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CONTENTS

FROM THE EDITOR.....	5
"MEAN GIRLS": THE RECLASSIFICATION OF CHILDREN'S AND ADOLESCENTS' FOLKLORE <i>ELIZABETH TUCKER</i>	7
EXPANDING A TRADITIONAL BALLAD: <i>TAM LIN</i> IN THE PICTURE BOOK FANTASIES OF JANE YOLEN AND SUSAN COOPER <i>JANIS DAWSON</i> ,.....	23
POLAR: THE MOST FAMOUS BEAR OF THEM ALL! <i>J. JOSEPH EDGETTE</i>	39
IN OUR OWN IMAGE: THE CHILD, CANADIAN CULTURE, AND OUR FUTURE <i>CAROLE H. CARPENTER</i>	47
"LIFE FOR ME AIN'T NO CRYSTAL STAIR"; READIN', WRITIN', AND PARENTAL (IL)LITERACY IN AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN'S BOOKS <i>NEAL A. LESTER</i>	75
IDEAS FOR INQUIRY: "EXHIBITING CHILDREN" <i>SIMON J. BRONNER</i>	101
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY: <i>CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE REVIEW</i> , VOLUMES 1-24. <i>C. W. SULLIVAN III</i>	105
CFS: 2002 ANNUAL MEETING.....	115
NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS	118
ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS.....	119
ON THE COVER: REPRODUCTION OF THE COVER OF W.W. NEWELL'S GAMES AND SONGS OF AMERICAN CHILDREN.	

FROM THE EDITOR

The volume of *Children's Folklore Review* that you hold in your hands is the 25th anniversary volume. I do not know about you, but I find it somewhat hard to believe that I have been editing CFR (née *Children's Folklore Newsletter*) since volume I, number 2 (volume I, number 1 was published by Tom Burns, University of Pennsylvania). A more detailed history of this publication can be found in "From *CFN* to *CFR*: The Editor's Perspective," 20: 1&2 (1998): 63-65, the 20th anniversary issue.

I believe that this volume contains articles that display the range of children's folklore inquiry and show the field to be a rich one that is still growing and adapting to the times. Libby Tucker's "Mean Girls" is a straightforward collection of oral folklore dealing with a topic that has recently risen to such prominence that the *Sunday New York Times Magazine* devoted a major article to it. In "Expanding a Traditional Ballad," Janis Dawson discusses what happens when folklore is placed in service to children's literature. Joe Edgette looks at the conflation of popular culture and material folk culture in "Polar: The Most Famous Bear of All!", a look at the "life" of a particularly famous teddy bear. Carole Carpenter examines the enculturation of children and what that means for the future of Canada. Neal Lester discusses the history of African American literacy and looks at the traditions behind portrayal of illiterate parents in African American children's books. Simon Bronner's comments from the "Exhibiting Children" panel at the 2002 AFS meeting, created in conjunction with the Strong Museum, Rochester, New York, show that children's folklorists and museum officers share similar concerns about the representation of children's traditions in museum environments. And I have included an updated and annotated bibliography of articles published in the first 24 volumes.

The volume concludes with the minutes of the 2002 meeting of the Children's Folklore Section, Notes and Announcements, and brief biographies of the contributors.

As always, send your articles to me and encourage your students to collect and analyze children's folklore. No Newell Prize was given out this year because there were no submissions from students. Also, encourage your libraries to subscribe; at \$10:00/year (USA) or (\$15.00/year (non-USA) it's the best deal around.

C.W. Sullivan III

"MEAN GIRLS": THE RECLASSIFICATION OF CHILDREN'S AND ADOLESCENTS' FOLKLORE

ELIZABETH TUCKER

In the winter of 2001, Ashley, a fifteen-year-old ninth-grader in a Catholic girls' school in Nashville, Tennessee, starts to have trouble with her classmates. "You're BARBIE," her friend Marcia tells her. "I hate your blonde hair and your clothes." Marcia and two other girls send threatening e-mails to Ashley; between classes they stand near Ashley's locker, muttering, "Barbie, Barbie!" in singsong voices. Following her mother's advice to ignore these mean girls, Ashley deletes their e-mails and turns away when they speak to her. Then all the name signs around Ashley's locker, colorful posters made by her closest friends, disappear overnight. "It's as if she's lost all her spirit," Ashley's mother tells me on the phone. "The name-signs were the last straw. She doesn't smile any more. We're thinking of moving her to a different school."

Insisting on staying at her familiar high school, Ashley tries to ignore Marcia and her friends. Her parents have a talk with the assistant principal, but their talk has little impact. Marcia and her friends stop targeting Ashley's locker, but their e-mails intensify. When Ashley changes her e-mail address, Marcia and her friends figure out her new address and start using it. They look for new ways to get Ashley's attention. Their harassment is long-term, unyielding.

During that same winter, Ashley's fourteen-year-old cousin Nathan is also having trouble with classmates: eighth-grade boys in a public middle school in a small town in upstate New York. Noticing Nathan's nervous habit of pulling his hair, his friend Eric has started chanting "Puller! Puller! Puller!" Eric and several other boys get into the habit of chanting "Puller!" on the bus ride home every afternoon; Nathan says nothing in response. Between classes, when no teachers are around, the boys throw paper at Nathan; occasionally Eric tries to push Nathan into his locker.

Nathan's parents have a talk with the assistant principal, who says that if the situation worsens, a video camera on the school bus can be used to gather evidence. When Nathan tells Eric to stop bothering him, Eric laughs and chants some more. Finally, Nathan finds Eric after school, just outside the school grounds where fighting is prohibited. He grabs Eric by the collar and punches him, hard. Other kids

cheer. Eric's nose is broken; he has to miss a half-day of school to go to the doctor. Nathan's problems with bullying are over.

These two stories from my own circle of family and friends illustrate gender differences in bullying, a phenomenon that has recently received much media attention. A special issue of *Children's Folklore Review* in 2002 examined aftereffects of the Columbine school shooting. Since that tragedy and others, adults have learned that bullying can lead to catastrophe. Once hidden in the childhood underground, bullying is now national news.

Definitions of bullying have evolved over time. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the word "bully" as "a blustering 'gallant'" or "a tyrannical coward who makes himself a terror to the weak"; this definition, with literary examples dating back to 1688, is more recent than "a term of endearment and familiarity," which goes back to 1538. According to an article in the *Gale Encyclopedia of Childhood and Adolescence*, recapitulated on a popular website, bullying "usually involves an older or larger child (or several children) victimizing a single child who is incapable of defending himself or herself" (<http://www.fairiebelievers.com/gnomenews/2002/bullying.htm>).

Since the early 1990s, people have tended to view bullying as repetitive verbal and physical harassment; the act of bullying has become more significant than the age or size of the bullies, which varies widely. Because of the broad age-range of bullying, from first grade through high school, it is necessary to view bullying as a process that begins in childhood and mutates into new forms in adolescence. Name calling, injurious pranks, rituals of exclusion, and physical pummeling are among the behaviors of bullying that can be found in the annals of children's and adolescents' folklore.

How can the study of folklore help us to understand bullying? The media have given more attention to boys' bullying than girls': a natural choice, since the perpetrators of the Columbine massacre and other school shootings were boys. Since the winter of 2002, some media attention has shifted to the bullying patterns of girls. In this essay I want to examine bullying by girls and, to some extent, bullying by boys, using information from children's folklore studies, the popular press, and a discussion group for parents and educators. I also want to explore how parts of children's and adolescents' folklore have been reclassified: instead of being viewed as traditions belonging to young people, they have become known as negative behaviors prohibited by school regulations and public policy. This reclassification has major implications for those of us who teach folklore and work with children and adolescents in the public sector.

FOLKLORE STUDIES

Before 1999, when the Columbine school shootout occurred, folklorists did not devote much attention to children's derisive language and behavior; narratives, play, and games were more common focal points for scholarly studies. As Marilyn Jorgensen points out in her chapter on teases and pranks in *Children's Folklore: A Sourcebook*, folklorists have published sample texts, but "interest in the genre seems to have stopped short of an in-depth analysis of the many possible meanings and functions of taunts" (1995: 224).

In *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren* (1959), Iona and Peter Opie devote an entire chapter to "Unpopular Children: Jeers and Torments." They distinguish between taunts of a general nature, from which recipients can "take little harm," and jeers for particular offenses, which are characterized by "piercing exactitude" (175). The first example of a specific jeer comes from a group of girls expressing their derision toward a girl who seems unfriendly:

I know a little girl sly and deceitful,
 Every little tittle-tat she goes and tells the people.
 Long nose, ugly face, ought to be put in a glass case.
 If you want to know her name, her name is *Heather Lee*.
 Please, *Heather Lee*, keep away from me;
 I don't want to speak to you, nor you to speak to me.
 Once we were friends, now we disagree,
 Oh, *Heather Lee*, keep away from me.
 It's not because you're dirty,
 It's not because you're clean,
 It's because you've got the whooping-cough,
 Pooh! You awful thing! (175).

This rhyme, sometimes used for skipping, describes both offense and punishment. Because Heather Lee is a sly, deceitful, and unattractive tattletale, the other girls will refuse to speak to her. As the Opies explain, excluding a child from normal social interaction is often called "Sending to Coventry." A ten-year-old girl says:

"When someone does something most of the class disagrees with, we send that person to Coventry which means we never speak to them. Sometimes one or two people hold their noses with their fingers and say that the place smells where they have been. Another name for this is "giving them a cold shoulder" (199).

Sending a classmate to Coventry can be traced back to British school stories as early as 1795; its apparent origin is the Parliamentary practice of sending Royalist prisoners to Coventry to keep them safe. The Opies make it clear that girls send each other to Coventry much more often than boys do. Boys bump or dump an unpopular fellow on the ground; they pull his arms and legs, make him march backward through mud and bushes, and jump roughly upon him, yelling "Pile on" (199201). Bullies are frequently subjected to these kinds of physical torture, as bullying tends to "arouse the desire for physical retribution more strongly than any other offender of the juvenile code" (192). From the wealth of examples in the Opies' collection, readers can see that juvenile justice is a self-regulating system. Both boys and girls call each other names, but the girls' jeers are especially varied and colorful. For example, girls may call a classmate who seems conceited a "swankpot," "Swanky Liz," "Swanky Lanky Liz," or "Swanky Pants" (182).

Echoing the Opies, Mary and Herbert Knapp state in *One Potato, Two Potato* (1976) that "the cruelest epithets are those which are the most specific" (66). Their list of cruel jeers includes "Pipe-neck, Platypus, Fish-lips, Beaver-teeth, Mush-mouth, Bubble-head, Spider-legs, Candy-grabber, Buger-peeler" (66). Focussing on the efficacy of children's self-education, the Knapps explain that jeers "enable children partly to control situations that would otherwise be almost unbearably frustrating" (59). Although they refrain from saying that verbal duels are always beneficial, they are firm in saying that "the traditional ways children have devised for dealing with feelings are better than most of us realize" (68).

Although most of the Knapps' coverage of children's jeers is not gender-specific, their description of Slam Books shows that girls are in charge: "Girls 'keep' these books, but boys and girls alike write in them" (79). Comments about an unpopular child in a 1969 Slam Book include "'Scago la Vomit,' 'Stupid' (three times), 'Gross' (twice), 'Ugh!' (three times), 'Not nice,' 'Show off,' 'Stinks,' 'Dumb Dope,' 'Scab,' 'Pu Pu,' 'Ugh boo'"(79). Analysis of these hurtful comments takes a generally positive direction:

This is scapegoating, and it is appalling. But Slam Books have redeeming features. Children who write in them discover that writing is good for something besides homework, and they learn a lot about the perils and pleasures of judging other people. They need to be surprised when they are misinterpreted, to be shocked as they discover what others think of

them, and to find out all those complicated things one learns from quarrels and reconciliations, from secret agreements, treaties, and alliances (79-80).

The underlying assumption here is that children, when left to their own devices, teach themselves good things that will prepare them for adult social interaction. This credo can be traced back to Rousseau's *Emile*, first published in 1762, in which the child becomes an independent, self-directed learner who makes healthful choices.

In *American Children's Folklore* (1988), Simon Bronner lists a number of derisive rhymes, including this one from an eight-year-old girl:

Mary, Mary, is no good
 Chop her up for firewood
 If the fire does not burn
 Throw her in a butter churn
 If the butter turns to cheese
 Georgie, Georgie will give her a squeeze (75).

Bronner explains that jeers clarify children's norms, such as cleanliness and cooperation; they also initiate social drama and elicit information or an emotional reaction from the child who is teased (74). This approach explores what a child can learn from derisive folklore without trying to identify all functions as educational and productive.

An early study of adolescent folklore, Millicent R. Ayoub and Stephen A. Barnett's "Ritualized Verbal Assault in White High School Culture," discusses the popularity of Sounding, also known as Playing the Dozens, among white high school students in the mid-1960s. Citing Roger Abrahams' *Deep Down in the Jungle*, Ayoub and Barnett suggest that Playing the Dozens spread from African-American culture to white culture after World War II. Offering examples of typical Mother-Sounds ("Your old lady is a fag," "Your old lady gives Green Stamps"), Ayoub and Barnett make several points that are significant for folklorists studying verbal duels and taunts today. Sounds begin in elementary school and gradually become more sophisticated as children grow older (339). What looks to outsiders like a serious exchange of verbal abuse can seem harmless to in-group members, who insist that "It's all in fun" (340). Girls play a name game related to the Dozens but deny that they know about the Dozens itself, even though they seem familiar with it. Ayoub's and Barnett's study conveys the same general message as the Opies' and Knapps': young people's folklore regulates itself.

In his recent essay "Redwood Grove: Youth Culture in a Group Home," published in *Children's Folklore Review* (2002), Jesse Gelwicks describes how children use storytelling and teasing to form a social hierarchy outside the control of adults. According to Gelwicks, "Adults can intervene and impose control based on behavior charts and points, but the social hierarchy framed by the boys is also a very powerful force in shaping the children's experiences" (77). This affirmation of children's hierarchies is an important reminder of what children can accomplish on their own, even in an era when youth culture seems to be fraught with danger.

RECLASSIFICATION

Since April 20, 1999, when the Columbine school shootout occurred, the view that children and adolescents can regulate their own society has radically changed. Knowing that children with guns can exact retribution for verbal derision makes the derision itself seem much more dangerous. High schools, middle schools, and even elementary schools have tightened their regulations; parents have become more watchful, and the power of words in youth culture has gained new respect.

Before Columbine, however, a change in attitude was already emerging. In 1991, a teenager in Duluth, Minnesota discovered that her name was listed among "sexually degrading graffiti" on the boys' bathroom wall. After the school refused to erase the graffiti, the girl's parents filed charges with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, and a cash settlement of \$15,000 was awarded "for emotional damages as a result of sexual harassment" (Strauss). Graffiti, often considered verbal and pictorial art by folklorists, had become grounds for a lawsuit.

In 1993, Susan Strauss published an essay in the *Vocational Education Journal* that gave examples of sexual harassment. Among these were graffiti, Slam Books, pranks such as "spiking" or "de-pantsing" and "wedgies," and "name calling: from 'honey' to 'bitch' or worse." More than half of the offenses listed in Strauss's essay came from children's and adolescents' folklore. What used to be part of the culture of childhood, occasionally noticed by parents and teachers, had entered the language of legal prohibition (<http://www.straussconsult.com/article2.htm>).

A survey of middle school and high school handbook available on the Internet shows how school administrators have tried to outlaw behavior that might prove to be dangerous. Rule 8 at New Lebanon Middle School in Ohio specifies that there should be no language

"deemed inappropriate or obscene by any staff member, either written or verbal, to annoy or humiliate others or to disrupt the educational process" (<http://www.newlebanon.K12.oh.us/handbook>). At St. David's School in Miami, with students from preschool to eighth grade, regulations prohibit rudeness, roughness, and "vile, vulgar or indecent language." One rule specifies that "Slam Books (derogatory writings) will not be tolerated. Students participating in Slam Books will be disciplined accordingly" (<http://www.saintdavid.org/School Forms/Handbook>).

In Hartford, Connecticut, high schools and middle schools have adopted a "zero tolerance" approach to fighting and dangerous pranks. The mother of a boy who was in sixth grade in the Hartford area told me:

Michael put plant food in the teachers' coffee pot after his teacher told the class about kids substituting salt for sugar. The police came; they told him that if a teacher had been pregnant, she would have lost her baby after drinking the plant food. Before this prank, Michael was a wonderful kid. Afterwards, he was on the middle school's "Most Wanted" list. He was suspended. I always thought it was the teacher's fault, because he told the class about that substitution prank (Martin).

The boundary line between pranks and crimes has changed, and educators' roles have been called into question. Could a parent file a complaint against a high-school teacher because a traditional prank was mentioned in class? As the above story suggests, describing a prank could precipitate a grievance.

The state of Connecticut is currently holding legislative hearings on Public Act Number 02-119: "An Act Concerning Bullying Behavior in Schools and Concerning The Pledge of Allegiance." Defining bullying as "repeated, overt acts by one or more students on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity that are intended to ridicule humiliate, or intimidate another student," this bill requires all school boards to develop an anti-bullying policy. Connecticut's Commission on Children has announced that Erika Harold, Miss America 2003, will work with Connecticut students to help launch an anti bullying platform (<http://www.cga.state.ct.us/coc>). Colorado and other states have already developed laws against bullying; Connecticut's recent efforts should have an impact on the way bullying is received in the northeastern United States.

"MEAN GIRLS"

On February 24, 2002, the bright pink cover of the *New York Times Magazine* displayed a doll-like teenaged girl, punctured with blackheaded pins, held in the fist of another girl who was clearly her tormentor. The headline: "Mean Girls and the new movement to tame them." This essay by Margaret Talbot immediately drew nationwide attention. Teachers, parents, and Internet chat groups mobilized to answer Talbot's questions: is it possible that girls are more aggressive than boys? And if so, how can their damage be controlled?

Talbot's essay gives the reader a glimpse into the "Girl World" of Rosalind Wiseman, a thirty-two-year-old woman who presents programs and seminars on relational aggression, date rape, and other issues that worry parents and teachers of girls. The founder of a nonprofit organization known as the Empower Program, Wiseman works with groups of girls to help them take responsibility for their actions and develop, as her handbook explains, "strategies to interrupt the cycle of gossip, exclusivity and reputations" (40). Talbot's description of Rosalind Wiseman makes her sound like an infiltrator who has studied girls' gestures and folk speech:

When Wiseman catches sight of you approaching, she knows how to do a little side-to-side wave, with her elbow pressed to her hip, that is disarmingly girlish. She says "totally" and "omigod" and "don't stress" and "chill" a lot and refers to people who are "hotties" or "have it goin on" (40).

In fact, Wiseman has studied girls' customs and chooses her wardrobe with the help of a seventeen-year-old girl: her sister Zoe. She interacts with her girl clients much as an older sister would, but she is an entrepreneur hired to intervene. Other programs like hers include the Ophelia Project in Erie, Pennsylvania and GENaustin in Austin, Texas. Helping girls to avoid hurting each other has become big business.

Does the prevalence of these relatively new programs show that girls are tormenting each other in new and alarming ways? On the contrary: the examples Talbot offers reveal patterns from children's and adolescents' folklore. When Wiseman holds an Apologies Day, girls who have been mean to each other are told to write down feelings of contrition. The girls who resist this exercise most are the ones Wiseman calls Alpha Girls, R.M.G. 's (Really Mean Girls) or Queen Bees; their victims are Wannabes and Messengers. Interestingly, the written apologies often hold new insults for the original victims. One girl writes, "I'm sorry I told everyone you had an American Girl doll. It

really burned your reputation" (26). Another girl writes a longer note:

Dear 'Friend,' I'm sorry that I talked about you behind your back. I once even compared your forehead/face to a minefield (only 2 1 person though). I'm really sorry I said these things even though I might still believe them (26).

Devious though these apologies may be, they sound familiar. Unflattering, insulting analogies have been common for as long as children's folklore has been recorded. The apologies written by girls in Wiseman's group are like Slam Book entries; the writer is allowed to record comments that will make the recipient furious.

Another genre of "meanness" common among Wiseman's girls is the custom of three-way calling. Two girls call up a third girl, but one of the two does not reveal that she's on the line. The girl who is speaking encourages the third girl to say terrible things about her silent partner. This is a phone prank resembling the traditional girls' game Truth or Dare, in which a player must share shocking truths. With the technology of three-way calling, the potential for inflicting pain is more advanced than it would be otherwise.

One especially painful process is the ritual of exclusion. The custom of Sending to Coventry, noted by the Opies, is just one of many for the same purpose. An apology note written by one of Wiseman's clients gives a few details: "Dear B. I'm sorry for excluding you and ignoring you. Also, I have said a bunch of bad things about you. I have also run away from you just because I didn't like you" (26). One reason for exclusion is failure to follow a clique's dress rules, such as "You cannot wear jeans any day but Friday, and you cannot wear a ponytail or sneakers more than once a week"(28). Rigid self-generated dress codes are typical of adolescents. While folklorists, psychologists, and sociologists have attempted to figure out why such rituals are so common, more research seems to be necessary.

Rosalind Wiseman's book *Queen Bees and Wannabes: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends and Other Realities of Adolescence* was published in the spring of 2002. Two other books on the same subject came out at that time: Emily White's *Fast Girls: Teenage Tribes and the Myth of the Slut* and Rachel Simmons' *Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls*. The era of "Mean Girl" analysis has arrived.

This publishing trend was preceded, perhaps inspired, by several books by Scandinavian scholars. Dan Olweus's *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do* (1993) compares boys' and girls' bullying; it also compares bullying in Sweden with bullying in Nor-

way. Other variables studied by Olweus include class size, school size, physical weakness and strength, and supervision at recess and lunch time. A book that more specifically addresses girls' aggression is Kaj Bjorkqvist's *Of Mice and Women: Aspects of Female Aggression* (1992). With an interdisciplinary approach, Bjorkqvist asks whether females of all species are less aggressive than males. His focus on patterns of female aggression has opened up the subject for scholars in other fields. Another valuable resource is *The Nature of School Bullying: A Cross-Cultural National Perspective* (1999), edited by Olweus and others.

GLOBAL VILLAGE

While looking for information about girls' bullying on the Internet, I discovered an informative website: <http://www.bullying.org>. Designed by a Canadian teacher to help children and their parents and teachers, this website contains pictures, poems, and stories from children who have suffered from bullying in countries around the world. Many of the poems, including this one by eleven-year-old Dani, show the torment of bullying:

When will it stop?
 I hope one day it does.
 I want, I need a life.
 MY LIFE. The one I had before you set onto me.
 Before I walked down that hall in fear.
 Before I saw that note you gave to all of them.
 Before I was told I was nothing. Before I was spat on.
 Some day I'll be free and I will walk far away from you, so far you'll never find me.

According to the proverb that Hillary Clinton used as a book title, "It takes a village to raise a child" (1996). Sometimes it takes a global village, a group of people from various countries connected to each other through e-mail, to find solutions to a problem as serious as bullying. When I joined bullying-support@yahogroups.com, recommended by the "bullying.org" website, I felt I had found that kind of village.

At first, never having belonged to such a group, I didn't know what to expect. Would group members welcome my queries about children's folklore, or would they find those questions intrusive? I needn't have worried. Two teachers and a parent replied immediately, sending me information and asking me to tell them more about my

interests. The ongoing dialogue was lively and interesting.

Within a few days, I had heard from teachers and parents in Canada, various parts of the United States, and Australia. One teacher at a public junior high school in Alabama assured me that name-calling was part of both bullying and everyday discourse: ". . . believe me the use of "Ho," "Yo mama," and "B" (bitch) are said every day 24-7. Both male and female students use them as a defense mechanism when they are upset without thinking" (Reese). A teacher in Australia wrote that "the most common form of bullying for both sexes is verbal. This includes teasing, harassment and name calling. It is the most painful" (Tamer). Just as the Opies found in collecting jeers for unpopular children, I discovered that there was a wide range of taunts for both girls and boys.

More compelling, though, were the stories of personal experience shared by parents of children who had suffered. Jill, who had learned about the support group from a television special on bullying in Indiana, shared details about what had happened to her eleven-year-old daughter:

She makes the honor roll and has long beautiful blonde hair (not from me. LOL). Several of the girls that have had trouble with grades, 1 in particular that was held back. . . was always telling my daughter that she is stupid and pulling her I keep trying to tell my daughter that this little girl just wishes she made better grades and had her hair. But when your daughter cries herself to sleep and does not want to go to a slumber party because of this other child, it is hard.

Others replied to Jill, offering consolation and advice. Two teachers suggested that Jill should ask administrators at her daughter's school to buy videos on bullying; several parents agreed. School administrators mentioned community conferencing and Spinclusion, both of which are designed to enhance dialogue and empathy. Lynn Zammit, the Coordinator of Choices for Youth Programs in Kitchener, Ontario, wrote about the Restorative Justice process, a conferencing model that brings the offender and victim together with school staff and community members. This process has been effective in dealing with gangs, school violence, bullying, truancy, and other difficult issues involving criminal charges (Zammit).

