarly, Bronner's 2012 *Campus Traditions* contains a chapter on supernatural legends and horrors in the lives of young adults, presumably many of whom have already experienced these stories at earlier stages in their lives, but who now begin circulating urban legends and terror tales anew. These students, according to Bronner, are explicitly acting out phemic meaning, fulfilling "a need to adjust to this [college] environment by connecting themselves to those who have come before" (277). The performative nature of the tales, which often reframe the unfamiliar and temporary home of the campus in terms similar to previously encountered environments such as the childhood home or summer camp bonfire, offers those who tell and hear a way to interact with their new peers in a particular life-cycle phase—"college kids"—while synchronously linking to their own experiences of childhood. Most potently, they synchronously experience a narrative and performance in which the campus itself plays a role, and all students who have engaged in the practice of sharing the legends associated with the school are brought into harmony. The multifaceted, multivalent expression of supernatural tales demonstrates that tales are not affixed to a single life-stage, but form the reusable material of an extended lifetime of folk practice.

One of the clearest examples of intersectionally phemic folklore in action is the *Belsnickel*, a holiday guising figure found in Pennsylvania German culture primarily. Several scholars have investigated the symbolism and social role of the Belsnickel, most notably Richard Bauman (1972), Alfred Shoemaker (1954, 1999), and Susan G. Davis (1992). The Belsnickel is a thickly fur-clad fellow, often with a mask or soot-smeared face to hide his identity. He visits nearby homes and farms, where he is welcomed by parents into the family home and proceeds to cut capers and play the bombastic fool. At some point, his attention turns to the children, whom he quizzes about their behavior over the previous months. He

uncannily seems to know all the wrongs they think they have kept hidden, and his fearsome demeanor cows them into promises of better obedience in the future. With a flourish, he scatters treats about the floor and then playfully whips or raps their knuckles as they grab for them. Soon, he is gone, often with a bit of cake or a draught of ale to warm him on his journey. Under the mask and furs, however, was a person—a local boy in his late teens or early twenties, usually unmarried, who knew his community very well. Bauman identified the Belsnickel performer exactly in terms of his adolescence:

> [B]elsnickling…was thought of as an activity predominantly for the older boys and young unmarried men of the community…The youngest belsnickles [*sic*] were fifteen or sixteen years old, with the majority around eighteen to twenty-one and the oldest between twenty-five and thirty…[T]he age of belsnickling was a socially transitional one, between childhood and full adulthood; boys began working for a living around sixteen, but did not conventionally marry or leave their parents' households till their early twenties. (Bauman 1972:232)

Bauman, along with others like Shoemaker (1999) and Davis (1992), point towards the liminal nature of the Belsnickel in every rural community in which he is found. He is a figure neither fully adult nor fully child. He occupies the period of misrule and topsy-turvy in the closing of the year. Why did neighborhood lads take on the Belsnickel role? Shoemaker and Bauman both identify a transgressive function which fell within acceptable community parameters. In short, the Belsnickel boy could play the fool and act upon his aggressions without fear of reprisal, so long as he did not overstep the bounds of the role—he could not do serious harm to the children, for example, and often households with very small youngsters would be bypassed on the Belsnickel's rounds. One component has been underemphasized in previous accounts of the singular, domestic Belsnickel visit, however. The Belsnickel boy certainly underwent his rite of passage, being both isolated and reintegrated into the community as noted in previous scholarship. We can also ask what function the Belsnickel's visit played for the larger community. In many accounts of the Belsnickel, we do not have the memories of those performing the role to rely upon nearly so much as we have the memories of those visited by the Belsnickel. Visits such as these were remembered fondly long after the lone Belsnickel receded from the scene. Several remembrances note the mixture of fear and pleasure the Belsnickel's visit provided. The Belsnickel, as a lord of misrule, was a creature both fearsome and benevolent, and as such would have embodied the experience of the New World for many first and second generation immigrant families. Boys taking on the role of the Belsnickel represented an important concept to the community: they had passed the dependence and dangers of childhood and were nearing an age of majority, in which they would be expected to provide for others. Here we have the phemic folklore operating in a multivalent fashion in both performed time and the practiced time of memory. Teenage and young adult boys performed

