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*Cover: This month's cover is the front of the Lifetime Achievement Medal which the Children's Folklore Section commissioned from artist Armond Szainer.*

## FROM THE EDITOR. . .

As some of you know, the Secretary-Treasurer and the *CFR* Editor have been less than rigorous about dropping names from the mailing list for non-payment of dues. When we sent out a four- to eight-page newsletter, we could afford to be generous. Mailing out a journal, however, is a somewhat more expensive proposition. Therefore, we are attempting to do two things: one, advertise the journal in hopes of attracting new members (individual and institutional); and two, update the current list of paid memberships. Help us out. If you know of institutions (especially university libraries) or individuals who should be receiving this journal, please encourage them to subscribe. Also, if you have been receiving *CFR* without having been a paid member for a while, please send in your money. Even at \$10.00/year (see 1990 meeting minutes), *CFR* is a good deal.

The Spring 1991 issue contains more papers from the Children's Folklore paper session at the 1989 AFS Meeting (see 13.1 for the Newell Prize papers from that session). These are followed by the minutes from the 1990 meeting of the Children's Folklore Section at the American Folklore Society Meeting in Oakland where, as Oakland was losing the World Series, the members present met to consider some important changes in the way the Children's Folklore Section is structured. This volume concludes with a short version of Simon Bronner's *JAF* obituary for Sue Samuelson, one of the founding members of the Children's Folklore Section, who died in January of 1991. She will be missed.

Once again, we are encouraging members and others interested in children and their lore to send in materials (see inside back cover for details), and we are open to suggestions for future issues and conference panels.

With the second volume in this new format, we become a bit more competent at desk-top publishing. East Carolina University has been generous in providing the computer, laser printer, and program for this endeavor and in assigning Tina Moore, the English Department's Graduate Studies Secretary, to this project. The success of *CFR* depends in no small measure upon ECU and Ms. Moore.

C.W. Sullivan III

# "I Believe in Santa Claus, But I Know He's Not Real": The Role of Ambivalence in Belief

Judith Haut

Until my daughter was six years old, she spoke of knowing that Santa Claus was not real: "It's just someone dressed up, isn't it?" But one December evening in 1987, while we sat watching a television movie about Christmas, she made some comments suggesting that she had reassessed her own ideas regarding the physical reality of Santa Claus. Responding to her words, I asked her, "Do you believe Santa Claus is real, or do you know Santa Claus is real?" Without hesitation she answered, "I *know* Santa Claus is real." I remember being surprised at her assertion because it was without reinforcement from us; we do not celebrate Christmas.

More recently I asked my now eight-year-old daughter whether she believes Santa Claus is real or whether she knows Santa Claus is real. She said, "I *believe* Santa Claus is real." I asked her to explain the difference between the two statements. She answered, "If I say, 'I know' that means I am sure, that I've seen it or something. 'I believe,' that means it's possible."<sup>2</sup>

As I will demonstrate in this article, belief is a construct through which people can express a sense of possibility, or perplexity, or personal commitment<sup>3</sup> Even though they may recognize disconfirming evidence, people can also choose to act "as if" they believe (cf. Dandridge 144-146; Opie and Opie 210; and Toelken). Any evaluation falling between the extremes of "probably true" and "possibly untrue" may be characterized as an expression of ambivalence: in short, the co-existence in one person of opposing emotional attitudes about an object, phenomenon or concept.

Ambivalence may be the quintessence of the construct *belief*. Although this inference arises from my analysis of data from individual and group interviews with children,<sup>4</sup> I assume that it also applies to adult conceptions. In the following discussion I will account for some of the reasons people might express ambivalence. It may, for example, result from noticing disconfirming evidence; or it may arise out of an awareness of peer pressure or other social expectations. Finally, I will hypothesize about the ramifications of ambivalence for belief and folklore studies.

First, however, it is important to characterize terms. I use the noun *beliefs* (or *a belief*) to refer to people's actual expres-

sions of belief; i.e. statements or actions which the speaker or actor classifies as belonging to the category, *belief*. Belief, like knowledge, is a construct, specifically a conceptual category. Belief, like knowledge, is a part of normative mental functioning. As cognitive constructs, both belief and knowledge are subject to the same dynamic, emergent forces underlying any and all conceptualization.

But this is not to say that belief and knowledge are indistinguishable. As one twelve-year old girl told me, "Facts you are sure of; a belief some people would be sure of and some people wouldn't." In other words, the children I interviewed generally categorized phenomena or ideas as *belief* not on the basis of topic, but on the basis of two interrelated axes: individual assessment and perception of others' assessments. Although the categories *belief* and *knowledge* rest on the same cognitive functions, to try to use them synonymously, as Black suggests in "Belief Systems" (511), is to ignore an important emic category for speakers of American English. Therefore, I use belief and knowledge as closely analogous constructs representing overlapping classifications; I further assume that an individual's categorization of phenomena or concepts may readily shift between belief and knowledge.

Of course, once we recognize the role of ambivalence it becomes difficult to study belief as if it were a rigid category. As people's doubts are resolved or their questions are answered their conceptual categories may shift. Moreover, when we take ambivalence into account it becomes difficult to study belief as if it were fully represented by isolated propositions, as belief study has so often been approached in the past. Philosophers Quine and Ullian, for example, argue for a direct manner of divining belief or what a person believes: they write, "The criterion is the obvious one: the man assents to the sentence when asked" (5). But how can any person communicate the complex nature of conception simply by assenting or affirming a sentence to be true? Let me illustrate the difficulty of this notion.