Another important idea that emerged from the group was to read what students have to say in "What Can Be Done About Bullying? Students Speak Out," by Ruth Rees (2002). Student-generated ideas include treating fellow students as one would like to be treated one

self, sticking up for fellow students, quickly reporting bullying incidents, and running year-long bullying programs; if nothing else works, a change of classrooms or of schools is recommended. Teachers should stick to the rules, monitor public spaces, handle troubling situations immediately, and impose progressively severe penalties (5-7).

At times the dialogue on this Internet support group became ideological. Julia, a Miami resident who grew up in Russia, wrote:

In Russia, sure there is a lot to be improved, BUT kids are being taught from the very beginning - by teachers and parents and everybody around - you should treat everybody equally no matter what, nobody is better than you are, nobody deserves to be hurt, everybody deserves to be treated friendly, etc. Here in the US I found out a lot of things that amaze me.

1. Schools do what's convenient for them, not for parents or children.
2. You can buy SpongeBob Squarepants video for \$10 and "Words can't hurt me," the one that really every school needs to see, is \$70! (Rivers).

One day later, Ana, who grew up in Cuba, expressed a different viewpoint: "The communist ideology did not protect in a special way anyone... I remember many bullies empowered by the ideological system" (Faya). It was clear that there was potential for more politically oriented dialogue, as well as more personal experience stories from diverse cultures.

Two mothers, Cindy Wesley and Fern Trithart, were central figures in the bullying support group. Their own stories were wrenching, powerful, and difficult to read. Both Cindy and Fern had lost their children because of bullying. Cindy's daughter, Dawn-Marie, died at age fourteen on November 10, 2000, in Mission, British Columbia. Reports of this tragedy were available on the Internet, but Cindy sent our group a more personal account:

On November 10, 2000 our youngest son found his sister who had hung herself. In her suicide note she named three girls who had bullied her at school, one being a police officer's daughter. For the first time in history bullies were charged. During the trial I sat through having to listen to how these girls tormented our daughter. The last words that our baby heard were "Dawn-Marie you are fucken dead." Am I thankful that the judicial system seems to be owning their part in this

out of control situation" (Wesley).

Cindy's story deeply saddened us all; this was the worst outcome that a bullying situation could produce. Many of us sent messages of sympathy. Faced with the starkness of this story, at first I did not want to analyze it as a folklore text; such analysis seemed disrespectful. However, as I read several renditions of Cindy's story, I realized that her narratives had become an important vehicle for activism. Cindy is the founder of PAVE, Parents Against Violence Everywhere, which has been a strong advocate for children's rights. Describing other parents' judicial challenges, she explains that "the process is very lengthy and parents usually give up midway" (Wesley). Her own story, telling of successful prosecution, gives strength and hope to other parents seeking justice in the courts.

Fern Trithart's story about the loss of her son is equally wrenching. Tyler Trithart died at the age of sixteen on May 25, 2001, in Chestermere, Alberta, Canada. He got into a fight with another teenaged boy over a girl, and the first punch was fatal. Sixty students watched the fight, which took place in a remote area where parents and teachers could not intervene. Although a trial was held, the boy who threw the first punch was not charged. Fern's recollections of Tyler's life are suffused with memories of bullying:

Losing a child to violence is different from losing someone. We had to endure a trial that blamed everything on Tyler not the boy or girl who dragged him into their issues. Tyler had a learning disability, he was not mean or violent, he was just an easy target to become involved in these kids' issues (Trithart).

Since Tyler's death, Fern has become an activist; she maintains a website on which she tells her son's story, urging young people not to engage in violent behavior (<http://www.iaredstory.com/tyler.html>). On this website, Tyler's death is described as a "bullycide." Fern regularly participates in the bullying support group, offering advice and encouragement to many people. Her courage, like the courage of Cindy Wesley, is extraordinary.

CONCLUSION

I began this essay with stories about two teenagers, Ashley and Nathan, who were tormented by their peers in the winter of 2001. After two months of interaction with my bullying support group, I

found it appropriate to conclude with the stories of Dawn-Marie and Tyler, who did not survive being bullied. These stories provide eloquent proof of the need for more effective intervention and education. Folklorists, aware of the long-standing traditions of children and adolescents, can approach this crisis with an understanding of how young people's hierarchies function. As Ruth Rees's essay explains, asking students themselves to come up with solutions is a promising approach. Community conferencing also gives students a voice but tends to be managed by adults. In the "global village" of the Internet, parents and educators can discuss intervention techniques, sharing their opinions about what works and what doesn't work.

Several types of children's and adolescents' folklore have undergone reclassification. Bullying can be prosecuted as a crime; writing in Slam Books and planning dangerous pranks can result in suspension from school; name-calling can lead to sexual harassment charges; and exclusion rituals can cause school administrators to hire professional interveners like Rosalind Wiseman. Will the recently published folklore of "mean girls" result in policy changes in the future? By gathering stories and other kinds of data, folklorists can seek answers to that question and others. In the midst of social change, storytelling is one of the most powerful problem-solvers we have.

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NOTE

I would like to dedicate this essay to the memory of Dawn-Marie Wesley, 1986-2000, and Tyler James Grant Trithart, 1984-2001. Dawn-Marie's memorial website is <http://www.missioncity.ca/pave/dawnmariewesley/dawnmariewesley.htm>. Tyler's memorial website is <http://www.jaredstory.com/tvler.html>.

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EXPANDING A TRADITIONAL BALLAD: *TAM LIN*
IN THE PICTURE BOOK FANTASIES OF
JANE YOLEN AND SUSAN COOPER

JANIS DAWSON

O I forbid you, maidens a,
That wear gowd on your hair,
To come or gae by Caterhaugh,
For young Tam Lin is there.

There's nane that gaes by Caterhaugh
But they leave him a wad,
Either their rings, or green mantles,
Or else their maidenhead.

Janet has kilted her green kirtle
A little aboon her knee,
And she has broded her yellow hair
A little aboon her bree,
And she's awa' to Carterhaugh.
As fast as she can hie.

-*Tam Lin* (Child 39A)¹

Tam Lin is one of the better known of the traditional Scottish fairy ballads. This highly romantic story of a young woman who rescues her lover from the Fairy Queen was noted in written sources as early as the sixteenth century. Although the ballad itself, set in the wild border lands of Scotland, appears to be unique to the Scottish people, folklorists have connected the story with Greek popular traditions older than Homer (Child 336)² The story has also been linked to other traditional ballads and tales, including *Thomas the Rhymer*, *The Faerie Oak of Corriewater*, *Alice Brand*, *The King's Daughter Jane*, and *Beauty and the Beast*, and it has been described as *the* canonical ballad ("Legends"). In more recent times, the story has continued to inspire artists, writers, and musicians.³ *Tam Lin* has even entered the electronic age with an extensive web site devoted to the discussion and interpretation of the ballad.⁴

Romance aside, however, *Tam Lin* is a dark, violent and highly complex story that in its various manifestations deals with rape, abortion, abduction, torture, and human sacrifice. It also draws on primal fears of abandonment, darkness, madness, and the power of evil. This is adult material, to be sure; nonetheless, the ballad has inspired a number of fantasy stories and novels for children and young adults including *The Gold of Fairnilee* (1888) by Andrew Lang, *Thursday* by Catherine Storr (1971) *The Queen of Spells* by Dahlov Ipcar (1973), *The Perilous Gard* by Elizabeth Marie Pope (1974), and *Fire and Hemlock* by Diana Wynne Jones (1984), as well as illustrated children's books by Jane Yolen (1990) and Susan Cooper (1991)⁵ Many of these authors have been drawn to the character of the determined young woman who redeems her lover from the Fairy Queen.⁶ Indeed, the fair Janet, or Margaret, as she is variously known, has been represented as a kind of profeminist in a number of modern discussions of the ballad. John Niles writes that

In its portrait of Janet, a young woman willing to venture her life in defiance of all restrictions in an attempt to win her lover back to human form, the Scottish ballad reflects an ideal of feminine behavior which is refreshingly unlike that which is reflected in most polite literature of recent centuries. The ballad itself has no use for pale, passive princesses. It shows us a spunky and defiant young woman who is both willing and able to help herself. The song is rooted in rough soil, and its protagonist shows the kind of toughness necessary for survival in such terrain. (346).

Colin Manlove expresses a similar view, noting that, "it must be said that there is a strong 'feminist' element to many Scottish (not Gaelic) fairy tales" (22). Manlove seems to see feminism as women pitted against one another, however, for his discussion is as much about the Fairy Queen as Janet. "The whole tale is a picture of feminine resolution-and even dominance," he writes, "for Tam is the slave of the Fairy Queen and cannot escape by himself" (32). Not surprisingly, authors who have used this ballad to structure their own works have emphasized female strength, boldness, perseverance and independence.⁷ This search for the female hero, at the expense, perhaps, of other elements in the traditional story, naturally raises the issue of how authors use traditional literature in the creation of fantasy for young readers. However, as C. W. Sullivan III notes, "little attention has been given to the work of authors of fantasy for children and

adolescents who have drawn directly on traditional plot structures upon which to expand and build whole novels" ("Traditional Ballads" 145).

Sullivan has identified three major ways in which authors have used traditional materials to structure or help structure their novels: expanding, interweaving, and inventing (*Welsh Celtic Myth* x)⁸ It is understood that regardless of the method used, a careful writer will use the materials conscientiously and respect the essence of the traditional work. For the purposes of this paper, however, I will refer to Sullivan's first method, expanding, in my discussion of modern versions of the ballad by Jane Yolen and Susan Cooper. The version of the traditional ballad that will serve as the reference point for this examination will be the one listed as number 39A in Francis James Child's collection of English and Scottish popular ballads published between 1882 and 1898. Child's 39A appears to be one of the oldest printed versions of the ballad.⁹

According to Sullivan, expanding refers to the way in which a modern author "expands upon the original material-adding, as it were, flesh to the skeleton [. . .]." In this manner, the modern author "adds detail and texture, filling in the background, developing major and minor characters more fully, borrowing from other compatible sources, and creating new material that complements the original" (*Welsh Celtic Myth* 13). Jane Yolen and Susan Cooper, both well respected authors of fantasy for children, have followed the traditional ballad closely in their respective works, but each has expanded the ballad in interesting ways. Both publications are illustrated and designed for younger readers. In addition to expanding the ballad, however, both Yolen and Cooper have chosen to omit some traditional material because they are writing for a younger audience. The ways in which these omissions affect the retelling of *Tam Lin* will be discussed in this paper.

Although there are some fifteen versions of the ballad (including fragments) in Child's collection, the general story line may be described as follows: A young man (Tam Lin)¹⁰ haunts a wild area (Carterhaugh)¹¹ threatening young maidens by demanding things of value including rings, green mantles, and even their maidenheads. One young woman, Janet or Margaret,¹² refuses to heed the warnings and proceeds to visit the dangerous place. She plucks a rose, thereby summoning the young man. He challenges her, but she declares her right to be there because it is "my ain, /My daddie gave it me." She dallies with the young man, and when she returns home, she is with child. She returns at a later time, summons him again by plucking a rose, and asks his identity. He explains that many years ago, he was

abducted by the Elfin Queen (or Queen of the Fairies), but now he is about to be given up as a "tithe to Hell" unless the young woman agrees to save him. The young man's instructions are explicit: she must meet him at the crossroads on Halloween night (or Midsummer's Eve) when the Queen and her court ride abroad and pull him from his horse. She must then hold fast to him while he undergoes successive terrifying changes of shape ending in a burning rod of iron. Once he has returned to his human form, she must immerse him in a body of water and then wrap him in her mantle. The young woman follows her lover's instructions and thereby wins him for herself.

Yolen begins her retelling of *Tam Lin* not with the familiar warning to maidens but with a description of a ruined castle, "strange and forbidding," set on "a weedy piece of land called Carterhaugh." Readers are told that, "many years had passed since humans had lived there," and that "now all the children were warned against it." Yolen has thus expanded the ballad to include an eerie atmosphere and a warning to all children, not just maidens. She alters the warning still further by having older boys go secretly to Carterhaugh on dares, "leaving tokens of their passing-garlands or rings, and once a fine green mantle." While Yolen's addition of atmospheric detail enhances the supernatural aspects of the tale and effectively prepares the reader for the appearance of the enchanted knight and the Faery Queen, her alterations are, in effect, omissions—*Tam Lin* does not demand a toll and there is no reference to the loss of maidenheads (rape or seduction)—and they deprive the story of its ability to function as a cautionary tale. These changes, dictated, one must assume, by the fact that Yolen is writing for a younger audience, also affects the nature of the relationship between *Tam Lin* and the young maiden called Jennet.

Yolen expands Jennet's character by describing her beauty and emphasizing her boldness. Yolen also makes Jennet's determination to claim her inheritance the motivation for her otherwise unexplained journey to Carterhaugh in defiance of the warning:

Jennet always had a mind of her own, even as a wee girl. The villagers all said she would never marry, no matter that her father was chief of the clan. No man would want her, even for all her beauty and her father's name. For she always spoke what she thought. And *what* she thought was never quite proper for a young lady.

"I will go," Jennet said, "for I am not afraid. I will go when I am old enough to win back Carterhaugh for our clan."

In the ballad, however, Jennet's reference to her inheritance is presented simply as her defiant answer to Tam Lin's demand to know why she is plucking a rose at Carterhaugh:

Carterhaugh, it is my ain,
 My daddie gave it me;
 I'll come and gang by Carterhaugh
 And ask nae leave at thee. (Child 39A verse 7)

Yolen has thus expanded the original narrative to make Janet's actions more understandable and to present her as a determined, strong-willed young woman—a female hero. Yolen also gives Jennet a last name which further identifies her as a strong woman determined to claim her rights.

True to her promise, Yolen's Jennet goes to Carterhaugh on her sixteenth birthday to claim her inheritance. Yolen embellishes the ballad's reference to Jennet's dress and again emphasizes her reason for going to Carterhaugh:

On the day she turned sixteen, the day she came into her inheritance, Jennet twisted her long, red-gold hair into a braid and pinned it to the top of her head. She put on her brand new birthday gown, as green as a young willow. She fastened the MacKenzie plaid across her shoulder and secured it with a golden brooch. [. . .] Jennet pulled the plaid up over her hair. She put on her walking shoes, tucked her skirts above her knees, and bounded up and over the heather hills toward the tumbledown towers of Carterhaugh.

Once at Carterhaugh, "In a voice that was strong, though the echo of it trembled," Jennet announces her claim to Carterhaugh *before* she plucks the rose that will summon Tam Lin:

This reversal of events allows Yolen's Jennet more power in her encounter with Tam Lin; she is in a less vulnerable position than her counterpart in the ballad. A further significant addition is Jennet's claim that Carterhaugh was stolen from her ancestors by the fairies. By plucking the rose, Jennet states that she is making a pledge that she will "take back Carterhaugh and restore it to humankind."

There is, of course, no sexual encounter between Jennet and Tam Lin, and Yolen's Jennet has no need to make a second journey to Carterhaugh to either confront her lover or gather herbs to induce a miscarriage (depending on the version of the ballad used). Jennet and

Tam Lin quickly fall in love, and as in the traditional ballad, he describes his enchantment and tells her how she can win him away from the Fey. Yolen follows the ballad closely up to Jennet's victory over the Faery Queen, combining details from different versions that require Jennet to carry holy water and earth from her own garden as additional protection from the power of the Fey.¹³ However, rather than end the story with the Queen's angry curse,

Shame betide her ill-fared face,
 And an ill death may she die,
 For she's taen way the bonniest knight
 In a' my companie. (Child 39 A verse 41)

Yolen's Tam Lin laughs at the Queen's curse, and dismisses her power:

"We stand here protected by a circle of earth, with holy water upon our heads. Your curses return from us to thee, O Queen of the Ever-Fair. And look!" He pointed to the horizon where the sun was just dawning. "Your power is over. Be gone."

Yolen then provides a fairy tale conclusion:

And so Jennet and Tam Lin were married. It is said in Selkirk that they lived a long and happy life together in the great stone castle Jennet restored and renamed Carter Hall. And that their children's children's children lived there happily ever after.

By ending her book in this way rather than with the curse, Yolen removes the possibility that the Queen will return to harm Jennet, Tam Lin, or their future offspring. Where the ballad leaves the reader or listener conscious of the lingering threat of evil and danger, Yolen provides a "happily ever after" picture. This removes the tension and upsets the fine balance in the ballad which begins with a warning and ends with a threat. Tam Lin's original audience would have understood that the Queen's threat was no idle utterance; it is powerful and malevolent, and it carries with it the weight of traditional lore rich in stories of changelings, stolen children, faery possession, and human sacrifice. In terms of Jennet herself, the ending seems to diminish her character as if her struggle with the Fairy Queen has robbed her of her essential boldness and vigour. The image of Jennet at the end of the book is inconsistent with the strong-minded young woman Yolen establishes in the opening paragraphs.

Evelyn Perry argues that Yolen's ending diminishes the ballad by downplaying the struggle between Good and Evil that is an essential part of the story. In Perry's words, "The Fairy Queen's final threat to the couple, the understanding that we must never relax our fight against Evil, and the touching appeal to the hero in all of us, have been plowed under by the promise of happily ever after and the distillation of Evil" (40).

Unfortunately, however, Perry, preoccupied with the hero's journey, is less than clear about what this Good and Evil might represent, and consequently her critique of Yolen falls short. If the ballad is read through its symbolism, however, Good and Evil are not vague and amorphous; what is represented is a struggle between Christianity and the still powerful ancient gods and spirits of nature. The symbols are Janus-like; they may be Christian or Pagan, and this creates a powerful tension in the ballad. The rose, the central image here, represents virginity, passion and seduction, but in Christian symbolism, it also represents the blood Christ shed on the cross. The thorn, as dominant in the illustrations as the rose itself, also recalls Christ's crown of thorns. The Christian symbolism, indeed, cannot be downplayed without violating the integrity of the ballad. In the ballad, Janet's action turns on her desperate hope that her lover is a mortal and a Christian. Pregnant with their child, she returns to Carterhaugh to confront him:

O tell me, tell me, Tam Lin, she says,
 For's sake that dies on tree,
 If e' er ye was in holy chapel,
 Or Christendom did see. (Child 39A verse 21)

Once she receives the assurance she seeks, she is prepared to follow his instructions. This sequence is important because it helps to explain Janet's action from this point forward. Janet is motivated not just by love but also by her real need for a Christian union for the sake of her unborn child.

Although Yolen has reduced the ballad through her happily-ever-after ending, in her defense, it must be said that she has, nonetheless, preserved a sense of the religious struggle at the heart of the ballad by having Jenet bring a bottle of holy water (blessed by the priest) and earth from her garden (earth from a Christian precinct) to her meeting with the Faery Queen. In Yolen's retelling of the ballad, the holy water and the earth play a crucial part in the redemption of Tam Lin. Tam Lin, in thrall to the dark powers of the Faery Queen, is indeed a

fallen man; by claiming him from the Queen, Jennet, a Christian woman, redeems not only his body but also his soul. His immersion in the holy well is his baptism.

Charles Mikolaycak's full page lavish illustrations are well suited to Yolen's retelling of Tam Lin and contribute in their own way to the expansion of the ballad. His illustrations, in fact, provide the sexual imagery that Yolen's text omits. He uses strong lines and bold and vivid colours that complement and emphasize Jennet's strong character. Gray and black are used to emphasize the darkness of the story and the eeriness of the setting, but red and green predominate, reinforcing the Christian and Celtic symbolism in the story: red for the rose that symbolizes virginity, seduction, passion, fertility, and the blood of sacrifice; green for fertility, renewal, envy, and deceit. Green is also the colour traditionally associated with the fairy folk. The central image in the ballad, the rose, becomes a focal point in Mikolaycak's illustrations, expanding from a small rosebud crushed in an old woman's hand, to a full blown rose in the wilderness at Carterhaugh. It is the full-blown rose that Jennet picks to summon her lover; it also signals her deflowering. The thorn joins the rose as a dominant image in the illustrations, representing not only the blood and Passion of Christ, but also untilled soil, and by association, virginity. In Christian symbolism, "Christ's crown of thorns celebrates the marriage of Heaven with the virgin Earth"; it is "the wedding ring of the Word—the Son of Man—and the Earth, virgin and still to be made fertile" (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 990). The colours are woven into the lovers' clothing, reinforcing the dual nature of the symbolism of the ballad. Jennet's gown is green and her mantle is a red and green plaid when she first goes to Carterhaugh; when she returns to confront the Queen, she wears a rose/blood red gown and a green mantle. Tam Lin's plaid is black and white; his colours recall the black thorn, but in the final illustration of the text, the artist has added the colours of Jennet's plaid. Through colour imagery, the union of Jennet and Tam Lin represents the marriage of Heaven and Earth and the victory over the dark forces represented by the Faery Queen.¹⁴

Susan Cooper's retelling of Tam Lin is based on several versions of the ballad rather than on the better known Child 39 A. Here Jennet is called Margaret, and she is presented as the king's daughter rather than the daughter of a clan chieftain. Cooper follows the outline of the traditional ballad closely, but like Yolen, Cooper expands the ballad by adding details that provide atmosphere and texture and contribute to the development of the young woman's character.

Cooper begins, as Yolen does, not with the traditional warning,

but with a description of the setting; however, Cooper's setting is pleasant rather than eerie and forbidding:

The clouds marched over the blue summer sky, and the cloud-shadows slid purple and grey across the hills of Scotland, as Margaret sat beside her window, sewing. She was not fond of sewing. She longed for adventure. But because she was the daughter of the king she was supposed to set a good, gentle example to all the other girls. Every morning they sat with her in the great tower of her father's castle, sewing, listening to the stories told by Margaret's old nurse and waiting to be married.

True to the spirit of the ballad, Margaret is presented as bolder than other girls, but Cooper's maiden seems to lack Jennet's vivacious manner. The soft tones of Warwick Hutton's watercolour illustrations contribute to this impression of a less confident, more subdued character for Margaret; unlike Mikolaycak's Jennet, she strikes no bold poses. Her sudden decision to go to Carterhays is prompted not by her determination to claim her estate, as in Yolen's retelling, but rather by her rebelliousness. She does not want to sit and sew and listen to instructions about maidenly behaviour.

"Rub your skin with cucumber for softness," said fat Jana, the steward's daughter.

"Behave modestly with young men," said soft-voiced Alison, "as is fitting for a maid."

The old nurse nodded in approval. "And never travel the roads alone, or go near Carterhays."

"I don't see why not," Margaret said. "Carterhays is the prettiest wood in my father's kingdom. Roses grow there. We rode by it last week."

"But it's haunted!" Jana said. "The Elfin knight waits there, to trap young girls!"

"Tam Lin," said Margaret. "Yes. But have you ever seen him?"

"If once you saw him it would be the end of you," the old nurse said sharply. "No man would marry you then."

Margaret jumped up impatiently. "Marry, marry, marry! Can't you think about anything else?" She flung down her embroidery and ran out of the room.

"Where are you going?" cried the old nurse in alarm.

"To pick roses!" Margaret shouted back up the curving stairs. "At Carterhays!"

Cooper's Margaret, keeping to the detail in the ballad's refrain, hitches up her green skirts (she wears no bold plaid), loops up her hair, and runs away to Carterhays. Once there, she enters the wood. "Oak, and ash and thorn grew in the wood," Cooper writes, introducing or interweaving (to use Sullivan's term), details that are not included in the ballad but which are, nonetheless, significant elements in traditional literature and therefore not out of place in her retelling of the ballad. The oak, ash, and thorn, sometimes referred to as "the magical trilogy," are often associated with fairies, spirits, and the supernatural generally (Briggs 159).¹⁵ The thorn, as already noted, also has Christian connotations.

Cooper describes the old gardens of the former estate where wild red roses ramble up into the apple trees. The rose is the central motif in the ballad, as already noted, but Cooper's addition of the apple tree, found only in two lesser-known versions of the ballad (Child 39G and K), adds another significant detail from fairy lore. This fruit tree is thought to have particularly magical properties associated with power, knowledge and youth, and, of course, the temptation of Eve in the Judeo-Christian tradition. However, according to traditional literature, there is some danger associated with this particular tree, because a "ymp-tree" or grafted apple tree was considered to be under fairy influence (Briggs 160). Those who rested or fell asleep under such trees were particularly vulnerable to capture by the fairy folk; Sir Lancelot and Thomas the Rhymer are just two examples of fairy capture in this manner. Cooper, by referring specifically to magical trees, links her retelling of Tam Lin to other examples of traditional literature and subtly weaves an atmosphere of enchantment and the supernatural.