for the children, yes, but also for the parents, other boys in their peer group, the communities around them, and for themselves. They inhabited a folk practice that brought circles of time into overlapping conjunction, and those points of conjunction then became the basis for new memorate transmission later in the lives of those visited by the Belsnickel. Perhaps not surprisingly, Bronner has also written extensively about the traditions of the Pennsylvania Germans, including an article on folk speech and humor (2011) and 2017's *Pennsylvania Germans: An Interpretive Encyclopedia*, which he co-edited with Joshua R. Brown, although he has not written at any length on the Belsnickel to date, despite the figure's clear articulation of his phemic principle.

What has all of this to do with the fathers chasing their children around a room, roaring like a dinosaur? In writing my own assessment of "horror play" among father and their children, I chose to de-emphasize the children's experience and instead incorporate the much less richly explored perspective of the fathers who engaged in such play. The dynamics of parental-child relationships are complicated and tricky, a web of multiple meanings that can represent simultaneously constructive and destructive principles at play in cultural formation. Bronner has also noted that intergenerational web and its influences in his work on the African American storytelling traditions within the Powell family (2011). His detailed ethnographic work with Eugene Powell and his son, Ernest, demonstrated the continued practice of storytelling within the family and the personal emphasis on differentiation for Ernest. The son did not wish to be his father or to tell his father's stories, but he did wish to do as his father had done. When Ernest told stories, he told them for his audience and filled them with a level of violence beyond anything in his father's tales, but he also performed for his father as a tradition-bearer. Bronner decoded a level of tension between father and son, noting that "Eugene's insecurity spilled over into his relationship with Ernest. Eugene saw much of himself in his son…Eugene worried about his control over Ernest" (Bronner 2011:261). Eugene was telling his stories in the same way a father might pretend to be Godzilla or a zombie for a five-year-old. He entertained his audience but simultaneously accommodated his own anxieties about his role in his child's life and, crucially, in his own life. Eugene and Ernest Powell occupy different "stages" of life but also reflect the stages of one another's lives through the sustained practice of storytelling.

The materials which Simon J. Bronner has gathered through his prolific corpus of work on American folklore continue to provide much to think about. His recent concentration on a "practice theory" of folklore offers new insights into materials he has compiled over a lifetime. Similarly, as we develop our own insights and ideas with relation to new material, Bronner's work provides a bank of comparative fodder rich with potential for close reading and reinterpretation. My own work with the intersectional father-child "horror play" dynamic, which was supported from its inception to publication by Bronner, represents only the smallest fragment of possible interpretive lenses that might be applied to concepts of phemic folklore. Here, Bronner has remained ahead of the game, and provided scholars with new terminology and frameworks to apply to their findings. Bronner's earlier work, such as *American Children's Folklore*, demonstrate

significant opportunities for review and rediscovery. His proclivity for production has cast a wide net, and we are certainly indebted to him for what he has given us so far. Yet his work also demonstrates a notable "lack," if I may co-opt Dundes' term from game morphology and apply it here. He leaves us much yet to do in the form of a lifetime of work that can still benefit from attentive reinterpretation. Is he then playing a game across time, whose object is an "elimination" of his "lack" through our own diligent scholarship? If so, that would be very much the playful and phemic Bronner, acting the part of mischievous child as he crosses the threshold of retirement.

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Book Review

Children's Games in the New Media Age: Childlore, Media and the Playground. Edited by Andrew Burn and Chris Richards. (Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2014. Xiii+pp.224, acknowledgments, introduction, notes, bibliography, contributors, list of figures and tables, index.)

Winner of the 2016 Opie Award from the American Folklore Society's Children's Folklore Section, this fine volume brings the collection of children's games smartly into the 21st century. How fitting that the work itself is dedicated to Iona Opie, as it showcases and builds upon her legacy. Three topics vie for our attention, all reflected in the subtitle. One wonders if the title and subtitle were fighting off camera for the volume's heading. Perhaps this is due to the ambivalence over the word "playground" in our time.