When Tam Lin appears after Margaret plucks the rose, she is surprised to see that he does not look like an enchanted or "Elfin knight," for "he wore a country tunic, and his feet were bare." Yolen's knight, on the other hand, is "dressed in velvet and kilt." Here the illustrations in each case work to reinforce the descriptions provided by the authors. Enhanced by the strong lines and colours of the accompanying illustrations, Yolen's Tam Lin looks every inch the romantic knight while Cooper's knight, outlined in pen and washed in soft browns, looks nondescript and even bewildered by his situation.

Margaret defends her right to pluck roses at Carterhays in the usual way, saying, "Why should I ask leave of you? [. . .] Carterhays belongs to my father the king, and I can come and go as I please. And pick roses." But, in an interesting departure from the traditional ballad, Tam Lin pulls a red apple from the tree to offer to Margaret:

"Margaret bit into the crisp, juicy flesh. She smiled back at the young man, quite forgetting that apple trees do not normally bear ripe apples in June." Enchanted fruit is a common motif in folklore, and the significance of apples in particular has been noted. But the fact that Tam Lin offers a ripe juicy apple to Margaret is an important detail, for this is, in fact, Cooper's method of dealing with Margaret's sexual encounter in the traditional ballad. Although there is no overt reference to rape or sexual activity here, Margaret lingers at Carterhays.

They spent all day together in the wood, happy with one another, until the sun dropped low in the sky and all at once the daylight was gone—and so, in a flash, was the young man with the golden skin and curly hair. Sorrowful, Margaret ran home through the glimmering twilight [. . .].

Margaret arrives home to find that the household has been looking for her not just for one day but for a week; time passes differently in the other world according to fairy lore.

Margaret's enchantment is consistent with one version of the ballad (Child 39G). Here the sexual encounter is described, not just implied:

When he had got his wills of her,
His wills as he had taen,
He's taen her by the middle sma,
Set her to feet again.

She turned her right and round about,
To spier her true-love's name,
But naething heard she, not naething saw,
As a' the woods grew dim.

Seven days she tarried there,
Saw neither sun nor meen;
At length, by a sma glimmering light
Came thro the wood her lane. (Child 39G verses 8-10)

In the ballad, Margaret is presumed to be pregnant sometime after she returns home; in a number of versions (Child 39A, B, I, K), she is actually described as looking "As green as onie glass" (A,B) and "pale and wan" (I). The household is concerned, prompting "an auld grey

knight" to express his fear that "we'll be blamed a'." Margaret denies that anyone of her father's men is the father of her child.

Because no sexual encounter, real or implied, occurs in Yolen's Tam Lin, there is no need for any discussion with members of the household. Cooper, however, recreates the scene with the old grey knight. Since Margaret has stayed with Tam Lin for a week, she has disgraced the household and cannot expect to marry any man in the kingdom. Cooper has managed to remain faithful to the spirit of the ballad without stating outright that sexual activity has occurred and that a child is expected.

Cooper's Margaret returns to Carterhays to see Tam Lin and question him about his history. He tells her that, when he was just three years old and asleep in his father's garden, he was stolen by the Elfin Queen. Hutton's hunched and furtive looking Elfin Queen, represented in the accompanying illustration, presents a striking contrast to Mikolaycak's proud and commanding Queen of the Fey. Cooper's detail of Tam Lin's abduction, while consistent with three versions of the ballad (G; I, K),¹⁶ also links Tam Lin to traditional lore about changelings and lost children. Yolen's Tam Lin, by contrast, was older when he was carried off by the Fairy Queen after falling from his horse. After hearing Tam Lin's history and learning how she might save him from being sacrificed to Hell, Margaret returns home.

Although Cooper follows various versions of the ballad closely through to Margaret's confrontation with the Elfin Queen, she does make one notable change. In the various Child versions of the ballad, Halloween is given as the occasion of the Fairy Ride and the sacrifice,¹⁷ but in Cooper's retelling of the ballad, the ride takes place on Midsummer's Eve. There seems to be no reason for this change apart from consistency; the descriptions of scenery—the summer sky outside Margaret's window, the green fields, the old orchard at Carterhays—all suggest midsummer. However, because Midsummer's Eve was, like Halloween, a significant Celtic festival and a time when the Fairy Folk were abroad, Cooper has remained faithful to the sense of the ballad.

Cooper emphasizes the regenerative aspects of the ballad in the final scenes of her book. Tam Lin's emergence from the well following his final transformation is clearly a resurrection:

Then light was growing in the eastern sky, and Tam Lin was climbing out of the well where Margaret had dropped the [burning] iron. His hair dripped wet and he wore no clothes; he was naked as the day he was born. She swung her mantle

from her shoulders and he wrapped it around himself, and through the greyness of the night the cloth shone suddenly brilliant green, as the sun rose behind the wood and brought color back into the world.

Margaret looked down at her hands. The palms were pink and clear with no sign of any burn at all.

Tam Lin said, "You have brought me to life again. One day we shall have a child, you and I, as naked and glad as the knight born today out of this well."

"We'll teach her to pick roses," Margaret said.

Cooper, like Yolen, chooses a happy ending for Tam Lin. Without even a hint of a curse from the Elfin Queen, Tam Lin and Margaret ride back to the castle, "through Carterhays wood and the green fields of Scotland, as the clouds marched over the blue summer sky and the cloud shadows slid purple and grey across the hills." By returning to her opening sentences, Cooper tells her readers that the story has come full circle.

Bringing the story back to the beginning in this way, however, has the effect of diminishing the ballad in Cooper's work. Cooper's conclusion seems to contradict entirely the significance of Margaret's struggle, and, as Perry might argue, it ignores or dismisses the tension between good and evil that is an essential aspect of the ballad. Hutton's water colour washes in soft earth and pastel tones give a dream-like quality to Cooper's Tam Lin and this has the effect of further diminishing the ballad.

Although Cooper's Tam Lin is more complex than Yolen's in terms of the ways in which she deals with the traditional materials, Cooper's work is far less compelling. Neither the prose style nor the illustrations seem to adequately represent the elemental power of this traditional ballad. Both Yolen and Cooper attempt to present their heroines as strong female characters that dare to challenge traditional female roles and expectations, but neither character is very successful as a feminist model because the happily ever after endings that both authors adopt rob their female protagonists of any power they might have acquired through their struggles with supernatural forces. Jennet and Margaret live happily ever after with their respective Tam Lins.

But there is still another reason why these characters do not work as feminist heroines. While Yolen and Cooper have remained faithful to the outline of the ballad, they have failed to adequately represent the real nature of the young woman's heroism that relates to her sexual encounter with Tam Lin and her resulting pregnancy. Yolen and Cooper

the real nature of the young woman's heroism that relates to her sexual encounter with Tam Lin and her resulting pregnancy. Yolen and Cooper have given readers twentieth-century female characters who may be admired for speaking their minds and flouting convention, but the traditional Janet, a sixteenth-century woman, must worry about more fundamental problems. She is pregnant and unmarried and she must deal with the moral and social consequences of her boldness. She has violated the norms of her society not only in terms of her pregnancy, but also by her dalliance with an enchanted knight, she has had commerce with the Dark Side; this puts her at serious risk of being named as a witch. Will she abort her child and risk censure by the church and her community, or will she dare to struggle with dark powers to redeem its father? What if her courage fails? Will she damn herself and her unborn child to Hell? In the end, Janet's strength and courage prevail and she does redeem Tam Lin from Hell, but there is no happy ending because the Faery Queen's curse lingers even after Janet's victory is acknowledged.

Yolen and Cooper have provided faithful outlines of the ballad, but they have failed to capture its essence and complexity. In terms of their ability to represent Janet's sexual encounter, both authors are constrained by the consideration that their books are directed toward younger readers, and this raises the inevitable issue of the appropriateness of the ballad for this audience. But even more troublesome is the fact that in their determination to see Janet as an assertive modern female hero, they have removed her from her historical context, glossed over her religious and moral struggles, and misrepresented her character and her achievement; they have, in effect, reduced her and remade her as the heroine of a romantic story.

NOTES

1. These first verses are taken from Francis James Child's five volume collection, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, first published between 1882 and 1898. Tam Lin appeared in the first volume as ballad no. 39 with ten versions (A - J). Some of the versions collected by Child are fragments. Further additions and corrections to the ballad were included in later volumes.

2. Child connects the ballad to a Cretan fairy tale "through the principal feature in the story, the transformation of Tam Lin" (336).

3. Two of the better-known recent recordings of the ballad are by Steeleye Span and Fairport Convention.

4. See "The Tam Lin Pages" by Abigail Acland (<tam-lin.org>). This site makes no claim for accuracy, but it includes useful references and links to

other sites dealing with fantasy, folklore and mythology. It is probably the best place to begin to investigate this ballad.

5. Related works by Pamela Dean, Ellen Kushner, and Patricia McKillip, though not marketed as young adult novels, have also attracted the interest of young readers.

6. See, for example, Jones's essay, "The Heroic Ideal—a Personal Odyssey."

7. A feminist interpretation of the ballad is adopted by Ethel Phelps who includes the story as "Janet and Tam Lin" in *Tatterhood and Other Tales*, a prose collection of feminist folk and fairy tales published by Feminist Press that portrays "active and courageous girls and women in the leading roles." According to Phelps, "The protagonists [in *Tatterhood*] are heroines in the true and original meaning of the word—heroic women distinguished by extraordinary courage and achievements, who hold the center of interest in the tales" (xv).

8. Expanding refers to the way in which modern authors add "detail and texture" to a traditional narrative (Sullivan, *Welsh Celtic Myth* 13); interweaving refers to the way in which authors select materials from a tale or from a group of complementary tales and then "weave these materials together into a cohesive whole" (35); and inventing refers to the way in which authors create their own plots and characters but use traditional materials "to give their novels mythic and legendary depth and texture" (x).

9. Version A was collected in Johnson's Museum (1792).

10. Various known as Tom-Lin, Tam Lien, Tam Lane, Tom Line, Tomlin, Tam o Linn, Tam Blain, Thomas, True Tammas, Earl Thomas, and Lord Robinson's only child. Variations on the names of the characters and setting are summarized by John Niles in "Tam Lin: Form and Meaning in a Traditional Ballad."

11. Also Kertonha, Charter's ha', Cartershay, Charter's Wood, Chester's Wood, Chaster's Wood, Gordon's wud, Moorcartney, the greenwood.

12. Also Jennet, Lady Margaret, Leady Margat, Fair Margret, May Margery, May, the maid of Katherine's hall.

13. Although these symbolic items are not mentioned in Child 39A, reference is made to holy water in versions D, G, and J.

14. Mikolaycak created the tartans for the story because, as Yolen writes in her background notes, "a faery tale demands its own colours and plaids." The plaids emphasize the fact that Tam Lin is a Scottish ballad.

15. Briggs provides an extensive discussion of these magical trees and others, including apple trees, under "Fairy Trees" in her *Encyclopedia of Fairies, Hobgoblins, Brownies, Bogies, and other Supernatural Creatures* (159-161).

16. In Child G, three-year-old Tam Lin falls asleep under an apple tree.

17. In Child G, Tam Lin refers to Halloween as the night of the Fairy Ride, but Acland suggests that the last verse of the story places the activity in May based on her reading of the lines:

She borrowed her love at mirk midnight,
 Bare her young son ere day,
 And though ye'd search the world wide,
 Ye'll nae find sic a may. (verse 59)

See her notes at <<http://tam-lin.org/storyline.html>>. It seems more likely that "may" is a textual error or a misreading on Acland's part. There is no other reference to May in the ballad. Nonetheless, May Eve, also known as Beltaine, was an important Celtic festival (Briggs 108).

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POLAR:
THE MOST FAMOUS BEAR OF THEM ALL!

J. JOSEPH EDGETTE

The story of POLAR, the *Titanic* bear, is one that has resulted from a careful blending of history, folklore, legend, and children's literature with an appropriate sprinkling of oral narrative and verifiable testimony and documentation. It is a tale that evolved from a "real life" event that was later set down in writing by Daisy Spedden, the mother of the child whose experience this account recalls. Had it not been for the accidental discovery of an old trunk in the barn of L. H. Coleman, Esq. by his grandson in August of 1982,¹ the life of Polar never would have been told and, subsequently, become known. The purpose of this article is to present the background, evolution, chronology, and afterward of the story of POLAR, the *Titanic* bear.

Before relating the details leading up to the event that catapulted the five-by-two-and-a-quarter-inch stuffed toy into the realm of *Titanic* lore, it is necessary and appropriate to start many years prior even to *Titanic's* own inception as well as Polar's creation. The year was 1902, the town was Giengen an der Brenz, Germany, and the creator of the first *Teddy* bear was a young inventor, innovator, and dreamer named Richard Steiff. He had studied art and was intrigued and captivated by the bears he would observe while sketching them at the Stuttgart Zoological Gardens.² He worked in his aunt's small toy factory, the Steiff Company. After much effort and pleading, he finally convinced Margarete Steiff, a loving but very strong-willed and determined woman, to approve plans to produce his bear. The prototypes were considered to be too large and heavy, not to mention the fact that the mohair used to make them was difficult to obtain. However, later that same year, "Friend Petz" was put on display at the Leipzig Toy Fair in 1902 to test the interest of toy buyers, but it was deemed a complete failure by most who had seen and inspected the newly created stuffed bear toy. Buyers of toys were just not interested in it. This setback would eventually be reversed thanks to the creativity and foresight of the American toy giant, F. A. O. Schwarz.

Frederick August Otto Schwarz, known today as F. A. O. Schwarz and probably the most famous seller of toys in the world, emigrated to the United States from Westphalia, Germany, in 1857, settling in Bal-

timore, Maryland, where he operated a small toy shop until 1870. Moving on to New York, he began in humble quarters on Broadway, opening the Schwarz Toy Bazaar; but by 1880, he had moved to the city's fashionable Union Square business district housing such companies as Tiffany.³ Schwarz quickly established a reputation as having a "toy store with distinction."⁴ With the help of his three brothers, Schwarz kept in constant touch with the major toy sources in Europe. While attending the Leipzig Toy Fair in 1902, F.A.O. Schwarz, unlike other buyers, found the Steiff bear a fascinating toy that had much potential for sales in the United States. According to Jorg Junginger, Steiff's manager of development and Steiff family member, Schwarz "placed an order for 3,000 bears and changed the name to 'Teddy' to help the stuffed animal appeal to American children"⁵ According to folklore, there are two explanations for the origin of the name 'Teddy' as it applies to the toy bears.

In the first it was said that Schwarz had changed the Steiff- given name to 'Teddy' because he was inspired by the President and believed that children who have a greater affinity to the toy with such a moniker.

A second origin has been attributed to the U. S. Navy. It was reported that President Theodore Roosevelt accompanied by a few friends went to Mississippi to hunt wild animals. Having found none a guide came across a small bear. Asked to shoot the bear, the President refused and instructed the guide to release it. Word of this kindness on Mr. Roosevelt's part spread throughout the country. In fact, not long after, political cartoonist Clifford Berryman drew a cartoon depicting the event.⁶ Further, and this is the probable connection to Swartz's origin, it was said that a Brooklyn toy store owner saw the cartoon and asked permission to name the toy bears in his shop "Teddy's Bear." This was to serve as a reminder of Roosevelt's good deed. Permission was given by President Roosevelt.

Both of these origins are plausible and are actually connected. As American folklorist Horace Beck has a habit of saying, "You pays your money, you takes your choice."

According to Steiff Company records, by 1907 they had produced over 974,000 bears, most of which were sold in the United States through the F. A. O. Schwarz Toy Company of New York. In addition to teddy bears in all sizes and kinds, many ancillary items were also made available. These included bear games, clothes, cars, carts, boats, and the like designed for teddy bears. In terms of popular culture, there are currently collectors' organizations and clubs that boast of large memberships. The teddy bear still ranks high among those best sellers in the toy industry.

Exactly, how did Polar become such a notable toy bear? The story continues. Tuxedo Park, New York, was a very upscale community during the early 1900s. One of this community's leading citizens and wealthiest of the families living there included Frederic Spedden, his wife, Daisy, and their son Robert Douglas, who would be known as "Douglas." Mr. Spedden was heir to a very sizeable banking fortune. This young couple devoted their lives to Douglas, their travels, and their pastimes. During the spring, Frederic tended to his business, summers were spent in Bar Harbor, Maine, autumns spent at home, and winters used for travel. Such a routine was not uncommon among wealthy American families during the Edwardian Age. It should be noted that Mrs. Spedden was heiress to the Corning glass fortune as well as an equally lucrative shipping fortune.⁷

Daisy Spedden's sister, Nan, was very fond of little Douglas. In late 1911, the family had decided to visit Algiers and had booked passage aboard the steamship *Caronia*. Prior to her seeing the Speddens off at the docks, Aunt Nanny had visited the F.A.O. Schwarz Company in Manhattan where she purchased a small white Steiff polar bear for Douglas. Before leaving the ship as visitors were asked to disembark, she presented her *bon voyage* gift to the child and asked what he might name it. He responded that it would be called POLAR. Later, the famous bear would be known as POLAR the *Titanic* Bear.⁸

The Spedden's trip to Algiers was a lengthy one that would take them through the Panama Canal area. Little Douglas and Polar were inseparable throughout the journey. The family stayed a few months on the island of Madeira, near Portugal. By mid-March they had arrived on the south coast of France and stayed at Monte Carlo. In early April, Mr. Spedden decided it was time to return home to America. They had booked first class passage aboard another steamship rather than the *Adriatic* whose scheduled departure was cancelled as a result of a coal strike in England. Instead, Mr. Spedden was able to secure first class accommodations aboard the *Titanic*, a new ship that was described as being the greatest ship ever to sail the ocean. Mr. and Mrs. Spedden and Douglas together with Daisy's maid, Helen Wilson, and Douglas' Nanny, Elizabeth Burns,⁹ arrived in Paris the first week in April. Then, by a special train, they made their way to Cherbourg from where they would depart for home aboard the *Titanic*. As first class passengers, the Spedden family shared the company of many other very wealthy American families aboard the "Millionaires Express." Some of the more notable family names were Widener, Astor, Guggenheim, Straus, Brown, Cardeza, Carter, Millet, and Butt, the last being personal attaché to President William H. Taft.

There is only one photograph in existence of little Douglas and his father aboard the *Titanic*, and that shows the boy on deck playing with a spinning top, another toy he had acquired while traveling abroad.¹⁰ The photo was taken during the first day enroute to New York, the final destination that they would eventually—but not aboard the *Titanic*. Another passenger, Father Frank Browne, S.J., had been given a birthday present from his uncle—a ticket aboard the *Titanic* from Southampton to Cherbourg to Queenstown. He left the ship in the Irish seaport as the doomed vessel continued its journey to New York. During his time on the *Titanic*, Father Browne managed to shoot nearly a hundred photos. These pictures are the only ones in existence showing the interior of the great ship and views of life aboard her. Little Douglas was captured on film while playing on deck as his father watched.

The tragic event that transpired on that fateful night of 14 April 1912 off the coast of Newfoundland in the icy waters of the north Atlantic is now history. The major account is well known and has been told and retold for nearly ninety-one years now. It was this foundering of the largest luxury ship of its day that would figure dramatically into the escalation of Polar's notoriety unbeknownst to anyone save his owner, Mrs. Spedden, and a crewman aboard the rescue ship *Carpathia*.

Testimony given before the United States Senate, as part of their official investigation into the loss of the *Titanic*,¹¹ produced revealing information about the sinking that would eventually impact on the story of Polar and Douglas. Once the alarm had been given following the iceberg impact, most of the passengers began to leave their cabins and assemble at or near their predetermined lifeboat stations. The Speddens and their servants were assigned to Lifeboat 3, located on the starboard side of the ship.¹² It became the responsibility of Nanny, Elizabeth Burns, whom Douglas called "Muddie Boons," to care for the young boy during this anxious and fearful experience. (The child had difficulty pronouncing his Nanny's name; thus, the variation.) It has been said that his Nanny woke the sleeping child and told him they were going to take a trip to see the stars and that he would therefore need to wear warm clothing. Once all women and children had been placed safely into the limited number of lifeboats, the men were permitted to join them. Frederic Spedden was one of the fortunate few who was able to join his family aboard lifeboat 3 that fateful night.

Based on witnesses who were passengers in lifeboat 3, it was reported that Douglas slept through the night cradled in the arms of his Nanny. When he woke at dawn, he saw the icebergs all around them and excitedly, as only a child could do, exclaimed, " Oh, Muddie, look

at the beautiful North Pole with no Santa Claus on it."¹³ By 4: 15 A.M. the morning of 15 April 1912, the rescue ship *Carpathia* commanded by Captain Frederick Rostron had arrived at the site and began the careful process of rescuing the survivors. Lifeboat 3 was supervised by able-bodied seaman George Alfred Moore, and it was he who would later place young Douglas into a net that would raise the child to the deck level of the rescue ship.¹⁴ Nets were used to raise the children from the lifeboats for fear they might fall in their attempt to climb the ladders. It would not be until later that morning Douglas would soon realize that Polar had not made it. He had the stuffed toy bear with him in the lifeboat at the time they entered and gotten under way; however, now it was missing.

The grieving child shared his sad realization with his nanny and his mother. A couple of the crew from the *Carpathia* also tried to comfort him, but it was to no avail. As was standard procedure aboard any rescue vessel, Captain Rostron ordered all of the then empty lifeboats to be brought aboard and stowed safely for the long, arduous trip to New York. A hook on the end of a line was put through the eye bolt at the front of a lifeboat, and it was then hoisted aboard the ship.

In so doing, each of the miniature boats would stand on end while being raised through the air. Many of the articles would fall from the boat into the water below; however, when lifeboat 3 had cleared the railing and was being lowered into its new position, a small water soaked stuffed toy rolled out onto the deck at the feet of a crewman.¹⁵ According to Mrs. Spedden's later conversation with the man, he leaned down, picked it up, squeezed the excess water from it, and stuck it into his pocket. He had intended to take it home to his child. Later that day, the crewman came across Douglas who was still upset at the loss of Polar. In a conversation with the boy the crewman suddenly realized what he had retrieved from the deck beneath lifeboat 3. Douglas and Polar had been happily reunited. He too had been saved.

Mr. Spedden sent a Marconigram (the newest type of wireless telegram of its day) from the *Carpathia* to relatives in Connecticut on the 18th of April that informed them the family was safe and would be arriving in New York the following night.¹⁶ Once having arrived at the White Star Line wharf in New York, the family was taken to the Waldorf Astoria, along with many others from first class, to spend the night before departing for Tuxedo Park the next day. It is interesting to note that the Astor family arranged transportation from the ship's terminal to their hotel for many of the first class passengers that were rescued by the *Carpathia*. Later, Mr. Spedden would participate in the awarding of a silver trophy to Captain Rostron and silver medals to mem-

bers of his crew in appreciation for the kindness and professionalism they showed during the terrible tragedy that had befallen them on the *Titanic*.

Once the family had returned to their home, life returned to the normalcy they had had prior to their most recent catastrophic trip. Daisy took a photograph of Douglas at Christmas in 1912 showing him standing next to a table on which can be seen Polar. They planned to travel again after the holidays that year and then return to Maine that following summer. The next year as a Christmas surprise for Douglas, his mother decided to write a small book that would feature Polar (the *Titanic* Bear) recounting his own creation, purchase, and life with Douglas including his fate by nearly becoming a *Titanic* victim. She entitled it MY STORY, Christmas 1913. In addition to the text she did the illustrations herself. This short manuscript would be published as a children's book in 1994, eighty-one years later.¹⁷

Daisy and Frederic would experience one more great tragedy, perhaps the worst imaginable, the death of Douglas in the late summer of 1915 at Grindstone Neck Winter Harbor, Maine. According to the Death Certificate, the cause of Douglas' death was "concussion of the brain-struck by automobile."¹⁸ As a matter of fact, Douglas was the first recorded fatality resulting from an automobile accident in the state of Maine. According to the accident report, the youngster attempted to retrieve a tennis ball, emerging suddenly from some thick shrubbery close to the side of the road. When he did, he collided with the car. Unconscious, he was taken to his home where he succumbed to head injuries sustained from the accident. The boy died on the 8th of August, 1915, at the age of nine years, eight months, and nineteen days. He is buried in the Corning family plot at Greenwood Cemetery, Brooklyn, New York.

It has been said that Daisy never again had the same zest for life following the tragic loss of her son, Douglas. In 1947 her husband Frederic died of a heart attack while diving into a pool in Palm Beach, Florida. His body was cremated.¹⁹ Following his death, Daisy discontinued keeping her diaries, but she did continue her interests in photography and travel. Three years later Daisy died at her home in Tuxedo Park on February 11, 1950, at age 78, following a brief illness.²⁰ She was interred in the Corning family plot at Greenwood Cemetery along side her son Robert Douglas.

Following the death of Daisy, a trunk containing her diaries, ephemera, and 24 photograph albums was left to her cousin, Jane Foster Coleman. The trunk was stored in the barn on the family farm and actually forgotten²¹ (Jane was the grandmother of L. H. Coleman, III.)

L. H. Coleman, Esq. asked his grandson L.H., III to clean out the old barn. The trunk was given to the younger Coleman on his 21st birthday in 1985. Earlier, in 1963, the Titanic Historical Society was founded in part to preserve the history of the *Titanic* and ocean liner travel in general. Aware of this mission, young Coleman donated copies of Daisy's STORY along with some photographs of family members to the Society in August of 1985²² By 1992 it was suggested to young Coleman that the STORY would make a great book for children. The title was changed to POLAR THE TITANIC BEAR, and it was published in 1994. Since then it has sold more than 250,000 copies.²³

To help launch the release of the book, the Strieff Company produced 1912 replicas of the Polar bear, together with a certificate of authenticity that the original was once owned by Douglas Spedden. The book will ensure that the memory of this child will live on just as the memory of the *Titanic* never fades.

From its origin in Germany to its home in America and subsequent adventures, a little stuffed toy polar bear became the impetus for the story of **Polar the Titanic Bear**. It is a piece of non-fiction that has successfully and creatively blended history, legend, folklore, and children's literature while simultaneously presenting a human interest story of top quality.

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IN OUR OWN IMAGE:
THE CHILD, CANADIAN CULTURE,
AND OUR FUTURE

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Foreword

Originally published in 1996, the following text was presented as the ninth annual Robarts lecture when I was the John P. Robarts Professor of Canadian Studies at York University for the academic year 1994-95. It was well received and excited considerable commentary given that it was perceived as a radical gaze on contemporary childhood. Yet little came of it in terms of any concrete action; indeed, the position of children and their culture within Canadian culture has, if anything, worsened. More children are now living in poverty than in 1996; children are more controlled and manipulated than ever; they evidence increased passivity (through escalating youth obesity, for example); and anger dominates their environments as never before. Hence, the call for a new vision of child and childhood is all the more necessary today in order to offer them a chance at a future they own.

A generation ago, the social historian Peter Laslett noted that:

In the pre-industrial world there were children everywhere; playing in the village street and fields when they were very small, hanging round the farmyards and getting in the way, until they had grown enough to be given child-sized jobs to do; thronging the churches; for ever clinging to the skirts of women in the house and wherever they went and above all crowding round the cottage fires.

Given such ubiquity of youth, it is not at all surprising that the "perpetual distraction of childish noise and talk must have affected everyone almost all the time." An estimated forty-five to fifty per cent of all people alive in Stuart England were children, according to Laslett's figures which, as he indicates, accord with circumstances in twentieth-century third world communities. It is, then, more than a little surprising that:

These crowds and crowds of little children are strangely absent from the written record, even if they are conspicuous

enough in the pictures painted at the time, particularly the outside scenes. There is something mysterious about the silence of all these multitudes of babes in arms, toddlers and adolescents in the statements men made at the time about their own experience. (104)

Children *per se* are not really absent from the record; rather, *real* children are—their cultural existence is, in effect, a veritable silencing of the lambs. We know very little about what it was actually like to be a child anywhere in the world in times past, especially from the perspective of children themselves.

This general suppression of children as a cultural presence persists today; a circumstance that is by no means unique to Canada, though it certainly is characteristic of this country. Despite a promising increase in scholarly interest recently, Canada definitely has not showcased childhood as an aspect of its culture as have some other countries of late: for instance, Australia, where an extended and expensive scholarly anthology on childhood sold out soon after publication¹; or Britain, which, along with producing many other relevant publications, dominates the 1988 Collins anthology, *Childhood* edited by Penelope Hughes-Hallett, a work that contains not one Canadian item in its 450 pages despite broad coverage of time, space and cultural groups worldwide.

Children do appear in a variety of "stories of childhood" in Canadian culture, that is, the range of discourses and gazes that deal with child and childhood, from anthropological considerations to literary and artistic representations. The anthropological sources are amazingly spare until relatively recently, especially given the vast accumulated data on Canada's First Nations, but then most of the early documenters were men and, often, priests; children were simply not within their purview, as the noted Huronia specialist Conrad Heidenreich observed (personal communication, Dec. 1993). The absence of children from Franz Boas' monumental Northwest Coast work is even more telling given that he was one of the founders of the American Folklore Society which, at the time of its establishment in 1888, specifically identified children's traditions as one of its primary foci of interest. The Native People were already marginal; their children—far from marginal within indigenous societies—were largely ignored by outside scholars whose gaze tended to exclude them. At best, indigenous children were heard of, but certainly not from.

The storying of childhood as the Native People actually experienced it has only emerged since the late 1960s as part of their cultural

reclamation. And then it has poured forth-suppressed voices release into a post-colonial discourse, seeking validation and respect. The result is many extraordinary oral life histories, memoirs and autobiographical novels (see, for example, the works of Blackman, Johnston and Campbell). Childhood is effectively a metonym for the overall oppression of the Native People, for it is as children that they have been most marginalized, silenced and robbed of their cultural selves by Canadian culture either through omission or relentless commission. Prevailing paternalist thought and policies essentially transformed all indigenous people into voiceless children and, by so doing, purposefully dismissed them.

This is not to suggest that Canada's First Nations should be treated as children nor that children are actually to be equated with the indigenous people, but rather that Canadian society has treated them both comparably. Investigation of the positioning of such different groups at the margin illuminates some key concepts and orientations within our culture. It is also worth noting that since the late 1960s, the Native Peoples have often served as a bellwether of Canadian concerns; hence, their contemporary cultural circumstances may presage the future of our nation's youth.

The denial of voice to children generally is simply part of the adult world's control over them. As Rex and Wendy Stainton Rogers note in their extended deconstruction of the knowledging of childhood, *Stories of Childhood*:

One voice has been largely missing. . . that of children themselves. This is not accidental; it very much reflects a general dismissing of such texts in our culture. (104)

The Stainton Rogers' argument was not constructed using Canadian examples, though it easily might have been. Children have an historical cultural presence in Canada, but their cultural present has been largely ignored and they themselves have not typically been heard. Very little indeed has been made of their existence as cultural beings, of their real or imagined significance in cultural terms, or most particularly, of their own culture.

Most discourses pertaining to Canadian children come from Education and the Social Sciences (particularly Sociology and Psychology), and consider them largely in the context of various institutions, social processes or roles. Some folklore studies assume a humanistic approach focussing on aesthetics and creativity; or child-centered cultural dynamics and meaning. Otherwise, virtually all analyses of

culture in relation to Canadian children deal primarily with its acquisition through socialization and its operation in families, schools, community organizations and the like. Even the finest works available on the history of Canadian childhood, such as Joy Parr's edited collection, *Childhood and Family in Canadian History*, tend to concentrate mainly on what comes passively to children from the adult world and their gradual adjustment to the established social orders in which they live. Seldom is consideration paid to children's active creation and manipulation of their environments through cultural means; their philosophical encounters with things, people and concepts; and the position of their own thoughts and traditions in their grappling with life. Noteworthy exceptions are Neil Sutherland's article, "'Everyone seemed happy in those days': the culture of childhood in Vancouver between the 1920's and the 1960's" and the study from which it emerged, the Canadian Childhood History Project conducted in the 1980s at the University of British Columbia.

The best-known works on Canadian children's traditions, such as Edith Fowke's handsome bestseller *Sally Go Round the Sun* (1969), tend far more to description than analysis so they have done little to counter popular opinion that such cultural artifacts are passing phenomena-charming, delightful and amusing, perhaps, but in the final analysis, not very significant. Fowke's book was selected 1970 Children's Book of the Year by the Canadian Library Association. This recognition, though arguably well-deserved, has had somewhat detrimental results in terms of the appreciation of children's lore as legitimate culture, for the work enables and, through its popularity with teachers and librarians has promoted, an approach to children's traditions as adult-directed entertainment over their actual operation in child-focused situations. Dr. Fowke assuredly did not directly intend this outcome and ought not to be faulted for it, since she both recognized the value and import of children's culture and was recognized for contributions to its appreciation.²

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The traditional behaviors and the intangible and tangible artifacts of Canadian children continue to be viewed primarily as the embodiment of the timelessness and universality of childhood, which itself is conceived of as a state we must survive in order to emerge as people. Children in this country are, then, effectively perceived and hence treated as pre-cultural or proto-cultural beings and, therefore, because culture is a defining characteristic of human beings, as not fully hu-

man. Canadians certainly are not alone in possessing or implementing such ideas, but the situation has particular relevance to us because of whom we think we are and should be.

In many respects, children today can be seen to occupy a position in our culture not dissimilar to that which Native Peoples endured from Contact through into the second half of the 20th century. Children are a recurrent image, a central concern, even a national symbol, but they are not considered to be people like or, more to the point, quite equal to other people. Rather they are treated to a greater or lesser extent as objects—possessions or commodities to be manipulated at will. Presumably with the best intentions, adults treat them paternalistically, claiming that they act only for children's own good. But that good is determined by outsiders to the group and children rarely have any opportunity to express their own truth.

The Canadian nation has come to recognize the folly of its historical treatment of the Native Peoples and the necessity to deal in contemporary, post-colonial times with a resultant complex tangle of human anguish and irreparable damage; just demands for reparations; cultural guilt; and a search for moral justice through self-determination. Yet, we have not mended our ways for, prevented by our laws and consciences from subjugating the "child-like primitives" we once supposed the Native Peoples to be, we Canadians persist in enacting the same imperialist scenario with today's children. Let us explore the similarities.

Strong societal images of the child and childhood are reflected in their many and varied representations throughout this country over time. These images are certainly not exclusive to Canadian, but then, exceptionally little of what characterizes us (or, for that matter, any other contemporary nation) is unique. We came by many of our images quite honestly through our heritage of western civilization and Christianity, namely: the Biblical child as innocent, pure and good; the Romantic child as visionary, closer to nature and hence to supreme understanding; John Locke's child as *tabula rasa* or blank slate; and the Calvinist child as evidence of original sin and so evil by nature, though sometimes salvageable through nurture.

Some images we fashion into a distinctive, that is, truly Canadian mould, for the representations reflect as well as shape us. One such image is the child as worker or extra hands. For a period in the latter nineteenth and early twentieth century, a child (specifically a needy one in care) was thought to be a highly desirable immigrant-viewed as malleable, biddable, capable of much-needed labor and bound to be grateful for the rewards that would certainly come his or her way. As a

result of this image, nearly 89,000 children were brought to Canada from Dr. Thomas Barnardo's homes and similar institutions in Britain between 1865 and 1925, many to be abused and made virtual slaves, treated worse than the farm animals they frequently tended. This disparity between the imaginary child as hands and the reality is vividly presented in a 1990 documentary, *Welcome Home*, which juxtaposes historical evidence, government propaganda and the commentary of one home child. The population of Canada now includes well over a million descendants of such children—an enormous debt to an image.

The child of nature, as natural creature, which is another significant image, takes on special meaning in this country given the mythic connection with the land that underlies our identity, be it local, regional or national. The child of the Canadian imagination is not merely a part of nature, but is *one with* nature, assuming an almost Pan-like quality. Two excellent examples are the stop-frame, frozen children in Jean-Paul Lemieux's portraits of the Quebec landscape (often in winter) and the Young Ben, a real boy who embodies the spirit of the prairie in W. O. Mitchell's classic novel, *Who Has Seen the Wind* (1947). The image goes much further back, however, to Charles G.D. Roberts' 1921 publication, *Children of the Wild*, and some of his other books, as well as to Ernest Thomas Seton's late 19th-century works of naturalist animal stories that established this distinctively Canadian contribution to international children's literature. The persistent image is one of a "sensuous little savage," as Wallace Stegner characterizes it in *Wolf Willow* (1962), his storying of the last plains frontier, the pre-World War I Saskatchewan milieu of his childhood.

The profound impact of Calvinism on Canadian culture (Jansenism in French Canada) is evident in our distinct take on the child as, on the one hand, evil (at least potentially) and, on the other, supremely good. The single most famous folktale of Canadian origin that centers on a child is *Rose Latulippe* also known as *The Devil at the Dance* (Fowke, 1979: 83-87). In this story, a young girl disobeys her parents' and societal proscriptions and sneaks out (sometimes wearing a red cape, no less) to go dancing: a handsome, dark stranger appears at the dance and leads our Rose into a whirl of temptation, only to be recognized for the Evil One himself, sometimes by a babe in arms who cries out or by a passing priest who eventually exorcises him away. Rose is marked indelibly in this encounter: visibly as scars of the Devil's claws on her hands and spiritually as a necessity to dedicate her life to the Church. A pointed message to all rebellious youth!

Alex Colville, an internationally renowned Canadian artist, once asserted that he preferred to paint subjects that were "wholly good";

consequently he turned his highly controlled magic realist vision to the task of portraying children and animals.⁴ Similarly, in creating the first of his many renderings of children's games on the Canadian prairies while hospitalized in England following a nervous breakdown, William Kurelek used childhood then as later to discover goodness and worth in himself and to proclaim a message of Christian virtue as the means of confronting the moral dilemmas of modern life. This image of the Canadian child is very widespread and popular, for Kurelek's illustrated book, *Prairie Boy's Winter* (1973) has won more awards than any other Canadian publication and, together with his other three works specifically for children (1974, 1975, 1976), has sold in excess of half a million copies worldwide.

Briefly, there are some other perhaps more immediate images: first, child as redeemer or savior is ever-present as third-generation figures in our immigrant literature—Noah in Mordecai Richler's *Son of a Smaller Hero* (1955) or young Moses in Adele Wiseman's *The Sacrifice* (1956)—let alone in the daily lives of countless thousands whose sacrifice of home and heritage their children carry as a sentence from which they redeem themselves and their families through success in this, the new land. Second, the child as helpless dependent is widely evident in advertising—what's riding on those Michelin tires, for instance, or appealing for moderation in drinking from posters in your local liquor store asking "Do you need a better reason?" And child as victim is a vivid image in such compelling modern works as *The Boys of St. Vincent's* (1992) back to perhaps the best-known visual image of child in Canada, Paul Peel's "The Tired Model" painted in 1889 and regularly on exhibit at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Working out of a Victorian sensibility which elevated the child's form to a consideration now deemed almost pathologically voyeuristic, Peel painted several youth nudes including "A Venetian Bather" (1889) about which the noted art historian Dennis Reid has said:

It was probably the first nude to be publicly exhibited in Toronto. Viewers who normally would be outraged at the display of such seductive flesh were enabled by the innocence of the young subject in her exotic setting to luxuriate in the delicious curves and soft glow and to savor pleasure for its own sake.

Such obvious exploitation of the young brings us to a singularly appropriate point to conclude this section on imaging children in Canada. In general, these representations demonstrate how we have fashioned

children in our own image, for our own purposes and how, in so doing, combined with the silence of the child's own voice, we have lost sight of the real living child. This cultural imaging and its relevance throughout our culture over time will receive the fuller discussion it merits in a book-length study—the direct result of my Robarts Chair research—on "Images of Child and Childhood in Canadian Culture." What is pertinent to this discussion is the impact of such imaging on the lives of contemporary children.

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Fine studies by scholars such as Daniel Francis (1992), Terry Goldie (1989) and Leslie Monkman (1981) pertaining to images of Native People in Canada indicate the extent and impact of this storying of our aboriginal peoples, their stereotyping along the Pesky Redskin/Noble Savage dichotomy, and the consequent failure to represent their multifaceted real cultural and human nature. The resultant situation is one of subjugation, alienation and marginalization and sentimentalization, exploitation and fossilized preservation among the image-makers. Such is the case as well for Canada's children, who remain suppressed in spite of the postcolonial, feminist, multicultural, and human rights movements of today. They are a special kind of human being sentenced to a status as "*a mixture of expensive nuisance, fragile treasure, slave and super-pet,*" in the words of the educator and commentator on childhood, John Holt (1975: 18).

Just as the images of Native People, their way of life and their cultural artifacts have been drawn into service to represent Canada and Canadianness at home and abroad, so too have children and childhood been used, as is evident by a glance at the most famous Canadian child of all—Anne (with an "e") of Green Gables. In her particularly insightful book, *Children's Literature in Canada*, Elizabeth Waterston describes Anne as operating in a distinctly Canadian way:

the fictional Anne Shirley uses idealism, imagination, humor, and independent thought to tame society's emphasis on unremitting work, social propriety, and religious conformity.

Waterston goes on to state that Emily Carr³ dealt with life in a similar manner, and to argue that:

Characters [of contemporary children's literature] are armed with the same weapons as the fictional Anne Shirley and the real Emily Carr:

humor, intense feelings, the will to survive, honesty and essential kindness. Canadians believe these qualities represent national values.(4)

Later in her work Waterston says:

Canadian children's books fix an image of the country that will endure and that may well affect international relations in the future. The true image of Canada is a composite of savagery and sweetness-like literature, like childhood. (11)

If any book has worked in this manner, it certainly is Lucy Maud Montgomery's classic, translated into dozens of languages and variously commodified overtime throughout the world (especially in Prince Edward Island where not a summer passes but that the play is staged for tourists who make pilgrimages to Anne's home, cradled on the waves of the Gulf of St. Lawrence). Anne encapsulates many of the key Canadian child images: she is an orphan, sought as extra hands (by mistake since they wanted a boy, about which much more deserves to be said); she is good (and does good, not least for Matthew and more especially Marilla Cuthbert, for whom she is a savor, brining nurturing love into an emotionally arid existence); she is unquestionably sensuous and certainly wild or savage in the sense of being untamed, but far the better for that; and above all, she is not merely close to nature, she *is* the essence of that particular place.

We Canadians frequently conceive of ourselves and present our essence as child-like, offering up our supposed youth as a nation as an excuse for our perceived or felt cultural immaturity. When our Prime Minister Sir Wilfred Laurier proclaimed late in the nineteenth century that "the twentieth century belongs to Canada," some Canadians seem to have believed that we would one day grow up, become a world power and have real guns rather than toy pistols (or the popular chicken cannon devised by the *Royal Canadian Air Farce*⁴). Some Canadians still harbor such beliefs despite the modern postnational condition. It is not merely by chance then, nor does it seem unfitting, that the 1984 Canadian volume in the *A Day in the Life of* [various countries] series carries a photograph of a young boy and girl as a symbolic representation of our nation comparable to the cowboy used on the American volume. As a people we seem to conceive of ourselves, of our essential being, in terms of the best that child represents—that sublime and natural goodness, simplicity and faith in people and life. For example, the Ojibway artist Arthur Shilling wrote in 1986:

Children are my island, my innocence.
They are the spirit of forgiveness.
Children are the giving
and forgiving
part of God in me. (80)

A central underlying Canadian conception of child, then, is as our conscience as a people, which made it quite natural for federal government under Brian Mulroney to chair the 1990 United Nations Summit on the Child. This national identification of ours with and through children renders all the more remarkable the fact that as a group, children are, without doubt, culturally the least advantaged—indeed, most oppressed⁵—people in Canada today for they do not even have recognition, let alone status, as a cultural group.

At the same time, children are not merely important in our cultural expression as already discussed, but central to our contemporary daily existence and (not insignificantly) to our economic activity. Kids constitute a huge market (estimates predict that by 2011 there will be 3.5 million children and youth in Ontario alone). Kid-stuff involves large sums of money: toys alone were a \$1.2 billion *Canadian* industry in 1990; revenue from children's camps across the nation in 1993 was almost \$110 million; and primary and secondary education combined now gobbles up over \$30 thousand million Canadian dollars annually. Childhood itself is a major commodity, to be preserved individually, in specially purchased Grandmothers' remembrance books for instance, or collectively in museums (akin to the famous Museum of Childhood in Edinburgh)⁶; to be nostalgically exhibited in our homes through those objects of great pride—our family photographs—or sold in art galleries.⁷ As well, childhood artifacts and expressions are regularly circulated internationally in campaigns aimed at tugging our heartstrings to loosen our purse strings in support of various causes. One particularly notable Canadian commodification of children's expression is Ben Wicks's 1995 compilation of young people's letters and drawings, *Dear Canada/Cher Canada: A Love Letter to My Country*, which is unabashedly intended to enlist children's voices in promoting national unity.⁸

Canadians have a particular angle on the commodification of childhood in that children's music is easily one of our most successful cultural exports. From over twenty years of performing, recording and publishing, Sharon, Lois and Bram as well as Raffi and Fred Penner have emerged as icons of childhood, in Canada and beyond our borders. They are all Canadians rooted in a long tradition of folk singing

for children fostered by the CBC around mid-century and Sir Ernest Macmillan's arrangements of traditional music for school children dating from the inter-war period (for extended discussion see Posen, 1993). It must be noted that this industry almost exclusively involves music produced for children by adults rather than the music children sing and pass on by themselves, that is, their own culture.

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Children's culture itself conjures up images-of youngsters singing, skipping, clapping, playing and sharing together a rich lore passed down over the generations and occasionally recorded by dedicated collectors such as the American, William Wells Newell, in his late nineteenth-century study, *Games and Songs of American Children* and Britons, Iona and Peter Opie following World War II (see, for instance, their first major work, *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*. In part we story our childhood years through such imagery, recounting our past-times, our experiences on the streets and in the playgrounds of yesteryear, often in the process nostalgically lamenting their passage and the other concurrent transformations we perceive in society, the environment and everyday activities during the intervening years.

But, today the streets are the preferred playgrounds for relatively few children; parks are frequently favored haunts of pushers and perverts; schoolyards are by intention orchestrated into adventure playgrounds and adult-supervised activities or patrolled by Peacemakers, adult-designated peer troubleshooters. Surface evidence might easily lead one to presume that the demise of children's lore has come, having been predicted virtually since the name in 1846 of the discipline of Folklore which studies such oral-based culture. One might claim, in keeping with Neil Postman's argument presented in *The Disappearance of Childhood* (1984), that much more than the lore, the very state of being a child has vanished, its passing hastened along as (in the manner outlined by David Elkind in *The Hurried Child* [1988]) we determinedly hurry our children through a brief, youthful apprenticeship for supposedly *real* life. Would we dare suggested that old age is comparably an apprenticeship for the next phase of the life cycle—death? In a certain spiritual sense the golden years may indeed serve such a preparatory function, but surely that would command greater not less respect for this period. The political correctness emergent from gerontology demands the social recognition and just treatment of our seniors as full human beings with all the attendant rights, feelings, interests and so on. Why not similar recognition and treatment

for those at the other end of the life cycle? After, as a childhood friend of mine wisely remarked many years ago, "Babies are wee people."⁹

We in contemporary western society significantly orchestrate our children's existence. In good part out of fears for their physical safety and security now or in the future:

we institutionalize them early—age three was recommended in the "*For the Love of Learning*," the report of a recent Ontario Royal Commission on Learning; we structure their free time into endless classes or organized activities, often of our choosing for their good, or for our good so we can fulfill the demands of our lives; we direct them towards success as we define it; we instruct them variously and continuously as we perceive they require; we manipulate their environments to reflect our ideas; we censor their cultural experiences and expressions according to our aesthetic sensibilities, and we generally seek to control and direct them so as to produce children as we think they ought to be, that is, *in our own image*.

In assuming as our right this extension of ourselves onto and through our children, surely we ought to accept responsibility for the contingent messages we convey to the young. Yet, there is little to suggest that we give much more than passing thought to those messages or how they are received. Comparable were the messages we communicated explicitly or implicitly to our aboriginal peoples in the course of their colonization. Now, faced with the consequences, we recognize that the Native People generally felt belittled and demeaned; came to view themselves as being inferior and forced to undergo radical transformation in order to benefit from, let alone participate in, mainstream culture. Large numbers ended up believing that they had lost control of their existence and, far too often, that their lives were not worth living.

Culture was both medium and message in this communication, which we now dub cultural genocide while engaging in a communal *mea culpa*. But does the guilt feel so good that we wish to repeat it? It would seem from our actions that singularly appropriate representations are to be found in the haunting portraits of the young amongst Edward S. Curtis's documentary photographs of "the vanishing race" included in his magnum opus, *The North American Indian*, published in the early 1900s. During their colonization, Native People were encouraged away from their cultural traditions, sometimes purposefully

impeded and/or prohibited from practicing and transmitting them by outsiders who did not really understand or appreciate the cultures. Are not the cultural circumstances of Canada's children similar?

As elsewhere in the world, the culture of childhood in Canada must be seen to comprise three different, though inter-related aspects. The first of these is the predominantly oral culture shared amongst children themselves, that is, their folklore-folklife, which includes material they appropriate from the world around and make their own; the second is all those cultural artifacts considered appropriate to children and/or to which they are intentionally exposed; and the third, the concept of child as storied and applied in the culture which necessarily both bounds and enables the existence of a culture of childhood. In this child-centered era, it is the latter two aspects that have mushroomed in presence so as to overshadow the child's present, which comprises his/her own take on the world, interpretation of circumstances, creative expression and the like embodied in children's own cultural artifacts not only preserved from the past but also shaped from and to contemporary life.