The editors, both professors in the Department of Culture, Communication and Media at the Institute of Education, University of London, have collected a set of essays that merit individual attention. Burn's introduction addresses "Children's Playground Games in the New Media Age," yet another version of the book's title. Pointing to the work of Iona and Peter Opie over 50 years ago, the chapter readdresses one of the ideas that the Opies themselves debunked, that they had started the collection of children's folklore "fifty years too late" (p. 1) Happily, the intent of the book is to show that children's folklore—that irreverent mix of playful genres belonging to children's peer culture—is still alive and well. We read of the history of "children's games, songs, and rhymes" with particular attention to change and children's agency and are introduced to five projects that frame the book.

The British Library Digital Archive, the first of these projects, includes The Opie Collection of Children's Games and Songs, new material collected in the United Kingdom, and the Australian collection of ethnomusicologist Kathryn Marsh. The project exceeded their initial plan and hosts games from Australia, the UK, America and Scandinavia. The second project involved ethnographic studies in two primary schools, one in Sheffield and one on London's edge, from 2009-2011. Methods included surveys, panel interviews of children, and video footage taken by adults and children alike. The third project involved website development: "Playtimes: A Century of Children's Playground Games and Rhymes," an industrious addition intended to display to the public both the Opie material and the ethnographic work collected in these two schools. Additional collaboration with the Bodleian Libraries at the University of Oxford, repository of the Opie archive, and the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, adds the wonderful game photos by Father Damian Webb. Most impressive was the involvement of children in the website development, as "researchers, designers, and curators."

The fourth project associated with the book is an innovative application of "The Game Catcher Prototype," an adaptation of motion sensitive video game

controllers of Nintendo Wii and Microsoft Kinect. The intention was to use the video game system to both record hand games as well as revitalize clapping. This project models the lack of separation in children's culture between "traditional" games and technology. It would be worth watching such applications longitudinally to see how they hold up over time.

The final project frames game collection through the development of a documentary film: *Ipi-dipi-dation, My Generation.* A catchy title, it references the counting out rhyme Ip dip, and ties in to the notion of historical study. Filmmaker Grethe Mitchell thoughtfully pays attention to camera angle and children's commentary, not just game content. It should be noted that the film is tantalizingly difficult to find, almost impossible. It is hoped that the authors will find a way to make it more accessible.

Language of social critique appears throughout, from Bourdieu's "embodied history" to Raymond Williams' notion of "residual culture" to Henry Jenkins' emphasis on "cultural production and circulation." Readers familiar with the anthropology of Levi-Strauss and Caillois will find the term "ludic bricolage" interesting. Burns invites us to think of the chapters as puzzle pieces, and what follows is a brief discussion of each piece.

Chapter 2 "The Opie Recordings: What's Left to be Heard" by Laura Jopson, Andrew Burn, and Jonathan Robinson invites us to listen to the archive, now fully cataloged and available online. There appears to be much in the Opie archive that had never been published, a gold mine of games for the game researcher or childlore scholar. Chapter 3 by folklorist Julia C. Bishop examines online/offline transmission and how "the whole hand-clap thing passes on." This particular chapter is one I will return to with my own classes, as she charts transmission face-to-face, through media culture, and through YouTube. Movement variations are analyzed in a study of variation of one particular game, and there are rich quotes directly from children.

Chapter 4 by Chris Richards offers a mix of memoir and social commentary on "Rough Play, Play Fighting and Surveillance: School Playgrounds as Sites of Dissonance, Controversy and Fun." He writes of "Childhood at Risk, Children as a Threat," and briefly addresses gender differences in terms of playground conflict. In chapter 5, Education professor Jackie Marsh examines "The Relationship between Online and Offline Play: Friendship and Exclusion." Here the chapter mixes fine-grained ethnographic quotes with Internet use surveys. Of particular interest is the innovative contrast between the social webs of one group and their friendship patterns online and offline. In Chapter 6, librarian Rebekah Willet looks at the process of remixing and the study of "media-referenced play in the playground." The chapter wisely points to how "children produce meaning from the variety of texts with which they engage in their remix culture" (p. 149). "Children's Remix Culture" might have been a fourth contender for book title.