In order to have such cultural artifacts of their own, children need time to be together, to explore the natural, social and personal worlds in which they exist, and to share their ideas and experiences. They need to encounter trials, be surprised, experiment, manipulate their surroundings, fail and master. In other words, they need to develop their cultural fitness through relevant exercise just as they should develop physical fitness by using appropriate muscles. The "cultural muscles" appropriate to children are rhymes, jokes, riddles, games, taunts, songs, parodies, gestures and much more that young people operate with and through amongst their peers, thereby manipulating, creating, negotiating, absorbing, reacting within a vital, interactive and, in a healthy way, subversive¹⁰ cultural matrix. It is such experiences that validate their existence as child, make worthy their very being (rather than their becoming), and underscore their joy in living.

The dynamics of contemporary life are such that relatively few children are encouraged or enabled to spend extended periods in child-focussed, child-directed environments engaged with children's own culture. Indeed, not a few responsible adults seem to view such circumstances with suspicion or derision. Rather than being respected as their right to privacy and freedom of expression, the *secret* world of children alone together is frequently equated with dark or sinister

behaviors, and as contributing to violence on the playgrounds, or to racial and gender stereotyping, or to "mischief" in its various aspects from sexual exploration to drug use. Either out of necessity or, in good Calvinist fashion, to ensure that their time is spend more wisely, the adult world increasingly restricts children's free time to be children.

But children's lore is far from dead, as demonstrated by the ease with which Virginia Caputo collected some 300 songs in oral circulation among urban schoolchildren in just six one-hour sessions.¹¹ A forum I organized for the 1994 American Folklore Society meeting on "Children's Folklore in the Media Age: Assessing the Field" concluded that the tradition, while transformed, notably persisted but also continued to display dynamic creativity. Very young children today may sing along with an animated purpose dinosaur they see on television but, as documented by panelist Elizabeth Tucker, they readily come to manipulate the Barney theme song in order to comment on the media or on human interrelationships, especial friendship and homosexuality.¹²

When the adult world turns its gaze upon children's own culture, it is commonly with pragmatic intent. Specialists from many fields recognize the benefits to children of engaging with their own culture, including: developments in terms of motor control, physical fitness, linguistic acumen, social skills, cultural stances or orientations, and understanding of abstract concepts such as justice as well as basic life skills. Play is good for children, psychologists tell us; it enables the proper unfolding of individuality that permits people to control their own lives. Fair enough, but such ideas do place emphasis on the *becoming* rather than the *being* in terms of culture. Adults typically want to ensure that the unfolding is, indeed, *proper*, and hence tend to intervene.

Let us consider an example: contemporary playground observations indicate that some children play a form of tag in which It has and can pass on HIV Upon learning of this game, many adults react in horror in one of two ways: either proclaiming (on the basis of their moral precepts or sentimental images) that youngsters should not play with AIDS, or demanding that children be taught the real facts of AIDS. The game should, then, be banned or attached through appropriate instruction. Few would let it be, allowing that the game is children's means of coping with the existence of this real-life terror through exerting control over it in the relatively sage microcosm of life that their culture, in effect, really is. During the Second World War, British children are reported to have played similarly with Hitler and Nazism (see Opie & Opie) in an effort to understand and to maintain the sense of

control over surroundings necessary to emotional well being. Also, one of the hypothetical origins for "Ring around the Rosie" suggests that this game, too, developed among youngsters in their efforts to assert control through play over another terror, the Black Death.¹³

The world around seldom seems to view children as knowing, having, doing but rather as needing, lacking, emerging. Little if any intrinsic value appears to be placed on the state of being child. How to encourage self-worth, then? Much of children's own culture has been around a very long time: it should be obvious that it is of significance, that it works and has real meaning for children since it truly has been strong enough to be remembered by them. By what right then do we endeavor to change it? and with what effect? Take some modern (politically correct) rewritings of nursery rhymes, for instance: "Georgy Porgy, puddin' and pie, Kissed the girls and made them cry. . ." becomes "Georgy Porgy, what a shame, Kids call you such a silly name . . ."¹⁴ Children who use the first rhyme know that Georgy did something he should not have done and made girls cry, so name-calling is Georgy's just desserts-retributive justice, an idea generally favored by children; youngsters who hear the second verse recognize it for the over, preaching didacticism it is and will not embrace it in their tradition so the adult's intent is foiled. Which is really in the cultural best interests of the child?

The liberties we take with children's culture demonstrate our unwillingness to accept the young for who they are, to recognize their differences and to celebrate their distinctiveness. These familiar phrases are the demands of multiculturalism, enshrined in the laws of the land, expressive of the fundamental freedoms of *all* (presumably younger and older) Canadians as specified in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms and at the heart of Canadianness. Cultural self-determination is the cry of our times, yet our children are less culturally empowered than any other distinctive minority. While children in care have the right to their religious freedom, the right to maintain their own culture and various other rights guaranteed under provincial legislation (for instance the Child and Family Services Act in Ontario), there is no similar statement of rights for a child not in care, who is, therefore, much at the mercy of his/her parents culturally. The phenomenal cultural reality experienced by many youngsters seriously infringes upon their rights, namely, to freedom of expression and freedom of thought, conscience and religion as specified in Articles 13 and 14 of the Hague Convention, the UNESCO Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted in 1989, of which Canada was a major supporter and signatory.

Children are such cultural pawns that it comes to some as a genuine revelation that their lives are actually their own. Jean Little, one of Canada's most famous authors for children, recounts her awakening at age nine following upon an aesthetic reaction to orange segments arranged as "*a line of glowing orange boats*":

For the first time I saw my world and my life as something that belonged to me and began to put small scraps of time away in a place where I could take them out and look at them whenever I needed.(92-93)

Ms. Little's marked success despite being legally blind is undoubtedly linked to this empowerment that refuses victimhood. Substantial numbers of Canada's children never are personally empowered culturally and assuredly suffer variously as a result, just as the Native People have. Many of the significant youth problems of today are notably similar to the a-social and anti-social behaviors exhibited by Native People that are commonly traced to colonization, for instance, low self-esteem, substance abuse, increased violence, inter-generation conflicts, rootlessness and lack of identity and, most alarming, a dramatic rise in the suicide rate.

Some psychologists and youth psychiatrists offer perspectives from their disciplines that may be adapted to a cultural understanding of this situation. In particular, Alice Miller presents in *he Drama of the Gifted Child and the Search for the True Self* (1983) a concept of loss of authentic self during childhood which derives from the abandonment or repression of aspects of children's personality deemed unacceptable in an effort to seek approval from parents or society-at-large. The result is a false self that requires external validation: in effect, a young person who is highly vulnerable and without internal direction. It is evident that growing numbers of children are experiencing a similar loss of their true cultural selves to which they may respond in several ways. Some develop a false cultural being that meets with parental, peer group and/or societal approval but is seldom richly satisfying in terms of providing a firm sense of identity and ownership. Others may rebel culturally, seeking solace in the highly subversive youth pop culture, which can lead them away from the security of local identifications into the consumerism and anonymity of international media and often into self-destructive or anti-social actions. Still others exist in a cultural void, estranged and without commitment or purpose.

The notable rage evident among contemporary youth owes partly to the suppression of this authentic cultural self which an individual

normally would. come to realize by actively manipulating culture to include self in relation to various groups, their traditions and artifacts. What we have, then, is growing numbers of young people who are suffering because they do not know who they are or where they belong as a result of being unable to engage actively with culture—ANY culture, let alone our national culture which could be seen to need their involvement.

There seems to be little joy in life for many of our youth, but why? An absence of fulfillment through joy, as opposed to amusement or thrills, can be directly linked to a stifling of the play-element in modern childhood. Today's children certainly play, but they generally do so under the scrutiny of adults as in daycare or during school recess, unless they are in the aerobics classes now being scheduled by some schools to utilize this time to (supposedly) greater effect in promoting fitness. Such efforts may foster physical, but not emotional fitness. Children need the freedom to develop emotional well-being, too, which is facilitated more through the interpersonal connectedness of their oral traditions and through observation and imitation amongst themselves than through intellectual activity or instruction under adult control.¹⁵ Adults authoritatively make certain that children are well controlled and supervised to ensure that their play is *good for* them, that no one gets hurt, that no one bullies or name-calls or teases or . . . copes in, manipulates and masters the natural and social world around or the emotional world within,

So it is that our children are culturally deprived and become disengaged. Marginalized and repressed while young, they do not personally appreciate culture as a concept, a process or a set of products. Hence they become prey to manipulation as passive recipients of, rather than creative participants in, the larger cultural matrix beyond their limited experience—a retrograde state for any nation, let alone for one so tentative about identity as our own.

The recognition of the culture of childhood within Canadian culture today and in the future has implication for the overall cultural well being of our nation's citizens. Our own image for children may not be in their cultural best interests or in Canada's best interests culturally. It remains a challenge to determine and pursue these cultural best interests of the child (CBIOC), but doing so is imperative. Only by actually, rather than merely rhetorically, recognizing the full rights of children will Canadians act in accord with their cultural ideals and enable future generations to continue the pursuit of excellence in being human that rests at the core of Canadianness. To do so requires that the child's own voice not only be heard but also be taken on advisement.

For young people to come to possess Canadian culture, they must first manipulate and master culture as children. They must know that they themselves own culture and realize the self-validation and self-esteem attendant upon the acceptance of that culture as equal to all others recognized under multiculturalism. Paradoxically, while children's rights in some, especially legal, areas are being supported (see Wilson), the respect for children's way of being, and therefore their culture, is lessening.

Key to promoting better child-adult interaction is the promotion of children's enablement rather than their containment, which first demands appreciation for the cross-cultural communication involved as a two-way process. Simply put, such a situation means that we adults have much to learn about children from children themselves. The knowledge children bring to any situation bears consideration, for no more than members of any other cultural group are children neutral receptacles disposed to received and be shaped entirely from outside.

Heritage is naturally a prime concern relating to the CBIOC. It behooves us as responsible adults to consider whether we are doing children any favor by imposing our heritage baggage on them, especially given the emergence of mixed ethnicity as the defining characteristic of the largest single group of Canadians. Is it not right and in keeping with Canadian ideals that any child should have a say in heritage-related matters within the family just as that child would be heard in a custody dispute? According children such a voice (and hence increasing their control) would, however, necessitate major restructuring of engrained cultural concepts of child and childhood, parent, child rearing and more. But such a restructuring is needed to liberate Canada's children and to ensure their just treatment today as well as their ownership of their futures.

In *Surviving as Indians: the Challenge of Self-Government* (1993), Menno Boldt poses five carefully argued imperatives to effect a just future for Indians in Canada (see p. x). Four of these are, with adaptation, applicable to a just future for children in Canada, as follows:

1. moral justice for children;
2. Canadian policies that treat children's rights, interests, as pirationations and needs as equal to those of other distinctive cultural groups in Canada;
3. Child-focussed leadership that is committed to eliminating the colonization of children and to empowering young people; and

4. The assurance of appropriate circumstances for children to maintain and pursue their cultural traditions with other children.

Boldt's fifth imperative concerns economic self-determination which, in the case of children, should be replaced by the security of the necessities of life provided by the adult world.

But how are we as a people to move toward this just future for children? First, adult Canadians must make evident a certain humility with respect to youngsters, what they know, what they have, what they want, what they can best teach themselves and so on. If manipulate we must, then let it be the environments not the children. In particular, we ought to consider carefully whether our agendas of child concern and the resultant environments we impose on children are really in their (and ultimately, then, the Canadian peoples') cultural best interests.

Of the many questions this presentation raises, the most central concern is how to achieve the goals it establishes. As a single example we might consider the desirability of children having free time to play. If we in our communities made such playtime a priority, we could direct resources towards ensuring safety on playgrounds by employing students or seniors (armed with cell phones) as discreet supervisors, or to establishing block networks for after-school play in homes or yards, using the extant model of babysitting cooperatives. What is required is the communal will; appropriate methods will follow apace.

Throughout Canada we must recognize that dealing with children is comparable to relating to members of any other cultural group. In the interests of developing better child-adult communication (and hence, mutual understanding), it is time, as Kathleen McDonnell argues, that "we called a truce in this thankless, no-win war with out kids"(18) and learn to do more than just censor and rage against their cultural preferences (20). Today's Kid Culture, as she terms children's own culture, contains a fair dose of material appropriated from or strongly influenced by popular culture. We clearly ought to recognize the legitimacy of children's chose cultural expressions—we demand the same for other cultural groups. But, cultural tolerance seemingly extends much more easily to diverse traits of distinctive others than to the sometimes wild, anarchic behaviors, attitudes and artifacts of our own children which challenge and disturb the established order. They are subversive-no more, no less than children's own traditions have always been and rightly so.

In *Don't Tell the Grown-Ups* (1990), Alison Lurie makes a powerful argument that:

We should take children's literature seriously because it is sometimes subversive; because its values are not always those of the conventional adult world (xi)

The argument applies equally to children's culture, for it is through the manipulation, rejection and re-creation of their cultural world that young people simultaneously search for and validate their voice and so situate themselves culturally.

While deserving of recognition as a distinct cultural group, children are decidedly different from other such groups, since they do grow out of their child-focussed culture. Yet, that cultural world can be, after Tolkien's claims for the secondary world of Faerie, a key means of coming to terms with the larger reality while offering fantasy, recovery, escape and consolation in the same manner as fairy stories do. As children we can be closer than perhaps at any other time of our lives to our authentic selves in our personal cultural operations. The cultural of childhood remains with us in memory as adults, a secondary reality to be revisited as burden or release, depending on our empowerment through it. Such revisitation may illuminate the primary reality of our true (as opposed to ideal or actual) selves—a scenario played out effectively in such scenes from Canadian literature as that in Gabrielle Roy's novel, *The Cashier*, where the constrained and unfulfilled protagonist, Alexandre Chenervert, "sees" an image of himself as a playful child who looks upon the actual adult he is to become quizzically, in seeming startled disbelief(104).

To more fully appreciate the authentic child, we should recognize the limitations of our cognitive map regarding childhood, cease appropriating the child's voice and admit the complex, multi-dimensional reality of child, embracing in particular the darker side, which we all know from personal experience does exist. Only by so doing will we enable children to reappropriate their full voice and be the true subject of their own discourse.

Let us return to Wallace Stegner's sensuous little savage and consider part of his account of the savage (darker) aspect, the portrait of a real child for sure:

I learned dirty words and dirty songs from the children of construction workers and from the . . . cowpunchers. With others, I was induced to ride calves and engage in "shit fights" with wet cow manure in the . . . corrals. Then or later I learned to dog-paddle, first in the irrigation ditch, later in the river. . . We put .22 cartridges or blasting caps on the tracks ahead of approaching handcars or

speeders, and once we got satisfactorily chased by gandy dancers. Around Christmas we all watched the first soldiers go off to the [First World] war, and then and afterward we had trouble with some Canadian kids who said the United States was too yellow to fight. (164-65)

This picture of the child is not wholly admirable, perhaps (and that is without the scatological ending), but it is human—the real-life experiences of living children which deserves recognition and valorisation. The ideal child of our imagination must cease to silence the real child so that the actual lives children lead in this country accord with their truly, fully human nature.

* * *

1975 was the International Year of the Woman, a commemoration that drove the Women's Movement forward around the world. 1979 was the International Year of the Child, but children have neither here nor abroad yet achieved a cultural position or voice comparable to that of contemporary women, for they have no political presence and require advocates. Recently, concentration on the image of child as victim (of abuse in particular) has engendered considerable genuine empathy for children and prompted many to speak out for them. These victimization accounts may serve Canada's children as the guilt literature of the seventies did the Native People. They should prod us forward toward what we know we ought to do: stop doing to our children and let them do and be themselves while accepting and respecting them in the process.

Our cultural ideals, our cultural superego, confront us—a child, whose voice needs to be heard, whose existence as a child must be validated, whose freedom to be demands affirmation, whose full humanity must be recognized. Not only must we let our children be, we must also enable them (gradually as they are capable) to assume control over their existence, actively cope with life and, potentially, triumph over rather than passively become victims of the adversity they surely will encounter. According to a popular saying, frequently cited in contemporary popular culture as an African proverb, *"It takes a whole village to raise a child"*¹⁶ We need to provide effective villages—spaces in our culture where children can come into themselves, surrounded by and connected with supportive adults. Childhood must not be "something we live to recover from," as historian William Westfall recently termed it.¹⁷ To this end, young people everywhere

should be freed to experience the sheer, immediate joy in living and be able, each and everyone individually and collectively, to assert that joy. If, as Johann Huizinga suggested, the best designation for humans is "homo ludens," we will be most human and best realize our ideals as Canadians when we let the culture of children reverberate through our lives.

We are all but fellow-travellers
Along Life's weary way;
If any man can play the pipes In
God's name, let him play.¹⁸

Afterword

In the years since I gave this lecture, some encouraging changes of orientation to child, children's culture and childhood have occurred, notably within academe. Numerous calls for a more holistic and child-focussed approach to the study of children and their worlds (variously defined) now emanate from many disciplines. Europeans have spearheaded this trend and recently produced a body of singularly illuminating research that demonstrates the merits of the approach. North Americans have more recently, but quite vociferously, joined the movement to appreciate children's culture and legitimize the area of "children's studies." In an insightful article, Kenneth Kidd discusses "this new enthusiasm for culture as representing continuity as well as innovation."(147) Certainly it opens the door to curricular developments that may have long-range impact.

At York University in Toronto where I teach, the appetite for interdisciplinary courses on child-related topics appears to be insatiable. The enrolment in my first-year Humanities offering, "The Worlds of Childhood" has more than doubled within five years and the course ranks amongst those with the highest unmet need in our Faculty of Arts which, with almost 10,000 students, is larger than most universities in this country. The course aims first and foremost to "hear the voice of the child" and demands that each and every student undertake fieldwork with this intent. It is a revolutionary experience for most, who bear the imprimatur of the developmentalist hegemony, but it is indisputably the most rewarding assignment on the course for most participants. The demands for more study along this line escalate every year with the result that we are now in the process of mounting an interdisciplinary undergraduate "Children's Studies" program, the first of its kind in Canada.

Like many other interdisciplinary programs, this one will be housed in the Division of Humanities, itself an interdisciplinary unit which, along with the Divisions of Social Science and Natural Science, has provided among its offerings the core General Education (now Foundations) courses since York's establishment over forty years ago. The Children's Studies program will have most in common, however, with Women's Studies—a highly developed area at York, offered through the School of Women's Studies. Students will have many options through Children's Studies, but basically each will major or minor in a discipline (from Arts, Environmental Studies or Fine Arts) and take a series of four core interdisciplinary courses plus electives in Children's Studies. Of the core, one course is planned as a practicum or internship involving placement in a child-focused setting in the larger community (a library, publishing house, community center, heritage site...as relevant to each student individually). One other will be a course in the ethics and methodologies of working with or for children. Students will, then, be able to graduate with a spectrum of concentrations from writing for children (Creative Writing/Children's Studies) to advocating for/with children (Social Work/Children's Studies) to appreciating children's interface with the natural world (Environmental Studies/Children's Studies). In each case, the emphasis will be on hearing *from* children, on liberating *their voices* and on making *them* authorities on childhood.

A research unit, the Canadian Children's Culture Collection, has been established to support the program. Already the repository of many past student projects, the CCCC will facilitate further research by students, faculty and, as appropriate, community members. It will also pursue the development of its resource collections of children's art, hand-made toys, books and relevant secondary sources. One of its primary aims will be to disseminate research results in order to develop greater understanding of children's culture and to effect changes in the condition of being child in Canada and beyond. It is hoped that the program (planned to begin in fall 2004) and its allied research unit (well established and soon to open for use) will therefore contribute significantly to achieving the goals laid out in the preceding paper.

*York University
Toronto, Canada*

NOTES

¹ Gwyn Dow and June Factor, eds. *Australian Childhood*, 1991.

² In 1986 she received the Vicky Metcalf Award given annually by the Canadian Authors Association for a body of work deemed inspirational to Canadian youth (in her instance, folklore of or for children). Further, in 1993 she was the recipient of a Life Achievement medal from the Children's Folklore Section for her contributions to the field.

³ A Canadian painter who lived from 1871-1945. She is best known for her representations of the Northwest coastal forests and the tangible artifacts of the Native People who inhabited the region.

⁴ A weekly comedy program shown in prime time by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and known for its sociopolitical commentary.

⁵ For instance, a section (albeit contested) of the Canadian Chart of Rights and Freedoms specifically allows for disciplining children by physical means, whereas no other Canadian can lawfully be hit by another.

⁶ One of the models for the proposed Toronto Museum of Childhood.

⁷ Just one example being an exhibit at Harbourfront in Toronto of works by Spring Hurlbut incorporating French children's beds, March-April 1995.

⁸ This was during the threat of strong separatist sentiment in Quebec that threatened the Canadian union.

⁹ I am grateful to Robert Graham who does not know how much his comment has influenced my thinking in the intervening years.

¹⁰ A point frequently made in such works on children's folklore as *One Potato, Two Potato: The Secret Education of American Children* (1976) by Herbert and Mary Knapp and *Captain Cook Chased a Chook: Children's Folklore From Australia* by June Factor (1988).

¹¹ In this research, undertaken in the early nineties for her dissertation in Social Anthropology at York, Dr. Caputo was replicating the fieldwork done by Edith Fowke some thirty years earlier in the same Toronto schools.

¹² For instance, the text of one parody collected by Dr. Tucker in Binghamton, New York and also reported to me in Toronto turns the first lines of the Barney theme song, "I long you, you love me, We're a happy family" into "I love you, you love me, Homosex-u-al-i-ty."

¹³ It is worth noting that when this lecture was first published, the paragraph received more commentary than any other part of the work.

¹⁴ From Lansky & Carpenter, *The New Adventures of Mother Goose* (1993), as reported by Dale Anne Freed in "Georgy Porgy cleans up his

act," *Toronto Star*, 7 February 1994, Section E, 1 & 3.

¹⁵ Northrop Frye maintains in "The Cultural Development of Canada" that our most important learning and that which stays with us longest comes through such interpersonal communication (p. 16), a position long held by folklorists.

¹⁶ Similar in meaning to the recorded Bantu proverb, "The child of your neighbour is yours" which is listed in S. G. Champion, *Racial Proverbs* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1963), p. 597.

¹⁷ Personal communication, 1994

¹⁸ John Bennett, p. 21 *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*.

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"LIFE FOR ME AIN'T No CRYSTAL STAIR";
READIN', WRITIN', AND PARENTAL (IL)LITERACY
IN AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN' S BOOKS

NEAL A. LESTER

Learning would *spoil* the best nigger in the world. Now. . . if you teach that nigger. . . how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave.

-*Frederick Douglass* (1845)

Mass literacy is a relatively new social goal. A hundred years ago people didn't need to be good readers in order to earn a living. But in the Information Age, no one can get by without knowing how to read well and understand increasingly complex material.

-*Newsweek* (22 November 1999)

LITERACY AS DEMOCRATIC IDEAL

While Frederick Douglass's important *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845) demonstrates an individual's alleged personal liberation spiritually and psychologically through reading and writing, the narrative equally forwards a culturally chauvinistic agenda that privileges the printed word. Proposing to show his learned northern abolitionist, primarily white male audience that access to reading and writing transforms him from his perceived animal barbarism to civilized humanhood, Douglass impressively and eloquently details human bondage and his release from it through elaborate rhetorical strategies: symbolisms, ironies, allusions, parallelisms, ambiguities, repetitions.² Indeed, Douglass's liberation from his enslavement comes less from his physical freedom than from his ability to read and write:

Though conscious of the difficulty of learning without a teacher [his master's wife, Mrs. Auld], I set OUT with high hope, and of a fixed purpose at whatever cost of trouble to learn how to read. (667)

He learns indirectly from Mr. Auld how threatened masters were of

slaves' becoming literate—among other things, they might write their own passes to freedom literally and figuratively—and this knowledge fuels his intense determination to become literate by any means necessary:

What he [Mr. Auld] most dreaded, that I most desired. What he most loved, that I most hated. That which to him was a great evil, to be carefully shunned, was to be diligently sought; and served to inspire me with a desire and determination to learn. In learning to read, I owe almost as much to the bitter opposition of my master, as to the kindly aid of my mistress. (668)

Douglass's learning to read from Mrs. Auld's instruction and from manipulating little white boys so that he could write what they wrote is fundamental to Douglass's newly realized selfhood. Douglass's copying—physically mimicking "white literacy"—speaks to a cultural binary that exists between literacy and illiteracy in the western world. Although Douglass clarifies that slaves' physical and psychological survival was also connected to slaves' "reading" masters' behaviors and motives, he feels completely human and humanized largely because he can read and write.