Filmmaker Grethe Mitchell's chapter on "The Game Catcher: A Computer Game and Research Tool for Embodied Movement" is perhaps the most innovative project in childlore collection to date. An adaptation of motion sensitive video game controllers of Nintendo Wii and Microsoft Kinect, it translates children's hand games onto the screen for archival purposes and analysis, not to mention the

pleasure of seeing one's motions on screen. Whether the application is affordable enough, portable enough, and easy enough for widespread use remains to be seen. It certainly suggests new ways of thinking about game research, borrowing the tools of media captured choreography and dance notation. John Potter's chapter, focusing on website development and heterotopia, raises the ethical implications of having children as "co-curators."

Part of the challenge rests with the essentially private, yet public, display of children's folklore, and yet when posted, it becomes an exposed performance. The book raises more questions than it has space to answer. I appreciate the ways in which it finds consistency and innovation in children's folklore, and how it suggests that the answer to the rigidity of school curricula can be found outside.

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Film Review

Let's Get the Rhythm!: The Life and Times of Miss Mary Mack. Directed by Irene Chagall (New York: Women Make Movies/City Lore & Public Art Films, 2014, 53 mins., color.).

Director Irene Chagall's *Let's Get the Rhythm!: The Life and Times of Miss Mary Mack* covers familiar folkloric territory: hand-clapping and rhythm games among young girls. The wide-ranging film frames rhythmic play as something inherent to human beings, particularly girls, with foundations in psychology and anthropology and connected to other forms of artistic expression. Chagall takes her camera around the world and through long stretches of human history to develop the film's thesis that clapping games are serious business for the girls who play them and that such games are worthy of focused attention. Students of other social sciences will find as much to contemplate in the film as folklorists, a testament to the richness of source materials and scholarship found in its hour-long running time. While Chagall offers a great deal of enriching context, *Let's Get the Rhythm!* also leaves a number of avenues unexplored and unresolved, creating both a problem for a viewer who wants more and an opportunity for ongoing scholarly work.

As an instructor in San Francisco's Community Music Center specializing in children's musical education, Chagall spent thirty years working with city youth and learning about the music they create. Her study of that rhythmic expression earned her a Smithsonian Research Fellowship, and she spent several years assembling footage from archival sources and gathering her own fieldwork. Chagall knows she is not covering new ground at a broad level, and draws upon Bess Lomax Hawes' 1967 film, *Pizza Pizza Daddy-O* frequently for both footage and conceptual underpinnings about the role of hand-clapping among girls. Hawes herself is a frequent onscreen presence, giving her perspectives on the interpretation of the game-playing rituals shown to the audience in both her own film and in Chagall's examples. The film's other experts include Kyra Gaunt, author of *The Games Black Girls Play*, and Ellen Dissanayake, author of *Art and Intimacy*, as well as experts from fields, including African Art history and cultural anthropology. Methodologically, the film presents copious ethnographic footage of girls playing the games or speaking about the games.

Some elements of the film work remarkably well to serve both Chagall's thesis and the viewer's understanding of the clapping games in local and global contexts. One particularly engaging sequence follows the game "Hello Operator," a game that traffics in near-miss ribaldry, through around a dozen different iterations, including historical and contemporary versions played among girls from different age groups, localities, and backgrounds. At the heart of the film are questions about how society values its girls and their culture, and the cultural habit of discounting such games as "mere play." Chagall deftly demonstrates the ways that

the games not only create social bonds among the girls who play them—as shown when an American girl travels to Tanzania to meet a pen pal and plays clapping games to break the ice with the local girls—but also address large-scale cultural and social issues. One of Chagall's interviewees makes the point that the games are a form of "graffiti with your hands," a motif reflected in the paint-splash palm prints used to accentuate onscreen text in the film. Clapping games, demonstrates Chagall, can address problems like Jim Crow segregation or the high incidence of sickle cell anemia in Sierra Leone, where the girls play a clapping game called "Ah Mella Sickle Cella." Chagall's particular exploration of rhythmic-clap sophistication among children elevates the discussion of the games. Informants like Hawes and jazz musician Bobby Sanabria repeatedly show that these games are not always simple, but often require a very sophisticated understanding of patterns and rhythm. The clapping patterns in a game called "Numbers," which requires ever-more complex rhythms as the girls play it, appears onscreen as an equation. The informants, largely children and teens from diverse cultural backgrounds, come largely from American cities like San Francisco and New York but also from international locations including Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Brazil, Russia, Spain, and Israel, do much to reinforce Chagall's points about the pervasive importance of the games. A strong current of what Nina Glick-Schiller and others have termed "cosmopolitan sociability" pervades the presentation, too, offering a way of contextualizing what the viewer sees as a transnational phenomenon.

The film's wide range of subjects, experts, and ideas all keep it lively and engaging, but do sacrifice some depth to meet the timeframe. A number of speculative points in the film appear and disappear with a frustrating evanescence. Chagall relates Egyptian hieroglyphics to the hand-clapping games she records, but the claim has only a small piece of interpretive text to stand on, and seems as flimsy as William Wells Newell's claim that girls play these sorts of games merely to warm their hands in the winter. Similarly, Ellen Dissanayake attempts to connect hand-clapping with the production of oxytocin in the body, and then makes some sweeping claims about gender roles related to that hormone. Gender also becomes problematic, as one self-described "tomboy" struggles to connect with the hand-clapping rhymes, which has the—hopefully unintended—effect of making her look "broken" as a woman because of her limited ability to interact through the games. Chagall does explore the ways in which girls' games get appropriated by men, particularly in popular music, but interestingly presents a pair of girls later playing a game that clearly appropriates a portion of K.C. & the Sunshine Band's "That's the Way I Like It" without discussing the folkloric process of that counter-appropriation. Strangely, despite the film's subtitle, the actual discussion of the game "Miss Mary Mack" occupies only about ten minutes of the film's runtime.

Such unexplored, underexplored, or problematic presentations read much more like opportunities for future scholars, however, than any sort of failure on Chagall's part. The immense scope of *Let's Get the Rhythm!* necessarily requires a tight editorial hand in order to accommodate the timeframe of the presentation. Chagall's previous work on the subject, published in 2005/2006's *Children's Folklore Review*, presented a rough draft of the film's thesis while answering some of the questions the video version of her work merely skimmed, such as the issue

of counter-appropriation. In this article, Chagall quotes Simon Bronner on the evanescent but vital role these games play in the lives of young girls, noting that these games merge "performance and integration of different expressive behaviors that [defy] easy typology" (Bronner 1988:166). That typological defiance is clear in Chagall's work as well, and students of folklore have no shortage of raw material or refined analysis available between her earlier article and this film. In the end, the film will likely be a strong future companion piece to Bess Lomax Hawes' earlier work, and set the stage for scholars who follow to build upon what Chagall has done.

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Bronner, Simon. 1988. *American Children's Folklore*. Little Rock: August House, quoted in Irene Chagall. 2005/2006. "Let's Get Rhythm," *Children's Folklore Review* 28:42-63.

Children's Folklore Section: 2016 Annual Meeting

Miami, Florida, October 21, 2016

Attendance: Eleven members were in attendance, including Kate Schramm (convener); John McDowell, Elizabeth Tucker, Priscilla Ord, Elizabeth Coberly, Fernando Orejuela, Brant Ellsworth, Ruth Stotter, Lisa Gabbert, Kate McCormick, and Spencer Green. Many other members were unable to attend due to other section responsibilities.

Treasurer: Priscilla Ord reported on the status of the section's finances. The Children's Section has approximately 90 members of which 40 people are dues-paying members. As the fee is optional, there was some discussion about whether or not the section should make it mandatory. Discussion was inconclusive because, as the journal is moving on-line (and presumably open-access) the question was raised as to what people might receive from paying dues. Pricilla noted that AFS had not yet deducted administrative fees for this year so financial report was somewhat incomplete.