In a broader sense, "formal" education generally and alphabetical literacy were believed to be keys to African American liberation from economic, social and political oppression. As Violet J. Harris explains in "African-American Conceptions of Literacy: A Historical Perspective,"

African Americans hold many of the same views [on the sacredness of education as white American citizens]; they, too, maintain an unstinting belief in the power of literacy to effect essential political, cultural, social, and economic change. In the past, and to some extent now, education was a privilege, albeit a privilege literally acquired through blood, sweat, tears, and enormous economic sacrifice. Unquestionably, acquiring access to literacy for African Americans has involved continuous struggle, in the face of unrelenting opposition from segments of the planter aristocracy, politicians, clergy, and ordinary citizens.³

Hence, to connect individual worth and selfhood, as does Douglass, with the ability or inability to read and write—one dimension of lit-

eracy—is not uncommon, however problematic, in a western culture that is, as Harlem Renaissance writer Jean Toomer describes, "hypnotized by literacy." According to the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey, literacy is the ability "to use printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential."⁴ Buried in this definition is the ideal of literacy as realized personal goals, social worth, and fullest self-potential, implying that illiteracy constitutes failure on any number of personal and social levels. Despite its obvious language bias by specifying "standard" English as the definitive marker, The National Literacy Act of 1991 broadens this definition of literacy by adding orality to the equation: literacy is "an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential."⁵ Personal goals and social values are again emphasized, literacy underscored as a prescribed personal and social ideal and standard. Neither definition, however, acknowledges literacy as a multitude of practices that legitimize realities and communicate diverse and varied experiences. If in fact literacy grants opportunities to achieve various ideals, those unable to read and write are perceived and treated as being socially handicapped and personally burdened. While Nancy N. Rue, in *Coping with an Illiterate Parent*, maintains that "literacy is not a single skill" (38) and has little to do with the moral and ethical decency of a non-reading individual (19), she nevertheless writes of this issue with extreme pessimism and oversimplification, maintaining that illiterate parents are most often "trapped in a nowhere job, imprisoned by a sense of inferiority, shamed by the inability to give [a child] everything [that child] needs intellectually and socially and emotionally *because* he/she can't read and write competently"(emphasis added 11). Rue implies that illiterate parents are in some ways less than complete and upstanding social individuals fully capable of maintaining satisfying familial and social relationships and leading productive lives. Even the book title itself—"Coping with an Illiterate Parent"—suggests that illiteracy is a kind of social disease or illness with which a child has to deal until a "cure" or "treatment" is found.

LITERACY IDEALIZED AND MORALIZED

Surprisingly or unsurprisingly, few children's texts address the issue of parental illiteracy. The treatment of illiteracy in a picture or

storybook for those learning to read seems on the surface oxymoronic, perhaps even absurd from the perspective of a publisher wanting to sell books. The idea of illiteracy I examine here is not about glorification of non-reading and non-writing. Rather, my concern is that books that dare to deal with parental illiteracy at all present parental illiteracy as a shameful secret, always to be hidden from the world of the parents' children. Eve Bunting's *The Wednesday Surprise* (1989) presents an elderly, presumably white grandmother learning to read as a "gift" to her adult son on the occasion of his birthday. Dick King-Smith's *The School Mouse* (1995) deals with the issue of non-reading parents in the racially and cultural neutral world of mice: young literate Flora "saves" her illiterate parents from eating poison. Both Dolores Johnson's *Papa's Stories* (1994), now out-of-print, and Vashanti Rahaman's *Read for Me, Mama* (1997) deal specifically with African Americans and parental illiteracy. In all of these books, the parent/adult-as-teacher role is reversed, and parents are led to literacy by the efforts of and responsibilities to a child. In these texts, literacy is idealized and those who can read idolized; literacy also—according to these accounts—allegedly signifies personal and social value and measures adult self-esteem and self-worth. With minimal complexity and compassion for individual circumstances even for or especially for children's texts, all of these treatments of illiteracy create artificial, culturally biased binaries that further marginalize those unable to read and write.

Children's texts that celebrate being able to read and write are not problematic in and of themselves. Problems arise however when such texts presume and forward the position that parental illiteracy is simple personal choice and not a series of complicated circumstances almost always beyond individuals' control. For example, my 79-year-old grandfather, with whom I spoke recently about his own illiteracy when I was mulling over ideas for this project, does not read and write, and to my knowledge this reality has never been an issue of family concern or discussion. It was an understood and rarely spoken fact, and clearly evident when, for instance, other family members read Father's Day and birthday cards to him. The whole tenor of my conversation with him was one of apology from him for this inability to read. He had a third grade education when his parents died and was forced to leave school to help work for the livelihood of his other five siblings. My grandfather and his older preacher brother were the only two who had minimal reading and writing skills. Others managed to continue studies along the way. With my Ph.D. in English, I felt awkward, embarrassed, and invasive talking about something the family had never

broached in such a manner. My conversation with my grandfather about his illiteracy was a lesson for me in his personal history and circumstances, a lesson of which I had no previous knowledge.⁶ In children's texts that deal with the subject of non-reading and writing parents but the non-reading and writing parents are not in fact the subjects, the circumstances of illiteracy—be they environmental or social, emotional, psychological, visual or even neurological as in dyslexia ("a disorder that makes learning to read extremely difficult")⁷ are unaddressed. Instead, literacy is celebrated at the expense of parental embarrassment, shame, and even morality.

Literacy is championed with near religious fervor in Vashanti Rahaman's *Read for Me, Mama*, wherein a young seven or eight-year-old African American boy is the instrument of his mother's "salvation" from illiteracy. Rahaman's story perpetuates class and race stereotypes, equating illiteracy with dirtiness, personal shame, even sin, and literacy with moral cleanliness and spiritual enlightenment. The story polarizes Joseph's ideal school/library experiences and the drudgery and mundane nature of his seemingly less than desirable home environment. The school librarian—older, wiser and proportional in weight—is almost God-like because of her professional authority and Joseph's adulation of her; she inspires Joseph with her engaging story reading. In fact, Joseph wants to emulate Mrs. Ricardo as a story reader. While Joseph's mother's storytelling is as exciting as the librarian's story reading, Rahaman's text affords the librarian and literacy an idealized position of power and authority not realized in Joseph's home life.

Race and class stereotyping occurs in other textual details. In fact, Rahaman makes illiteracy the source of these stereotypes. The overweight, late twenty-something African American woman, also a single parent—the text affords no clues to how this circumstance came to be—is trapped financially in two janitorial jobs. She has no independent means of transportation—she rides a bus or walks wherever she goes—and lives in an apartment next to empty lots of garbage and in a neighborhood with broken sidewalks. While these images alone are not distinct class markers, contextually, they render this less than ideal family unit as limited and existing in less than ideal American middle-class circumstances. Again, images of dirtiness and cleanliness are synonymous with illiteracy and literacy respectively. The illiterate Mama cleans hotel rooms, dirty dishes, the dirty apartment, and presumably white Mrs. Holder's apartment. These clean/dirty images appear in the illustrations as well. The literate librarian is either a light-skinned ethnic minority or a white person. The illiterate mother

is dark-complected.⁸ The university student who reads to Joseph at the laundromat is also non-African-American. Because of the mother's illiteracy, the text suggests, her participation in society is limited to working two jobs, doing laundry, shopping for groceries, and attending church activities. The implication is that the mother wants more or should want more or deserves more from life than these social rituals afford when in reality, some individuals, whether literate or not, may be quite satisfied in these circumstances.⁹

While leaving Joseph's mother unnamed in the text affords some degree of character universality in treating this issue of illiteracy, it also suggests that an illiterate parent may not warrant the authority of an identity, a name, not even the ability or opportunity to name herself. Recall that Frederick Douglass's consummate mark of selfhood and manhood comes in his ability to name himself, to "subscribe [him] self Frederick Douglass," suggesting the power and authority of one who can name or possess a non-generic name. Surely, there is more to this individual's identity than her named motherhood identity, an identity that is neither personalized nor individualized. All of the other literate characters, even the son Joseph, are privileged with a named identity: Ms. Ricardo (librarian), Mr. Beharry (university student), and old Mrs. Holder.

That Joseph's mother finds literacy through her church might easily be connected with the role black churches played historically in educating African Americans during and after slavery. As Leo McGee and Harvey G. Neufeldt note in *Education of the Black Adult in the United States: An Annotated Bibliography*, "[T]he black churches, most notably [sic] the African Methodist Church, took the lead in providing educational opportunities for blacks of all ages" (92). Yet this historical note is not revealed in the story but rather the notion that literacy is a "gift" from God. Just as a mysterious and seemingly divine presence puts a "pot of geraniums. . . in the deep hole in the sidewalk" in Joseph's neighborhood, the preacher and the congregation at Mama's church pray fervently to God for her to become literate, and God answers their collective prayers with evening adult reading courses and tutorials for Mama. One of the last images in the book shows Joseph and his Mama reading together as though their mouths are reading in unison. This image of open mouths even suggests singing as at Mama's choir practice or church revival service. Indeed, the illustration and the final words—"Slowly and carefully, Mama's voice stepped from word to word, page after page. Mama was reading!"—resound with the religiosity of singing, shouting, and celebration. With Mama's newfound literacy, she is presumably no longer desperate and

blinded by personal shame, deception, and inadequacy. She rather cryptically explains her illiteracy before her "conversion": "I have to learn to read. . . . My boy *needs* a mama who can read. But I never practiced up my reading, never learnt it good in school, and it all got lost from my mind, all got lost" (emphasis added). Notice that the mother equates literacy with good parenting. Importantly, the book's title, "Read *for Me*, Mama" (emphasis added), rather than "Read *to Me*, Mama" (emphasis added), further suggests that this parent's becoming literate is a response to her son's desperate plea, a plea that goes beyond the son's leisure entertainment: if Mama does not respect herself enough to be literate, then certainly she will become literate for her child. Notice also that Mama's spoken language is mangled and awkward, and presumably once she learns to read, she will be a better parent and will speak correct "standard" English. Indeed, literacy brings light and enlightenment to Mama. In this sense, the final open mouth might well be the words read or sung of the popular folk hymn "Amazing Grace":

Amazing grace how sweet the sound/
that saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now I'm found.
Was blind but now I see.

Rahaman's text associates illiteracy with "wretchedness," being "lost," and being "blind"; literacy, in contrast, with sight and moral purity. While illiteracy may be perceived as a blindness, it is nevertheless one dimension of a person's life experience, not a whole human condition. Hence, although Mama may already know the words to the hymn as she does the hymns she knows well in her church choir, she can now read other unfamiliar verses and other less familiar hymns.¹⁰ With literacy, the book contends, Mama is a soldier armed to conquer the world. Armed with literacy, the author contends, this mother and by extension this family will break from its personal and social shackles. Even the book jacket reiterates this religious romanticizing of literacy as "salvation": "Vashanti Rahaman's story of how a mother and son face the challenge of literacy is told with warmth and sensitivity, while [the illustrator's] bold and beautiful oil paintings light the pages with images of hope and love."

The message of *Read for Me, Mama* oversimplifies even for a child audience the issue of illiteracy. We see Mama's life of drudgery before she becomes literate and are to believe that her daily busyness as a single parent will either change or cease and that she will have more time for her son. Indeed, while the mother may not spend time avoiding reading to her son, perhaps too much of the relationship between

a mother and her son is connected with her (il)literacy. The message presumes that Mama will not arrive home from work late if her work times are changed because she will be able to read announcements about revised schedules. The story avoids the reality that even literate persons misread or do not always read carefully. And how likely is it that Mama's work place would present revised schedules and have no verbal announcement or discussion so that Mama and others might at least hear about the schedule change? The final lesson of the book also suggests that Mama's literacy will change the quality of the relationship between this mother and her child. While reading to a child is an unquestionably important act that can be a bonding experience between a parent and a child, there is no reason to believe that the quality of this family's life overall or needs to change significantly.

Although Joseph admits that his mother is a great story teller—"Mama was the best storyteller in the world. Her voice danced and played with the words. She could make the most ordinary things seem not so ordinary after all"—her storytelling is not really celebrated.¹¹ Indeed, the book makes clear that Mama's stories are interesting to Joseph because Mama is an engaging storytelling performer: she uses interesting voices to make stories come alive. But while Mama is a great storyteller, even better than Mrs. Ricardo and the university student Mr. Beharry, Mama's storytelling—to which Joseph has undoubtedly been exposed long before he goes to school and hears a librarian read to him—ranks second in importance and value to Mrs. Ricardo's, the librarian's, story reading: "Mrs. Ricardo, the librarian, was the best story reader in the world. She could make her voice loud and soft and squeaky and growly. She could sound angry and happy and oh, so very sad. She knew all of the great big words in the books. Joseph wished he could read like that." The librarian, because of her literacy performance, is idolized. Joseph's mother's storytelling performance is as exciting and actually comparable to Mrs. Ricardo's animated performances, yet what distinguishes the librarian from the mother in this context is the librarian's ability to "know great big words." Surely, literacy is more than decoding big words.

Mama's conversion to literacy furthers the primary bias that literacy exempts individuals from limitations and creates false hopes: "Literacy," one source claims, "arouses hopes, not only in society as a whole but also in the individual who is striving for fulfillment, happiness and personal benefit by learning how to read and write. Literacy. . . means far more than learning how to read and write. . . The aim is to transmit. . . knowledge and promote social participation."¹² While literacy allegedly "saves" Mama from public and personal shame. *Read*

for Me, Mama does little to move what can be the painful realities of illiteracy to a deeper understanding. Rather, it maintains and even perpetuates faulty assumptions that illiteracy determines one's self worth and the quality of one's personal relationships. The text confirms Nancy N. Rue's assertions that "Illiteracy is considered by our society to be a shameful thing—certainly not something that is volunteered in the course of casual conversation. . . . If [adults] tell people they can't read, they're likely to lose jobs, friendships, and even the respect of their kids" (9). That Mama wears a pair of heart-shaped earrings prominently positioned in the illustrations just before her "true confession" before the church congregation and during and after the "conversion" further presents literacy as a divine "gift" from God, suggesting once again that literacy directly impacts on the loving relationship between a parent and child.

With the mother's literacy also comes a seemingly newfound church community rallying around the new "convert." Was there no community around Mama before this moment? Perhaps Rahaman works too hard to idealize literacy with assumptions that can surely undermine parental authority and individual self-respect. Perhaps she tries too hard to present a "happily ever after ending" to a story and circumstance that are more complicated than she realizes or dares to explore. Perhaps the story would achieve a greater impact if it explored some possible or probable causes of Mama's illiteracy beyond her cryptic explanation in the church. Perhaps Rahaman's reading audience might be better served by using Mama's illiteracy to discuss the cultural bias and social marginalization of those who do not share the same abilities, talents, opportunities, or even reading levels. The book might have been an occasion to educate both reading parents and children that there are degrees of functioning literate practice, that Joseph's mother's inability to read his library books, her church hymn books, or her work schedule announcements does not mean that she can not differentiate between cleaning supplies, shop for groceries, read numbers on her paycheck, or pay bills. Perhaps the book might have included some awareness on the author's part of the social, historical, and political history of illiteracy specifically among African Americans since according to Jonathan Kozol, in *Illiterate America* (1985), "[Illiteracy] figures for the younger generation of black adults are increasing. Forty-seven percent of all black seventeen-year-olds are functionally illiterate. That figure is expected to climb to 50 percent by 1990" (2). Although the National Education Association reports that among the total population of adult non-literate in English—41 % are English speaking whites, 22% are English speaking African Ameri-

cans, 22% are Spanish speaking, and 15% are non-English speaking people-"the actual numbers of white non-readers is twice that of the number of African American and Hispanic non-readers, dispelling the myth that illiteracy is not a problem among whites." ¹³ Still, Kozol further urges the rightful need to address illiteracy specifically within a particular cultural context of race politics:

When nearly half of all adult black citizens in the United States are coming out of public schools without the competence to understand the antidote instructions on a chemical container, instructions on a medicine bottle, or the books and journalistic pieces which might render them both potent and judicious in a voting booth, who can pretend that literacy is not political? (92)

While Kozol's comments are fundamentally sound, his call for urgency certainly warranted, perhaps he, too, overestimates the alleged "saving" powers of literacy. Joseph's mother seems not to have endangered her life or Joseph's or suffered any devastating trauma as a result of her inability to read. Nevertheless, the need to historicize illiteracy in any such discussion is clear:

The politics of literacy are nothing new. Long before the politics of racial segregation in the schools came to the national attention, long before Woodrow Wilson argued for the merits of class stratification in the public schools, long before laws throughout the nation made it a crime to teach black people how to read and write, long before the U.S. Constitution measured the black citizen as three-fifths of a man, one hundred years before the present government existed, a powerful leader, Sir William Berkeley, governor of Virginia, stated his views in clear, unflinching terms. "I thank God," he said, that "there are no free schools nor printing [in this land]. For learning has brought disobedience, and heresy, and sects into the world, and printing hath divulged them..God save us from both!"(93)¹⁴

While Rahaman's children's story need not be a history textbook, readers might well benefit from a cursory explanation of the richness of the African American oral tradition represented to some extent in the mother's storytelling, a tradition often less valued by a learned people. Carl F. Kastle farther adds in *Literacy in the United States: Readers*

and Reading since 1880:

For some centuries after the introduction of alphabetic writing, literacy was restricted to a small elite and limited to a few functions. . . . These early developments took place in the contexts of pervasive oral culture. Oral culture did not atrophy in contact with written culture; rather, the written word modified and extended communication networks. Not only has the great majority of the earth's population been illiterate throughout history, but the great bulk of communication in literate societies is still oral. (6-7)

The artificial white literate vs. oral and African American illiterate dynamic speaks largely to the race dynamics more fully understood within the context of social and political history. Kastle adds:

On all measures of literacy, at all points during the last century, white Americans have been more literate than black Americans. In 1880, the differences were vast, of course, with American black population emerging from slavery and subject to massive poverty and discrimination. . . . A large, durable portion of literacy differences between black and white Americans clearly cannot be explained by measurable economic and family characteristics. In the unexplained portion of the variation lie such elusive but real factors as the effects of prejudice, cultural alienation, discouragement, and differential aspirations, all related to race. (125-26)¹⁵

Additionally, the various ways in which different races, ethnicities, and even genders experience the world impact on their learning to read and write. For instance, African Americans, historically and politically denied access to writing and reading, emerge from and celebrate an aural, oral, and visual culture often at odds with the culture of the written word, authors such as Zora Neale Hurston raising oral rituals of folk culture to high art. "The white man," according to Hurston, "thinks in a written language and the Negro thinks in hieroglyphics" (50). To offer some commentary that presents parental illiteracy often as the result of varied and complex circumstances is to enlighten readers, young and old alike, rather than perpetuate further ignorance and misunderstanding among the alleged literate.

Dolores Johnson's book on parental illiteracy, *Papa's Stories*, comes with mixed and confused messages, again associating illiteracy

with parental love for a child and with individual self-love. Emphasizing folktales, fairy tales, and the rich textures of oral traditions, Johnson's detail of a father's illiteracy seems incidental, not fundamentally connected with the story's inadvertent final message: that good storytelling is good storytelling whether the story is read, recited, or improvised.

Perhaps without really intending to, Johnson has written a book that celebrates folklore and performance. Not only does the narrative engage fairy tale rhetoric and a young kindergartner, Kari—her father's growing "Princess"—stumbling upon her thirty-something-year-old father and mother's secret of his illiteracy, but the story also romanticizes literacy as a middle-class ideal. While Kari's Dad does not "read" words in his daily "reading" rituals with Kari, he reads the pictures and creates wonderfully exciting stories from those pictures. In the illiterate father's hands, the culturally familiar stories of Little Red Riding Hood, Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, and Jack and the Beanstalk take on new life for Kari.¹⁶ And since Kari herself is not quite a reader, there is no immediate confusion for her about what she sees on the printed page and what she hears her father "reading" to her. The father-daughter reading ritual seems complete until the fairy tale's wicked stepmother or witch figure—Kari's older neighborhood friend, Jennifer—disillusions Kari about her whole relationship with her Dad. Ironically, it seems that Jennifer's literacy threatens the ideal world Kari and her Papa have created:

Papa settled into his favorite chair, his skin smelling as fresh as fir trees. Kari climbed into his lap and snuggled into the crook of his arm. Then Papa read her a story. . . . There were times Kari and Papa got so wrapped up in their reading that Mama let supper sit while she joined Kari and Papa on the porch in the moonlight. Or, during winter's chilliest evenings, the whole family would snuggle close together on the sofa and read by the light of the fire.

Although Jennifer's alleged literal reading of the Little Red Riding Hood story affords Kari an opportunity to discuss her dad's illiteracy with him—the story does not clarify why Kari should believe her friend's version over her Dad's—the story does nothing to advance an understanding of the issue of illiteracy. That illiteracy seems secondary stems also from the fact that the illiterate father is not presented with any problems particular to his disability: he and his literate wife own a nice house in a pleasant middle-class rural environ-

ment, and he presumably has an adequate blue-collar job.

Johnson is not quite sure what her book is about; its focus seems too fuzzy to know what Kari or Johnson's reading audience is to glean from the details other father's cryptic explanation of why he is unable to read: "When I was young, I didn't care enough about learnin'. And there was no one who seemed to care about me. When I got older, I didn't love myself enough to even try." Might Johnson have allowed the family to have an honest discussion of less vague reasons for the father's illiteracy? How young is "young" when this father did not care about learning? Did extenuating family circumstances impact on this father's early education? How is learning to read and write fundamentally connected to this father's lack of self-love, and how has this lack of self-love manifested itself in his life as an adult? Did this father drop out of school when he was young? Is it possible for an illiterate individual, a parent even, to have healthy self-esteem? Were the circumstances of this father's illiteracy forced upon or "chosen" by him? What specific lessons might Kari learn from her father's reading inability?

Indeed, as Papa "reads" to Kari, Johnson does not initially make clear that the father is not choosing to improvise. That Kari prefers her dad's improvised, more creative versions of stories accentuates the performative nature of good storytelling that in this case is not handicapped by the father's illiteracy. When this father learns to read a little from his wife and is able to read the words on the pages of Kari's books, not just the pictures, Kari prefers what might easily be considered sillier revisionist versions where "little boys swallowed magic till they were full of beans, and giants. . . were angry because their mustaches didn't fit." At the book's end, Kari makes this request of her father: "Excuse me, Papa. When you finish this book, read it to me again like you always did. I love the extra-special way you read the stories. "

It seems odd that Johnson foregrounds her text allegedly about illiteracy in fairy tale folklore since fairy tales are part of cultural literacy and even those who may not be able to read them have surely heard of them and know their narrative germs. As folklore, these fairy tales have surely circulated in the father's own childhood whether or not he is the product of a literate family. Just as Kari and anyone else starts the journey toward literacy by inventing stories from pictures, Kari's father has every right to be respected for and confident in his storytelling abilities despite his illiteracy. Are story readers necessarily the best storytellers?

BEYOND THE LITERACY BINARY

Many readers and writers take for granted the privilege and authority given those who can do the same. For them, daily tasks such as reading traffic signs, a newspaper or magazine in a doctor's office waiting room, a restaurant menu, telephone books, a child's school progress report, checks, recipes, maps, and medicine bottles are believed fundamental to our social and personal survival. I was starkly reminded of my own middle-class assumptions when I recently assigned to my African American children's literature class an intergenerational oral history midterm project specifically about African American identity and childhood reading experiences. Students were asked to interview two individuals—one at least ten years older than they and another between the ages of five and ten—about their reading experiences as African American children. I had expected to get stories from individuals that allowed students to see how images of African Americans had or had not changed over generations and how early reading experiences impact on adult identity formations. When one student submitted his project, his younger interviewee was the only instance of twenty who could not read. While I had assumed that all parents are reading to their children before they are put to bed, the reality of non-reading children and non-reading parents became an issue I had inadvertently overlooked in all of my fairly extensive preparations for teaching the class. The young boy, now age ten and in a juvenile jail until age eighteen for various crimes, was never read to and never learned to read; he still acknowledges no value in learning to read as he is the product of a non-reading adult environment. Another student submitted a project that revealed an eleven-year-old boy's extreme written and verbal giftedness despite having grown up with totally illiterate grandparents. And just as it is necessary to understand the circumstances of young Johnny's inability to read, it was equally important to understand the circumstances of Johnny's parents' illiteracy since illiterate children become illiterate adults and illiterate parents.

While this project has made no efforts to be exhaustive in its exploration of parental illiteracy in African American children's books, it recognizes the grave misinformation and incomplete information available to children with non-reading parents.¹⁷ Failure to address parental illiteracy in children's texts in many ways furthers the marginalization of those unable to read and write. Treatments here evidenced are rudimentary and grossly inadequate. To equate illiteracy with hopelessness, immorality, lack of self-love, limited quality

family relations, latchkey childhood, parental dishonesty, and limited social participation is to accept the cultural bias associated with literacy and to remain ignorant to complicated realities. As a Professor of Education clarifies, "The great divide in literacy is not between those who can read and write and those who have not yet learned to. It is between those who have discovered what kinds of literacy society values and how to demonstrate their competencies in ways that earn recognition."¹⁸ Sojourner Truth, an illiterate former slave and one of the first black feminist abolitionists, "protested against discriminatory laws that denied the ballot to women. . . blacks and illiterate citizens. After she was once turned away from a voting booth, she said, 'I can't read a book, but I can read the people.'¹⁹ Indeed, her comment speaks to a dimension of (il)literacy that must be considered in order to eradicate myths and stereotypes used to determine individual self and social worth. My exploration reveals that literate authors can be totally unaware of the complexities of (il)literacy and the multitude of literate practices at the core of social, cultural, and individual identity formations. Among African Americans, the issue of (il)literacy must be further contextualized not as a way of condoning not learning to read and write but as a way of understanding more fully that non-reading and writing is seldom if ever a simple matter of personal choice.

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NOTES

1. Langston Hughes. "Mother to Son," *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes* (New York: Vintage, 1974), 187. This poem is selected and recited by Precious Jones, Sapphire's illiterate teenage African American female in *Push* (1996), as one of her pre-GED adult illiteracy course assignments. The poem is dedicated to her infant son, Abdul (112-113).

2. Alphabetical literacy and orality need not exist in cultural opposition. Even though the "readerly" narrative is a model of rhetorical flourish at its best and meant to be read as a demonstration of "mastering the muster" through mastering the master's language, other rhetorical strategies by Douglass-emotional flourishes, metafictional moments, and rhythmic patterns-render the *Narrative* its distinctly sermonic/ "speakerly" textures, its clear connections with orality and African American folk storytelling. Robert G. O'Meally, in his essay "Frederick Douglass's 1845 *Narrative*: The Text Was Meant to Be Preached," comments on the oral "preacherly" dimensions

of Douglass's text:

The *Narrative* does more than touch upon questions often pondered by black preachers. Its very form and substance are directly influenced by the Afro-American preacher and his vehicle for ritual expression, the sermon. In this sense, Douglass' *Narrative* of 1845 is a sermon, and, specifically, it is a black sermon. This is a text meant to be read and pondered; it is also a Clarion call to spiritual affirmation and action: This is a text meant to be preached. . . . But Douglass, who grew up hearing sermons on the plantation and who heard and delivered them throughout his life, produced, in this greatest account of his life, a text shaped by the form and the processes of speaking characteristic of the black sermon. This is a mighty text meant of course, to be read. But it is also a text meant to be mightily preached. (Dexter Fisher and Robert B. Stepto, eds., *Afro-American Literature: The Reconstruction of Instruction*. New York: MLA, 1978, 192-193; 210).

3. Violet J. Harris, "African-American Conceptions of Literacy: A Historical Perspective" *Theory Into Practice* 31 (Autumn 1992): 276. Not only does Harris provide a rudimentary summary of historical realities facing African Americans in their quest for literacy, she also comments on the fact that literacy, depending on the nature of what one becomes literate in or about, can be both "emancipatory and oppressive":

Literacy serves emancipatory functions when appropriated to reconstruct society and/ or provide individuals with the options needed to participate in all sociocultural institutions. Literacy functions in an oppressive manner. . . when curricular materials, educational philosophies, and pedagogical techniques combine to inculcate an ideology that denigrates a group, omits or misrepresents the history and status of a group, or limits access to knowledge that would enable the individual or group to participate in sociocultural institutions. (277).

4. "Literacy and Life." <<http://www.edentek.net/litlife.htm>> (26 February 2000): 1.

5. Ibid.

6. In circulating drafts of this essay, a couple of African American friends, responding with familiarity to these details of my illiterate father, were compelled to share illiteracy details in their own families. Both email accounts show how adult family members' illiteracy impacted on their own educational values. One, an adult literacy volunteer teacher, writes:

The men on my mom's side of the family are illiterate. They were not encouraged to do well in school like the women were. So they

didn't. None of my uncles could read or write past elementary school level. Survival came from what they learned on the streets and others doing their reading and writing for them. My dad, who was a math whiz, dropped out of school in the third grade to roam around and do nothing. In his fifties, he joined a literacy organization to learn how to read and write. We are proud of his accomplishments. It was never a secret in my family. When my brothers slack, they try to use the excuse that [since] dad made it without an education, why can't they? He sets them straight.

One of my students (female) also quit in the third grade to help feed the family. She never really had the opportunity or drive to go back until recently. She is now eighty years old. (Personal email, 19 January 2000)

Another writes of the circumstances other parents' illiteracy:

My mother died at the age of forty; she did not get her GED until she was thirty-seven. She was a very smart woman and it was fun when she went to school because we sometimes go to help her with her homework to an extent. My stepfather never graduated from grade school as I can recall; however, he traveled the world in the army. It was not until I was a grown woman that I found out how extremely well his math was, something I suffer with. The point is that neither Mom nor Dad ever helped us with our homework. There was no doubt that we would go to school and were expected to graduate, but there was never any reading to help us or helping with math so that we could move to the next level. Other than school books and the Bible, we had no books around our house. There was no money for them and of course we never went to a library. I do however remember them telling stories when the weather caused the lights to go out. That was fun! As you can tell, I sometimes have very mixed feelings about education and its benefits. So many non-formally educated folk have become millionaires. (Personal email, 2 February 2000)

7. Barbara Kantrowitz and Anne Underwood, "Dyslexia and the New Science of Reading" *Newsweek* (22 November 1999): 72. In their investigation of this disorder that affects about 20% of children, Kantrowitz and Underwood point out that this inability to decode sounds, essential to reading, results from mixed brain signals; in this case, "reading disorders are most likely the result of what is, in effect, faulty wiring in the brain-not laziness, stupidity, or a poor home environment" (74). They also cite instances of individuals who are successful despite these childhood reading and learning challenges: "Indeed, famous and successful dyslexics include Tom Cruise, artist Robert Rauschenberg and Olympian Dan O'Brien" (74). Although the article obviously does not champion non-reading, it emphasizes that non

readers can succeed, further evidenced in the example of John Corcoran: "By sixth grade John Corcoran, a severe dyslexic, still couldn't spell 'cat' and could tell MEN from WOMEN on restroom doors only because one was longer. Still illiterate as an adult, he taught social studies in high school—by using movies for lessons, inviting guest speakers and having students grade papers. At 48, he registered for a public library literacy program. . . . Now 60, he published *The Teacher Who Couldn't Read* in 1994" (78). Corcoran's book details his life of deception and riskiness as he successfully moved up the career ladder through elementary and high school, college, and ultimately to his own classroom as a teacher unable to read words on a page. Learning how to read was to him like "being set free from almost five decades of bondage." Notice the analogy made here between illiteracy as a form of enslavement and Frederick Douglass's alleged liberation from slavery through his ability to read and write.

Although not a children's text, Sapphire's controversial novel *Push* (1996) is the disturbingly graphic account of an adolescent African American girl's tortured journey to realized selfhood through literacy. The novel demonstrates the complex circumstances—emotional, psychological, social, and physical—that interfere with Claireece Precious Jones's efforts to become literate. Because of many complicated circumstances and situations revealed in the novel, Precious is sixteen and unable to read and write. In fact, she confesses in her narrative that except for pages with pictures, "the pages look all the same" (48). Importantly, literacy is less Precious's "savior" from her traumatic life of paternal and maternal incest and two subsequent pregnancies, AIDS, and social neglect, than her teacher, Blue Rain, whose approach to helping Precious realize her own self-worth despite her past and present circumstances is through reading and writing. The narrative shows Precious's spiritual blooming after enrolling in a pre-GED adult literacy class for beginning writers. In addition to mastering alphabetic literacy, Precious gains a community of fellow students who respect and care for her as never before. The novel ends with Precious reading to her infant son and committing herself to making her son's life better than hers. Interestingly, some details of Precious's circumstances echo a situation shared in one of the emails from an adult literacy tutor friend that, after reading a draft of this essay, shared an experience with one other student:

I had a student once who quit school in the ninth grade. She thought she was stupid because she never did well. It was not until just before we began our lessons that she found out that she was dyslexic. When I started working with her, her kids would make fun of her. When she started improving, they started helping her with her homework. When she was on her way, she got a job in her child's school as an office aide. Before, she was on welfare, just passing the time doing much of nothing. I would say she had very low self-esteem. In the two years we worked together, I saw her grow as a person. (Personal email, 19 January 2000)

8. Historically, the intraracism that exists within African American communities and households associates light skin with power, authority, and success. Dark-skinned African Americans were presumed to be, were treated as, and perceived themselves as less socially advantaged. Such dynamics emerge from the history of American slavery that rewarded on many levels African Americans closest to masters' white ideal in skin color or hair texture. Masters' children with slaves often were treated as privileged and socially gifted. See Kathy Russell, et.al., *The Color Complex: The Politics of Skin Color among African Americans* (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

9. Nikki Giovanni's autobiographical poem, "Nikki Roasa," is an adult's perspective on childhood memories often misrepresented or misinterpreted when others impose their values onto another's realities or experiences. Despite her family's material lacking and problems with a father who drank too much and too often, Giovanni is not necessarily in psychological and emotional denial when she insists that her childhood "was quite a happy one":

childhood remembrances are always a drag
if you're Black

... and if you become famous or something
they never talk about how happy you were to have your mother all to
yourself and
how good the water felt when you got your bath from one of those big tubs
that folk in Chicago barbecue in

... and though you're poor it isn't poverty that concerns
you. . .

... I really hope no white person ever has cause
to write about me because they never understand that Black love is Black
wealth and they'll probably talk about my hard childhood and never
understand that all the while I was
quite happy.

("Nikki-Roasa." in Demetrice A. Worley
and Jesse Perry, Jr., eds.,
African-American Literature: An Anthology, 295)

10. This instance of illiteracy is explored briefly in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* when the narrator Scout attends her black maid Calpurnia's church and wonders why the congregation is not reading from the hymnals as they sing. Coupled with the economic issue of the black church not having sufficient funds to buy enough hymnals for its members is the fact that most of the congregation is illiterate. Calpurnia's literacy came from the whites whose house she keeps and she has passed that "gift" of literacy on to her son Zeebo who lines hymns—announces the words of hymns for the congregation in a call-and-imitation response format. Notice the conversation between Scout and Calpurnia about this performance:

"How're we gonna sing it [hymn] if there ain't any hymn-books?"
Calpurnia smiled. "Hush baby," she whispered, "you'll see in a
minute. "
Zeebo cleared his throat and read in a voice like the rumble of distant
artillery. . . .
Miraculously on pitch, a hundred voices sang out Zeebo's words. . . . (121)

It never occurs to Scout that folks who can not read as she and others around her can function quite efficiently. Scout's naivete highlights again the assumptions of privilege attached to literacy. The reality of illiteracy in her church congregation offers Calpurnia the opportunity to explain literacy as something that potentially separates rather than unites her with other blacks socially:

Jem [Scout's older brother] said it looked like they [illiterate congregation] could save the collection money for a year and get some hymn books.
Calpurnia laughed. "Wouldn't do any good," she said. "They can't read."
"Can't read?" I asked. "All those folks?"
"That's right," Calpurnia nodded. "Can't but about four folks in First Purchase [church] read. . . I'm one of 'em." . . . (124)

Class and race are here connected with literacy. In this moment, Lee shows that illiteracy does not mean individuals are unable to function or suffer from low self-esteem because they are unable to read and write. At the same time, the literacy and Calpurnia's attachment to her white family further separate her from the "regular" lot of blacks in Maycomb County.

Not only are illiterate church members able to function in literate circumstances, but there are even illiterate preachers who manage effectively as well. My maternal grandfather's older brother is an illiterate preacher and has been all of my life. For those who do not know that he is illiterate, he "performs" literacy quite effectively. He has heard biblical scriptures so often that he has memorized them, giving audiences a sense of his spiritual commitment. He knows familiar songs and the Word of God so well that he does not have to read them word for word. Since there are so many translations and modifications of the Bible for various audiences, his recitations might easily be taken as a modernized revision of scriptural texts. He does open the Bible to some text as he recites. Those who know him well know how he skillfully manages to avoid situations calling for spontaneous reading on his part. Since a number of illiterate black preachers in my childhood were not formally trained in seminaries or other theology schools, they managed quite effectively to preach soul-stirring sermons and to negotiate their leadership, authority, and credibility masterfully.

Literacy as privilege and a means of separating blacks from the illiterate masses is evidenced in Harriet Jacobs's slave narrative *Incidents in the Life of*

a Slave Girl, Written, by Herself. Notice the emphasis as in Frederick Douglass' title when both authors clarify that their narratives were "written by [themselves]." Literacy marks their liberation from slavery. Jacobs, who allegedly taught herself to read, is more self-confident, arrogant even, because she is literate, unlike the other slaves around her: "I was invited to attend [slaves' churches] *because* I could read" (emphasis added 45). There is no sense that Jacobs/ Brent has any other connection, spiritual or communal, with those who share her lot beyond her ability to read to them. She even comments on her ability to pass on news information because others depended on her reading abilities: "They knew that I could read; and I was often asked if I has seen anything in the newspapers about white folks over in the big north, who were trying to get their freedom for them" (45). While literacy puts Jacobs/ Brent on equal grounds with the white populace, it separates her from her fellow lots of slaves. This middle-class preoccupation with literacy surfaces again when Jacobs/ Brent is reunited with her nine-year-old daughter Ellen after seven years of being separated and in bondage. Although Jacobs/ Brent is concerned about Ellen's unkempt appearance, she is most bothered by daughter's inability to read: "When she [Ellen, the daughter] was placed with Mrs. Hobbs, the agreement was that she should be sent to school. She had been there two years, and was now nine years old, and she scarcely knew her letters. There was no excuse for this, for there were good public schools in Brooklyn, to which she could have been sent without expense" (166). At the same time, Brent/ Jacobs's concern for her daughter's literacy might seem any literate parent's desire that her child receive an education that will aid in living a "better" life.

11. Story reading and story telling need not be as dichotomized culturally as this narrative presents. In other words, reading stories is certainly not any more important than good story telling. For instance, Angela Johnson's *Tell Me a Story, Mama* (New York: Orchard Books, 1989) is an African American children's book that celebrates a storytelling tradition. When a young daughter requests that her mother tell her a story as she is being tucked into bed, the young preschool girl clarifies which story she wants her mother to tell by ultimately telling the story to the mother as the mother has told her. The narrative re-creates the mother's childhood story through the daughter's retelling. Whether or not the mother is literate does not influence this equally important parent-child ritual. Two other children's texts importantly present talking and storytelling as a source of communal celebration: Deborah M. Newton Chocolate's retelling of the Ashanti legend, *Talk, Talk* (Mahwah, NJ: Troll Associates, 1993) and Angela Shelf Medearis's *Too Much Talk, a West African Folktale* (Cambridge: Candlewick Press, 1995).

12. "Quotations about Literacy." <<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Database/quote.html>> (03 September 1999): 2.

13. "The Typical Adult Non-Reader," <<http://indian-river.fl.us/living/services/als/typical.html>> (26 January 2000): 1. According to a 1987 report, *The Subtle Danger: Reflections on the Literacy Abilities of America's Young Adults*, published by the Educational Testing Service (Princeton, N.J.), "on

the average, African Americans perform 20% behind whites on literacy tests and Hispanic perform halfway between the two."

14. Not only were slaves punished if caught learning to read and write, but whites that assisted in slave learning were also subject to legal consequences. Describing feminist abolitionist Lydia Maria Child's crusade against slave illiteracy in Child's *An Appeal in Favor of Americans Called Africans* (1833), Cecelia McCall, in her essay, "A Historical Quest for Literacy," recounts the deliberate obstacles to slave learning:

[Lydia Maria Child] reports that various laws were enacted to maintain illiteracy. For instance, South Carolina was the first state to order that any person caught instructing a slave be fined one hundred pounds. Virginia declared that schools established to teach either slave or free Black people should be disbanded and each pupil lashed twenty times. Anyone caught teaching slaves in Georgia was imprisoned for ten days and given thirty-nine lashes. By 1837, all states in the slaveocracy had enacted similar laws. . . . In the free North, . . . Ohio, for instance, refused to educate "colored" children at the public expense or allow them to attend schools with white children." (4)

After slavery ended, literacy continued to be a weapon of white supremacy used against black social and political participation: "Literacy or other tests as a condition for voting were suspended by the Voting Rights Act in 1965 initially only in those states in which Congress found there had been pervasive discrimination against blacks in registration and in which literacy tests had been specifically designed to disfranchise racial minorities. Later, the ban on literacy and other tests was made nationwide and permanent by amendments to the Act in 1970 and 1975. The Supreme Court held the nationwide ban constitutional after concluding that literacy tests had reduced voter participation in a discriminatory manner throughout the country and not merely in those states originally covered by the Act" (McDonald, Laughlin. "Minority Vote Dilution: The Fourteenth Amendment and the Voting Rights Act" <http://www.aclu.org/aclu-e/course3_mcdonald3.html> 4 January 80, 3).

15. Recall that Frederick Douglass, even after being free from slavery and "armed" with literacy, is unable to secure a job as a calker because whites will not work with him: "I went in pursuit of a job of calking; but such was the strength of prejudice against color, among the white calkers, that they refused to work with me, and of course I could get no employment" (Mack 714). The myth of Frederick Douglass's liberation from slavery and racism is perpetuated even in historical texts for elementary students. As if literacy exempts Frederick Douglass from racial discrimination, Karen H. Dusek's essay, "Frederick Douglass, Abolitionist Writer" boldly asserts: "When Frederick Douglass was a boy, he wanted more than anything else to be free. Believing that he would never be truly free without an education, he learned to read and write. His ability to read and write soon proved to be his most powerful weapon in his lifelong fight against slavery and prejudice" (*Cobble*

stone: *The History Magazine for Young People*, 21). Neither Douglass's narrative nor this essay on him speaks of literacy—the ability to read and write—as a way of personal liberation imaginatively. Rather, liberation is ideally connected to overcoming social circumstance.

16. John Corcoran, chronicling his life as an illiterate parent and high school teacher, offers a similar experience with the fairy tales he pretends to read to his daughter, also called his "princess." Because of the pictures and his familiarity with the fairytales orally, Corcoran confidently embellishes the stories of *The Three Little Bears* and *Cinderella* but is at a total loss when his young daughter requests a story with which he is unfamiliar. He recounts the pain of that experience:

The big Golden Books and their wonderful pictures would stimulate my imagination to weave some crazy yarns. When I told the Three Bears, Cinderella, or another well-known fairy story, they were embellished with all the drama of Orson Wells or Alfred Hitchcock. Sometimes I could hear Kathy [Corcoran's wife] laughing in the kitchen at my tall tales. I had a lot of practice at storytelling.

Colleen had a surprise for me that night. "Read this Daddy," she said, snuggling closer to me. She held out a new book, one with smaller pictures and more words. Her blue eyes were bright with anticipation. . . . I looked at the first page, hoping there would be a clue. . .

I couldn't decipher one word in this preschool children's book.

How I wanted to be able to read, to help her [daughter] during those valuable growing-up years before school. Parents who can't read can't teach their children to read. My heart was wrenched, knowing that I could not give her what I didn't have. (4-5)

17. Eve Bunting's *The Wednesday Surprise* intends to be a warm, fuzzy middle-class, white family moment celebrated when an elderly grandmother and her seven-year-old granddaughter, Anna, give the adult son a "gift": the grandmother learns to read from the granddaughter's instruction. Although the message encouraging everyone to value reading is undeniably important—"It's much smarter if you learn to read when you're young. . . . The chance may pass along with the years"—the story is full of unanswered questions that might explain rather than boldly proclaim without explanation or clear illustration the advantages of literacy. As in other children's books examined in this exercise, illiteracy is synonymous with an individual's lack of self-esteem, poor self-image, and is tainted with presumed immorality. As the narrative moves rather fumblingly, it leaves more narratively unsatisfying questions than answers and explanations: How does the grandmother choose the books from which the granddaughter will teach her? How has the family responded to the grandmother's illiteracy up to the point of this story? What is the grandmother's life like as a nonreader? How and why is grandmother's learning to read such a "gift" to her son? Why has the grandmother resisted

her son's insistence that "she must learn to read"? Why does the son insist that his mother become literate?: "You were always telling me to go to classes, classes, classes," Grandma says to Dad." To what extent does the relationship between this mother and son suffer *because* she is a non-reader? To what extent has the grandmother's illiteracy affected the son's literacy? What are the specific circumstances of the grandmother's illiteracy? To what extent does a seven-year-old read well enough to teach anyone how to read? How long has the granddaughter been teaching the grandmother? Why has no adult in the family bothered to teach grandma to read? Why and how is grandma's reading "the best gift ever" for her son? While Bunting supports the notion that everyone should learn to read when young, her book never explains through the grandmother's experiences why and how reading is important on many levels. Once grandmother "performs" her literacy—"this wonderful thing" —before the family at her son's birthday party, how does literacy change her life or the family's? Mom will continue to have her office job, Dad will continue to work as a truck driver, and Sam will continue his sports practice. Once grandmother learns to read, will she and Anna continue to read during their weekly Wednesday night sittings?

Derek King-Smith's *The School Mouse*, a level four reader and chapter book, is the story of a mouse, Flora, desperately making herself literate: "By day, she educated herself, and in the evenings she taught her class" of other mice. While the story champions literacy in the very act of the mouse's saving her mouse parents from eating "poison" because she has learned to read—"Thank goodness I have learned to read. . . or else I might well have sampled these attractive-looking blue pellets" (28)—the journey toward literacy is both dangerous and lonely for Flora. She meets with hostility and resentment *from* her mouse family who initially have no interest in learning to read. Flora's literacy quest begins as and leads to arrogance and alienation *from* her other mouse family. She says: "I am not an ordinary school mouse. I'm sure I'm not. I'm sure I can learn all sorts of things that no mouse has ever learned before, if only I study hard enough, and then I shall be an extraordinary school mouse" (16). Flora has accepted the assumption and cultural bias that literacy elevates individuals from the masses and that that such elevation is socially valued by all. Despite her mouse family's initial resistance to Flora's "too high an opinion of herself" (15), Flora recognizes her literacy acquisition as part other self-esteem in much the same way as does Calpurnia in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*: "I am lucky. I don't suppose there's another mouse on the face of the earth that knows as much as I do already. But I can't talk much about my lessons to the others because they wouldn't understand. . . . They're all uneducated. And why? Because there's no one to teach them" (104). Literacy isolates the questing mouse and she is lonely until she meets another literate male mouse and they live happily ever after. As do the other children's texts, this one misleadingly idealizes literacy through Flora's action and proclamation that: ". . . the first and most important thing, for mice and humans, is to learn to read. Once you can do that, there is no limit to what you can get into your heads" (108).

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IDEAS FOR INQUIRY:
"EXHIBITING
CHILDREN"

SIMON J. BRONNER

Think about it—while scholars of children's folklore typically report the identification, collection, organization, and interpretation of children's traditions, they also must be aware of the variety of ways that this material is adapted, displayed, even misrepresented, in museums, publications, festivals, web sites, community centers, and classrooms. What are the images of tradition projected of children and childhood in various media? The Children's Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society sponsored a special forum to take up this provocative theme of "exhibiting children" at the 2002 annual meeting in Rochester, New York. Conference attendees had the opportunity before the forum to visit the Margaret Strong Museum (including the National Toy Hall of Fame), renowned for its children's material culture collections (see <http://www.strongmuseum.org>). The opening ceremony of the conference was held in the museum. Recognizing discussions of the visual representation and cultural construction of childhood in various disciplines, Children's Folklore Section leaders C. W. Sullivan III and JoAnn Conrad working with Robert Baron of the New York State Council on the Arts organized the forum as a way to bring this issue to a wider audience of folklorists and museum professionals.

I introduced the concept of the forum this way:

Children rarely have control of their own representation, and yet the exhibition of childhood is usually a key to the understanding of the inheritance of culture from one generation to the next. Considering the public debate revolving around the decline of traditional values passed along to children, the hegemonic structures of consumer cultures dictating children's lives, the vulnerability, and danger, of children, and the proliferation of alternative children's subcultures in America, the forum addresses what impact the exhibition of children in media, education, and museums has had on the representations of children's culture, especially folk culture. It necessarily takes up the difference between material and visual ex-

hibitions presented by children and adults. These central questions lead with oral and social genres while popular culture has exhibited the material and visual realm. Against the backdrop of exhibitions and collections of childhood by the Strong Museum, the panel suggests new intellectual directions that can place folklore at the center of scholarly discourse on children, family, and youth as the key to cultural analysis.

One such intellectual direction begins at the museum, gallery, and cultural agency interpreting children's artifacts for the public. Jon Paul Dyson, historian at the Margaret Strong Museum, explained the background of Margaret Strong's collecting and the museum's work in building a cultural interpretation of the collections (see <http://www.strongmuseum.org/collection/index.htm>). The emphasis has been on the historical development of children's culture, and Dyson offered insights into the implications of comparing contemporary practice with Victorian children's culture. While the Victorian sensibility was on accumulation of artifacts, contemporary practice calls for themes that suggest the meaning of children's lives. The themes presented to exhibit children are: House and Home, Ideas and Images, Clothing and Accessories, Play and Work, Sight and Sound. The Museum explains the collection this way:

These artifacts embody, illustrate, illuminate, preserve, and enable understanding of the attitudes, beliefs, values, customs, tastes, and traditions that Americans have held individually and collectively over the last two centuries and have passed, or are passing, to subsequent generations. These personal, everyday objects help Americans to understand who they are and who they believe they are and why.