Editor: Trevor Blank's report as editor of *Children's Folklore Review* was accepted. It was noted that the editor is actively seeking submissions to the journal and that submissions are somewhat low. Brant Ellsworth is coming onto the journal as assistant editor and Trevor would like to see him take over as editor when he rotates off. There was some question as to how advertisements and other issues would be handled once the journal moves online. Kate Schramm asked that Trevor Blank, Priscilla Ord, and Brant Ellsworth get together to hash out a timeline to ease this transition.

Social Media: There was discussion about how many people used/participated in the section's Facebook page. A decision was made to seek out a person to fill a new position as the section's social media manager.

Aesop Committee: There was much discussion of the Aesop Prize. The winners were announced and hard copies of books passed around. The winner was *Lowriders to the Center of the Earth*, by Cathy Camper and Raúl the Third. Aesop Accolades were awarded to *I Am Pan!* by Mordicai Gerstein, *The Princess and the Warrior*, by Duncan Tonatiuh, and *The Storyteller*, by Evan Turk.

It was noted that 85 books were submitted for the prize, of which only 24 were eligible. Of that 24, it was estimated that only 6-7 were prize-worthy. Kate Schramm noted that most of the books submitted under "children's folklore" tended to focus on decontextualized ethnic folklore and thus tended to reinforce stereotypes. There was discussion of how to increase communication about the importance of the prize since there is no cash award. Some discussion was held as to the possibility of a cash prize, but section finances must be figured out first regarding the journal.

Newell Prize: Brant Ellsworth noted that there were no submissions this year and only one submission last year. This led to a broader discussion of the lack of graduate student work being done in children's folklore. Lisa Gabbert will take over chairing the Newell Prize and it was decided to broaden the criteria to include "emerging scholars" in order to increase submissions.

Opie Prize: Libby Tucker and John McDowell will continue to chair the Opie prize. The winner for this year was *Children's Games in the New Media Age: Childlore, Media and the Playground*, edited by Andrew Burn and Chris Richards (Ashgate, 2014).

Section Elections: Kate Schramm was re-elected as convener. Brant Ellsworth was elected as Secretary and this position shall now be separated out from the position of Treasurer, held by Priscilla Ord.

Discussion: The section meeting concluded with ideas about how to raise the profile of the Children's Folklore Section within the Society. Lisa Gabbert suggested initiating an annual lecture on Children's Folklore lecture and wondered whether we might bring national media personalities such as Lenore Skenazy to the meeting. Libby Tucker noted that we could still initiate the lecture and have AFS members deliver it. Katie Schramm encouraged people to think about collaborative ideas for panels for next year's meeting, noting the very good panel that had taken place this year in conjunction with the Folklore and Education Section. The meeting was adjourned at 1:50.

Notes and Announcements

Newell Prize

The Children's Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society annually offers the William Wells Newell Prize (which includes a cash award) for the best student essay on a topic in children's folklore. Students must submit their own papers, and published papers are eligible. Instructors are asked to encourage students with eligible papers to enter the competition.

Papers must be double-spaced and submitted as a Word document. On the first page, include the author's name, academic address, home address, telephone numbers, and e-mail address. Deadline for this coming year's competition is September 30, 2017. Please submit papers electronically to Dr. Lisa Gabbert, folklore@usu.edu.

Book Reviews

Children's Folklore Review is seeking book review submissions for its next issue, to be published in December of 2017. This is an excellent opportunity for graduate students interested in building their writing credentials and demonstrating breadth in folklore, literature, and childhood studies. Books are selected for review in *Children's Folklore Review* according to their relevance to the field of children's folklore and their year of publication (within the past two years). If you would like to request a book for review, please contact the editor, Brant W. Ellsworth (brantellsworth@centralpenn.edu). Book reviews should not exceed 1,000 words.