C.W. Sullivan III, professor of English at East Carolina University and editor of the *Children's Folklore Review*, discussed what he and some others perceive as the passing of spontaneous play. Children's traditional play, especially the songs and games that folklorists have collected since W.W. Newell's *Games and Songs of American Children*, published in 1884, has long been a central concern of children's folklorists. The songs and games that have, in the not-so-recent past, been collected from children at recess, before and after school, in the neighborhood in the afternoon or evening may soon no longer be available as recess disappears from the elementary school schedule, children are signed up for after-school sports, arts, or academic pro

grams, and homework for even first graders becomes the primary activity of the evening. In short, children are losing (or having taken away from them) the opportunity to exhibit themselves in game and song. As that happens, is there any way a museum can exhibit games and songs in any way other than photographs and written texts?

Peter Tokofsky, associate professor at UCLA, addressed the dissonance between exhibition of and experience of celebrations from the perspective of children. Whereas museums tend to display the sacred or special objects associated with these occasions, he pointed out, his observations participating in a "Family Traditions: Linking Individuals to Cultures" project in Los Angeles, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, marked objects for memory, which are ultimately not suitable for most museum displays. It might be the foods, spontaneous games, or other ephemera, which serve as the highlights of celebratory occasions for children.

Jeannie Thomas, associate professor of English and folklore at Utah State University (see <http://english.usu.edu/americanstudies/thomas.html>) discussed the ways that children perform and exhibit Barbie dolls, the world's most popular doll. Thomas's interest in the effects of Barbie on popular culture was stimulated by narratives elicited from students in a children's folklore course. One student recalled collecting Barbie heads and baking them in the oven. Another posed Barbie and Ken dolls in idealistic "Theodore (Beaver) Cleaver" tableaux when dysfunctional family interaction became too disturbing or painful. For all the controversy and problems surrounding Barbie, she maintains her popularity. Thomas said she believes Barbie encourages creative play, which has helped Mattel become a part of contemporary folk culture. The variety of Barbies on the market enforces the connection she has with folklore and culture. "I was struck at how Mattel commodifies folklore and sells it. There are Barbies for holidays, fairy tales, even international Barbies. Folklore studies places and culture, and Mattel markets that in a really superficial way," said Thomas (see http://www.hardnewscafe.usu.edu/archive/july2000/0720_barbie.html).

The lively response from the audience signaled many of the perspectives opened up by the theme of "exhibiting children." A number of participants remarked on the representation of children's folklore in classroom materials available for basic education. Other participants picked up on the tension between commercial culture in the marketing of toys and folk culture in the performances of children with toys. This led to a lively debate over the hegemonic effect that commercial culture has over the folk practices of children. The past-orientation of

museums also received scrutiny, and discussion ensued on incorporating ethnographic documentation of contemporary culture, or children's views of their own culture, in museums and cultural exhibitions. The session brought out the ways that children's folklore scholarship is an act of representation and construction. In so doing, participants realized the ethical implications of the adaptation of scholarship in various media.

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C.W. SULLIVAN III

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Beresin, Ann Richman. "'Sui' Generis: Mock Violence in an Urban School Yard." 18.2 (1996): 25-35.

An examination of the non-violent/violent handball game of "Suicide" which argues that the hybridity of the game reflects its paradoxical status as a mixed genre and unique cultural marker.

Berres, Allen. "Everybody is Their Enemy': Goths, Spooky Kids, and the American School Shooting Panic." 24.1&2 (2002): 4353.

Discusses the stereotyping that has led school administrators and others to erroneously class all high school students of a particular sub-group as potentially dangerous.

Branigan, Michelle. "Blocks and Matchboxes: Negotiation of a Shared Reality Between Two Siblings." 16.1 (1993): 3-31. *

An examination of an episode of play between two siblings that observes the static and dynamic aspects of their interaction.

Bronner, Simon. "Expressing and Creating Ourselves in Childhood: A Commentary." 15.1 (1992): 47-59.

General thoughts on the evolution of the study of children's folklore and reviews of narrative articles in the same issue.

_____. "History and Organization of Children's Folklore in the American Folklore Society." 20.1-2 (1997-1998): 57-62.

A discussion of the place of children's folklore in the history of the American Folklore Society.

_____. "Introduction: Folklore Responds to Columbine and Adolescence." 24.1&2 (2002): 7-20.

An introduction to the papers from Children's Folklore Section panel at the 2000 AFS meetings on folklore, adolescence, and the Columbine shootings by the panel's respondent. See also: Bill Ellis, JoAnn Conrad, Allen Berres, and Charlie McCormick.

Carnes, Pack. "Arnold Lobel's *Fables* and Traditional Fable Features." 15.2 (1993): 3-19.

An investigation of the role of traditional elements in Lobel's *Fables* and of the relationship between folklore and a literary text.

Carpenter, Carole H. "Developing an Appreciation for the Cultural Significance of Child lore." 17.1 (1987): 19-29.

A study of the ways in which childlore contributes to "the development and expression of individual, group, and national identity."

Chinery, David. "Snooping for Snipes: America's Favorite Wild Goose Chase." 10.1 (1987): 3-1, 10.2 (1987): 3-4.

A presentation of variations on the traditional snipe hunt and conjectures about the continuance of the tradition.

Conrad, JoAnn. "Bedtime Stories." 21.1 (1998): 43-53.

A preliminary examination of the narrative interactions between a mother and a small child that occur as a part of a regular bedtime ritual.

_____. "The War on Youth: A Modern Oedipal Tragedy." 24.1&2 (2002): 33-41.

A discussion of California's "Youth Crime Initiative" and other measures designed to deal with rising juvenile crime rates.

Cox, Cynthia Anne. "'Postmodern Fairy Tales' in Contemporary Children's Literature." 16.2 (1994): 13-19.

An exploration of postmodern elements in new fairy tales: denial of order, antiheroes, the lack of control over human experience and perception, and subjectivity.

Davey, Gwenda Beed. "'What's for Dinner?' 'Duck Under the Table': Traditional Verbal Sayings Addressed to Children by Adults." 19.1 (1996): 13-18.

A study of folklore for children and how adults convey their folklore about children through "family sayings."

Edgette, J. Joseph. "'Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep. . .': Symbols and Their Meaning on Children's Gravemarkers." 22.1 (1999): 7-24.

An examination, with illustrations, of the symbols commonly found of gravestones for children.

Ellis, Bill. "Hitler's Birthday: Rumor-Panics in the Wake of the Columbine Shootings." 24.1&2 (2002): 21-32.

Discusses the processes by which unsubstantiated rumors of impending violence become "fact" in school communities.

Fowke, Edith. "Books for Children." 14.1 (1991): 39-44. A review essay of pertinent studies of the folklore of Canadian children.

Freed, Shaari. "Spooky Activities and Group Loyalty." 16.1 (1993): 33-39.

An assertion that intimacy among friends is increased by participation in supernatural beliefs and practices.

Friel, Tara. "'Once Upon a Time' to 'Happily ever After': The Development of Children's Narrative Skill." 18.1 (1995): 3-52*

An analysis of the process by which children learn and develop the ability to tell stories.

Gelwicks, Jesse. "Redwood Grove: Youth Culture Within a Group Home." 24.1&2 (2002): 66-87. *

A case study of male preadolescent and early adolescent folklore in the controlled community of a group home.

Grider, Sylvia Anne. "Dorothy Howard: Pioneer Collector of Children's Folklore" 17.1 (1994): 3-17.

Some notes on the life and achievements of Dorothy Howard.

Groth, Susan Charles T. "'Here We Sit Like Birds in the Wilderness Waiting for Our Dessert': The Girl Scout Program and Ordering Space in Camp Sacajawea's Dining Hall/Main House." 19.2 (1997): 3-30*

An examination of the presence of themes of "domesticity" and "play-

ing Indian" in Girl Scout Camping and the way in which a dining hall chant exhibits these themes.

Haut, Judith. "I Believe in Santa Claus, but I Know He's not Real: The Role of Ambivalence in Belief." 13.2 (1991): 3-12.

An examination of the way uncertainty and degrees of possibility play into distinguishing knowledge from belief.

_____. "I Know a Story About That: One Young Child's Use and Understanding of Narrating." 1 5.1 (1992): 3-46.

A case study examining one child's development of voice and skill in narration.

_____. "Of Related Interest: Children's Music." 14.2 (1992): 23-27.

Reviews of various collections of "folk" music for children.

Hurlston, Nicola. "Who's the Boss? A Study of Power-Defining Folklore Among Children." 13.1 (1990): 10-16. *

An analysis of power struggles among young children observed at play in a college daycare program.

Johnson, Sharon Peregrine. "'The Hare and the Tortoise Race': Eleven Variations." 18.2 (1996): 3-24*

A comparison of eleven different printed versions of the traditional story that discusses its origins and structure and provides a great deal of comparative analysis.

Kjaer, Bjorg. "Childhood Narrated and Negotiated: Children's, Parents' and Teacher's Views on Childhood." 21.1 (1998): 3542.

A look at the ways in which children, parents, and teachers define childhood.

Klutz, Catherine. "Friendship Bracelets," 12.1 (1989): 4-5.

A discussion of the traditions behind the making and sharing (and not sharing) of friendship bracelets among junior high school girls.

Lanclos, Donna M. "Bare Bums and Wee Chimneys: Rudeness and Defining the Line Between Child and Adult." 22.2 (2000): 748. *

A examination of rude or "dirty" folklore on Belfast playgrounds that compares and contrasts children's understandings and usages with those of adults.

- Lapp, Dean M. "Systematic Investigation of Jump Rope Rhymes: Computer Applications for Field Collected Cultural Material." 11.1 (1988): 3-5, 6.*
Relates children's psychological development with the folklore, specifically jump-rope rhymes, in which they participate.
- Lenz, Millicent. "Mythologizing Chief Seattle: Susan Jeffers' *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky* or How to Make a Myth in Ten Easy Steps." 19.1 (1996): 3-11.
An inquiry into the responsibility of writers to transmit myths accurately and without enhancing them.
- Lester, Neal A. "Nappy Happy: A Review of bell hooks' *Happy to be Nappy*." 22.1 (1999): 45-55.
A discussion of the folklore of hair among African Americans as it relates to Carolivia Herron's *Nappy Hair* and bell hooks' *Happy to be Nappy*.
- Lonnqvist, Bo. "The Concept 'Toy' and Cultural Research." 14.1 (1991): 31-38.
A study of how adults' conceptions of children's reality is reflected in mass-produced toys and how actual child culture has been relatively ignored.
- McCormick, Charlie. "A Fear of Adolescent Cruising: Adult Reactions to a Tradition that Won't Go Away." 24.1&2 (2002): 55-63.
A look at the way cruising has changed over the decades and a discussion of changing adult attitudes.
- McGonnagill, Laurie. "Preschool Protolore." 16.1 (1993): 41-47.
An examination of the ways in which children's immature social and cognitive skills explain their brand of prototypical folklore that imitates more developed forms of folklore.
- Mechling, Jay. "Don't Play With Your Food." 23.1 (2000): 7-24.
Begins with a look at theoretical perspectives that underlie the study of playing with food and opens up into a discussion of the "diverse meanings and functions of playing with food."
- Meley, Patricia M. "Adolescent Legend Trips as Teenage Cultural Re-

- sponse: A Study of Lore in Context." 14.1 (1991): 5-24.*
 A presentation of results from a group study of the "legend trips" of adolescents examined in light of recent scholarship on the topic.
- _____. "Paper Power: A Search for Meaning in the Folded Paper Toys of Pre-Adolescents." 11.2 (1989): 3-5*
 An examination of the ways in which the making and sharing of paper toys among children illustrates their need to establish an identity apart from adult culture.
- Ord, Priscilla. "' Curiouser and Curiouser!': Narration and Mimicry in Literature About and For Children." 15.1 (1992): 5-16.
 A consideration of the ability of children to narrate, mimic, and reenact, illustrated in characterizations of children in children's stories.
- Perry Evelyn M. "The Ever-Vigilant Hero: Revaluating the Tale of Tam Lin." 19.2 (1997): 31-49.
 A description of "current devaluations of folk literature" through close reading of the original text and comparison with contemporary literary texts for child and adolescent readers.
- Riley, Linda. "Extremes: How Girls Play Slaughter, How Boys Play Slaughter at Valley Oak Elementary." 13.1 (1987): 10-16. *
 An argument that the variations on the game's rules indicate shared group meaning and identity for each gender-distinct team.
- Ruppert, Erica Lynn. "Folklore and Persistence in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*." 20.1-2 (1997-1998): 43-55*
 An assertion that the folklore in Lewis Carroll's classic story is largely responsible for its continuing popularity.
- Rush, Judith. "Twin Pranks and Practical Jokes" 10.3 (1987): 3-6*
 A suggestion that twin' pranks afford them the opportunity to establish individuality and to distinguish their personalities.
- Sains, Ariane. "The Latest Teen Rage? Embroidery." 13.1 (1990): 23-24.
 A response to Catherine Klutz's "Friendship Bracelets," 12.1 (1989): 4-5.

Samuelson, Sue. "A Review of the Distinctive Genres of Adolescent Folklore." 17.2 (1995): 13-31.

An argument that adolescents create their own distinct folklore to define for themselves the transition from childhood to adulthood. Edited and introduced by Simon J. Bronner.

Sherman, Josepha. "Gopher Guts to Army Trucks: The Modern Evolution of Children's Folklore Rhymes." 21.2 (1999): 17-24.

A discussion of formula and variation over time in some popular children's folk rhymes.

Staunton, Sarah. "Riddle Use and Comprehension in Irish School-Aged Children: A Developmental Study." 23.2 (2001): 7-100.*

An examination of riddling as an indicator of children's language acquisition and comprehension.

Stone, Kay. "Child as Story-Maker." 16.2 (1994): 3-11.

An observation of a child creating stories and a consideration of the relationship between researcher and subject.

Stotter, Ruth. "Trick or Treat: Coyote in Children's Picture Books." 22.1 (1999): 35-43.

A look at the ways in which Native American mythic and legendary materials are used and misused in children's picture books.

Sullivan, C. W. III. "Baloney and Peanuts: Politics Among Gradeschoolers." 1.2 (1977): 4.

An examination of a children's rhyme that equates Jimmy Carter with foolishness.

_____. "Folktales, Ballads, and High Fantasy: An Excerpt from Research in Progress." 5.1 (1982): 2 & 4.

A look at the use of ballads and folktales as sources for works of modern fantasy.

_____. "Knowing what Children Believe; Believing What Children Know." 19.1 (1996): 19-24.

An examination of the separation between child culture and adult culture and how this is significant to folklore studies.

_____. "Learning the Structure of Traditional Narrative." 15.1

(1992): 17-23.

An assertion that in experiencing folklore we learn that structure of traditional narrative that we carry to all other aspects of life.

Sutton-Smith, Brian. "The Future Agenda for Child Study and the Implications for the Study of Children's Folklore." 13.1 (1990): 17-22.

A consideration of current trends in the academic study of children that might impact the study of children's folklore.

_____. "A Play Biography." 20.1-2 (1997-1998): 5-42.

A autobiographical essay by one of the century's leading children's folklorists explaining how he came to that discipline.

_____. "Tradition from the Perspective of Children's Games." 14.2 (1992): 3-16.

A colonial commentary on children's games.

Tillery, Randall K. "Folklore and Children's Worlds: Nature, Place, and Belonging in a Romantic Key." 17.2 (1995): 3-11.

An examination of the traditional perceptions of frontier experience which make up much of the "lore" of summer camp.

Tucker, Elizabeth. "'I Hate You, You Hate Me': Children's Responses to Barney the Dinosaur." 22.1 (1999): 25-33.

A look at children's parodies of Barney the Dinosaur's theme song.

_____. "'Text, Lies and Videotape': Can Oral Tales Survive?" 15.1 (1992): 25-32.

An argument that children's creativity remains fecund despite the inundation of video-produced stories.

Tuleja, Tad. "The Tooth Fairy: Perspectives on Money and Magic." 13.2 (1991): 13-22.

An examination of the origin of tooth fairy folklore and the integration of this lore into modern culture and traditions.

Van Rheenen, Derek. "Boys Who Play Hopscotch: The Historical Divide of a Gendered Space." 21.1 (1998): 5-34.

A discussion of play and the changing role of gender using hopscotch as the focus of the study.

Watson, Laura. "The Nature Lore of Children: Functions and Variations." 16.1 (1993): 49-60.

An examination of children's lore involving nature and how these beliefs function to enable children to grasp and accept the world around them.

Wein, Elizabeth. "The Discipline of Play: Is There a Future for Children's Lore in Academia?" 21.2 (1999): 5-16.

An examination of the status of children's traditional "play" as an academic discipline over the past 50 years.

_____. "Show Biz: Performance and Text in the Children's Show." 13.2 (1991): 23-28.

A discussion of the way children's "shows" evolve from improvisational to written and rehearsed performances.

_____. "'Unaware to Her Ears': When the Storyteller Cannot Speak." 23.1 (2000): 25-39.

A look at the storytelling of a young man whose head injury has limited his physical and mental development.

AMERICAN FOLKLORE SOCIETY
CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE SECTION MEETING
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK
18 OCTOBER 2002

MINUTES

President Jacqueline Thursby called the breakfast meeting to order at 7:05 AM in the Wilmorite Room of the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Rochester, New York. A quorum was present.

Minutes of the Anchorage meeting were approved as published in the CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE REVIEW, Volume 24, Numbers 1 and 2, Fall 2002.

REPORTS

The OPIE Prize was not awarded this year. The Executive Board did approve the cash prize of \$200 be attached to this prize. We need to be more actively aggressive in soliciting critical books of folklore as they pertain to children. Further, we need to be specific as to the deadline for submissions. Perhaps we shall use the same deadline we use for the AESOP PRIZE of August 15.

B. Ellis reported that the AESOP PRIZE Committee (B. Ellis, J. Conrad, M. MacDonald) reviewed a short list of nominations. This year there are two prize winners:

Can You Guess My Name? Traditional Tales Around the World.
Selected and retold by Judy Sierra. Illustrations by Stafano Vitale.
New York: Clarion Books, 2002.

And

One Time Dog Market at Buda and Other Hungarian Folktales.
Translated and retold by Irma Molnar. Illustrations by Gerogeta-Elena Enesel. North Haven, CT: Linnet Books, 2001.

Aesop Accolades went to:

Head, Body, Legs: A Story from Liberia. Retold by Won-Ldy Paye and Margaret H. Lippert. Illustrated by Julie Pashkis. New York: Henry Holt, 2002.

The Race of the Birkebeiners. Written by Lise Lunge-Larsen. Illustrated by Mary Azarian. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001.

Shakespeare's Storybook: Folk Tales That Inspired the Bard. Retold by Patrick Ryan. Illustrated by James Mayhew. New York: Barefoot Books, 2001.

Libby Tucker was elected unanimously as a member to the AESOP PRIZE Committee replacing J. Conrad. Members are elected for a three-year term.

The NEWELL PRIZE will not be awarded this year.

The motion to set August 15 as the deadline for Aesop Prize submissions was passed unanimously.

Bill Ellis will revise the letter that is sent out to solicit entries. He will highlight criterion #5 related to the citing of sources.

Priscilla Ord was named "Keeper of the Labels" in order that we have a central location for them. She already has the Opie medallions.

C. Sullivan reported on the Journal:

As is the case across the country, college and university budgets are getting tighter each year. North Carolina has agreed to continue its support of the *JOURNAL* at least for this year. Volume 24 is a combined issue including numbers 1 and 2. Some savings was realized by combining the issues. One volume per year instead of two may help us expense wise. From both financial and aesthetic perspectives we like the change.

Send any articles for the Journal to Chip as soon as possible in time for his putting together the next volume in early January.

The cost of a complete set of the twenty-five years of the CFR is \$200. This price was unanimously approved by those present.

In his final Treasury Report J. Edgette gave the balance in our general operations fund as \$1812.66 reflecting a check to Laurie Evans for \$300 for services related to the *JOURNAL*.

The Newell Prize balance is \$7,931.24; the OPIE Prize at \$2,898.61; and the Life Membership Fund at \$708.54.
Total Section Assets = \$13,351.05

Because our funds are shrinking in the area of general operations, it is imperative that we increase membership. At present we do not have enough money to cover the publication of our next issue of CFR.

NEW BUSINESS

Sean Galvin was unanimously elected President-elect as was Priscilla Ord to the position of Secretary/Treasurer.

Sean agreed to organize a panel for next year's meeting

At next year's meeting in Albuquerque, NM (Hyatt Regency) we shall try to schedule the Children's Folklore Section meeting as a luncheon meeting to see if this change will draw more members.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Joseph Edgette, Ph.D.
Secretary

NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Newell Prize Announcement

The Children's Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society annually offers the **W.W. 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 typed, double-space, and on white paper. On the first page include the author's name, academic address, home address, and telephone numbers. Deadline for each year's competition is September 1st. Submit papers or write for more information": Dr. C.W. Sullivan III, English Department, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC 27858-4353.

"Masculinity, Patriarchy and Power: an Interdisciplinary Conference," University of Southampton, 5-7 April 2004. Proposals are invited for papers of 30 minutes on any of the conference strands: masculine socialization and childhood, male life cycle/s, patriarchy as an oppressive force in men's lives, male sexuality and reproductive rights, masculinity and material culture, alternatives to the "warrior male" paradigm, virility as a quality, and female masculinity.

Proposals (preferably by e-mail and including an abstract and a short CV) should be sent to Trish Skinner (p.skinner@soton.ac.uk) for pre-1700 C.E. topics or Julie Gammon (j.gammon@soton.ac.uk) for topics post-1700 C.E.

In case you are unaware of it (as I was until very recently, *ed.*), The Johns Hopkins University Press published *Girls, Boys, Books, Toys: Gender in Children's Literature and Culture*, Beverly Lyon Clark and Margaret R. Higonnet, eds., an examination of the ways in which gender symbolism of children's culture is constructed and resisted.

CONTRIBUTORS

Simon J. Bronner, PhD, is Interim Director of the School of Humanities and Distinguished Professor of American Studies and Folklore at the Pennsylvania State University, Capitol College. He is the author of many books on folklore, including *American Children's Folklore*, which won the Opie Prize from the Children's Folklore Section, and *Piled Higher and Deeper: Folklore of Student Life*. He is a Fellow of the American Folklore Society and a former President of the Children's Folklore Section.

Carole H. Carpenter is a professor in the Division of Humanities at York University where she teaches children's literature and culture, childhood culture studies and folklore. She founded the Canadian Children's Culture Collection, a unique resource which includes extensive documentation of children's own voices and their cultural artifacts. Currently, she is coordinating the development of the first Children's Studies program in Canada at York.

Janis Dawson is a graduate student in English at the University of Victoria in Victoria, British Columbia. She is also enrolled in the Graduate Program in Children's Literature at Hollins University in Roanoke, Virginia. Her interests include folklore, fantasy, and eighteenth- and nineteenth-century children's literature. She has recently published an article on folklore and Irish nationalism in Roddy Doyle's, "A Star Called Henry" in the *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, 12.2.

J. Joseph Edgette, Ph.D. is currently the Director of the Teacher Intern Program and Coordinator of Graduate Education Admissions and Advisement for the Center for Education at Widener University, Chester, Pennsylvania. In addition he is the resident folklorist, and he teaches courses in education and folklore at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Chair of the Cemeteries and Gravemarkers Area of the American Culture Association and former Trustee of the Association for Gravestone Studies, he has been very active in this field of research. He has been an active member of both the American Folklore Society and various sections including Children's Folklore.

Neal A. Lester, a professor of English at Arizona State University, teaches courses in African American children's literature, African

CONTRIBUTORS

American short story, African American images in American cinema, African American folklore, and African American drama. The author of *Ntozake Shange: A Critical Study of the Plays* (1995) and *Understanding Zora Neale Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God: A Student Casebook to Issues, Sources, and Historical Documents* (1999), he has also published on Alice Walker and womanism, African Americans and the race and gender politics of hair, black/white interracial intimacies in popular music, and the absence of "nigger" in African American children's literature. He is currently completing a piece on heterosexual hegemony and coercion in children's texts.

Elizabeth Tucker teaches folklore at Binghamton University in Binghamton, New York. She is the author of various publications on children's folklore, including the "Tales and Legends" chapter of the CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE SOURCEBOOK. At present she is working on a study of college campus ghost stories. She would be grateful for story contributions; her e-mail address is ltucker@binghamton.edu.