Contributors

Anna Beresin is Professor of Liberal Arts at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, and Co-Director of NEUARTS, Neighborhood Engagement at the University of the Arts. Her books include *Recess Battles: Playing, Fighting, and Storytelling*, and *The Art of Play: Recess and the Practice of Invention.* Briand Sutton-Smith was her thesis advisor at the University of Pennsylvania, where she earned two doctorates; one in folklore, and one in the psychology of education. She enjoys bad puns.

Andrew Delfino has a B.A. in English from the University of California, Davis, with a minor in American Studies; he graduated with highest honors. He won the University of California, Davis's Prized Writing Awards in consecutive years. His research into Las Vegas' neon signs as postmodern architecture was awarded a President's Undergraduate Fellowship. After graduating, he taught writing and literature to junior high students in Atlanta, Georgia; he also coached junior high wrestling. Delfino earned a Master's Degree in Literary Studies at Georgia State University, where his thesis focused on masculinity, gender, and sports in Post-Modern literature. He currently teaches technical writing at the University of Maryland at College Park. Since 2015, he has been working to include more of the cultural studies turn in composition to his technical writing course as well as researching digital pedagogy as he helped UMD develop a completely asynchronous, online technical writing curriculum.

Cory Thomas Hutcheson is a PhD candidate in American Studies at Penn State Harrisburg. His research focuses on American vernacular religion with an emphasis on folk magic and cosmology.

Jay Mechling is Professor Emeritus of American Studies at the University of California, Davis. A past convenor of the Children's Section of the American Folklore Society, past President of The Association for the Study of Play, and past President of the Fellows of the AFS, he has been writing lately about the folk cultures of warriors.

Wolfgang Meider is University Distinguished Professor of German and Folklore at the University of Vermont, where he served as chairperson of the Department of German and Russian from 1977 to 2008. He is an internationally acknowledged proverb scholar and the founding editor of *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship.* His numerous books in German and English include bibliographical, folkloric, literary, and philological studies, with a recent volume being *"Behold the Proverbs of a People": Proverbial Wisdom in Culture, Literature, and Politics.*

Amy Milligan is the Batten Endowed Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies and Women's Studies at Old Dominion University, where she is also the director of the Institute of Jewish Studies and Interfaith Understanding. She is the author of *Hair, Headwear, and Orthodox Jewish Women: Kallah's Choice* (Lexington, 2014), and her research continues to explore the intersections of hair, body, gender, sexuality, and religion. Examples of her work include "Colors of the Jewish Rainbow: A Study of Homosexual Jewish Men and Yarmulkes" in the *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* (2013) and "Expanding Sisterhood: Jewish Lesbians and Externalizations of Yiddishkeit" in the Journal of Lesbian Studies (2014). In 2011, she received the Raphael Patai Prize in Jewish Folklore and Ethnology from the American Folklore Society for her study of Orthodox women's headcovering, which was published in *Framing Jewish Culture* (Littman, 2014).

David J. Puglia is Assistant Professor of English at the Bronx Community College of the City University of New York, where he teaches courses in folklore and folklife. He received his Ph.D. from Penn State Harrisburg, where Simon J. Bronner was his dissertation director. He is the author of three books, *South Central Pennsylvania Legends & Lore*, *Maryland Legends: Folklore from the Old Line State* (with Trevor J. Blank), and *Welcome to Baltimore, Hon: Vernacular Wars and Local Identity*. His essays have appeared in *Contemporary Legend*, *New Directions in Folklore*, and *The Folklore Historian*. He is the co-editor of the scholarly journal *New Directions in Folklore* and the past president of the Middle Atlantic Folklife Association.

Elizabeth Tucker, Professor of English at Binghamton University, is co-editor of *Children's Folklore Review*. She served twice as president of the Children's Folklore Section and is Past President of the International Society for Contemporary Legend Research. Her publications include *Campus Legends: A Handbook* (2005), *Haunted Halls: Ghostlore of American College Campuses* (2007), *Children's Folklore: A Handbook* (2008), *Haunted Southern Tier* (2011), and, with Ellen McHale, *New York State Folklife Reader: Diverse Voices* (2013).