At age eight, Simon was one of the youngest children in my study. During my initial conversation with his mother, she told me that she never encouraged her children to believe in things like Santa Claus or the Tooth Fairy. Her older son Lyndon, who also participated in my study, echoed these sentiments. Thus, when Simon first responded "I do not believe" to my written questionnaire items regarding the Tooth Fairy, I hypothesized he was expressing his family's overt consensus about such fantasy figures.

In a subsequent individual interview, however, Simon discussed the Tooth Fairy within the rubric of belief. During our discussion he told me that he had heard about the Tooth Fairy from his mother and his friends. He explained, "You're always asleep when she comes." Then he added, in what sounded like a puzzled tone, "I'm surprised that you don't get waked

up." He continued, "You could put this bell on top of the door, and then it's tied with a string on top here; and then they open the door and 'm.' And when it goes down to the bottom, it goes 'clang' and you wake up." I asked, "And that would be a good way to find out what?" He answered, "If the Tooth Fairy is the Tooth Fairy."

Simon's statement--"If the Tooth Fairy *is* the Tooth Fairy"--leads to an inference that Simon entertains the possibility, however slight, that the Tooth Fairy has corporeal existence. I further infer that his conception must have included some uncertainty because there is no reason to posit a test for something about which the individual has no doubt.

Although anthropologist Benson Saler also characterizes belief as "a proposition, meaningful to an individual, which the individual affirms to be true" (30), he also acknowledges the useful dimension of uncertainty or doubt. He asks, "In what domains of their meaningful universe do our informants display the greatest toleration for uncertainty? Where the least? What might be the significance of the allocation? And what, indeed, might be the social functions of doubt" (33)? Doubt, as a component of ambivalence, plays a major role in an individual's construct of belief.

Ambivalence may result from noticing disconfirming evidence. As such, ambivalence is an outgrowth of experience in the broadest sense of that word and may be the basis for a child's actively wondering. In this sense, ambivalence, or more properly dissonance, is also an incentive or impetus for seeking information or experience or at least being receptive to new information.

Perhaps ironically, ambivalence may also be the means whereby children can ignore disconfirming evidence. The children I interviewed expressed their uncertainties as they talked about their changing conceptions and the difficulty of squaring those new conceptions with all the information. At times, the children worked arduously and consciously at making new data fit. During a group interview, for example, Alice, Gary, Sam and Barbara were discussing things that they "used to believe, but don't now." During a discussion about Santa Claus, Barbara turned to Gary and asked him, "Do you believe in Santa Claus?" He said, "I used to." I asked, "Do you think you still believe a little bit?" He said, "Yeah, I sort of do. A little bit." "Which tiny bit?" I asked. Gary's reply provides an illustration of how he fits "facts," or his concrete experiences, into his changing conception concerning Santa's actual existence. He said, "Well, see, I don't urn think that much that urn that my mom and dad could wrap all those presents in one night Cause they have to go to sleep too."

His older sister Alice interrupted, "I don't think they do it all in one. Sometimes I'll go in their closet months before, and you'll see all these presents wrapped." Gary didn't even look at his sister as he continued, "But see they can't do it when we're at school because Mom works at school,

and then they do errands and stuff." Alice, her words slightly overlapping Gary's, said, "They can do it at night." Gary said, "Dad's at work." In an aside to me, Alice said that she used to tease her brother by saying that Santa was not true. She concluded, "So he had a big belief that it was true, because he wouldn't even believe it when I said it wasn't true."

It may take an enormous amount of disconfirming evidence before paradigms, personal or otherwise, change. This seems to be the state of affairs in the scientific community, as Barnes describes in "Paradigms: Scientific and Social," the members of that profession shoehorn discordant data into existing paradigms until they are moved to change those paradigms because they recognize the growing anomalies or until there is an alternative theory which will serve as a paradigm (100).

Similarly, people do the same with their individual paradigms. In the discussion I quoted above, for example, Gary tries repeatedly to "fit the facts" into his existing conception of Santa Claus, conception which seemed heavily marked by ambivalence. Acknowledging, or at least verbalizing, that Santa is not real, Gary nonetheless wonders how his parents could possibly be responsible for all the presents. He is working very hard to maintain the possibility of Santa Claus' existence in the face of the disconfirming evidence which his sister Alice presents to him. Gary's conceptualization is very much affected by his perception of peers', parents' and other people's assessments of various phenomena and ideas which he might categorize as belief.

I suspect that as children grow older, they learn to reject-verbally, at least-age-inappropriate notions about fantasy figures. This is akin to Gordon Allport's delineation of the stages of prejudice in which the older child verbally accepts but behaviorally rejects other people (292-295). During one interview, for example, one twelve-year-old boy told me privately that he has a lucky penny. He did not want the other children to know, for fear that they would think it was "a little kid thing to do." Expressions of this kind of social awareness illustrate the self-awareness that is part of both conceptualization and the children's own responses to their age-peers and siblings. In other words, there is a strong social dimension to ambivalence.

Other researchers have noticed the ambivalence with which some children discuss fantasy figures. In general these researchers have addressed ambivalence only in terms of the transition between believing and not believing.

In their studies of the developmental progression of children's belief regarding imaginery figures such as Santa Claus, the Tooth Fairy and the Easter Bunny, for example, Norman Prentice, Martin Manosevitz and Laura Hubbs categorize a child as being in the transitional stage "when the child was tom between belief and disbelief, presented 'facts' and reasons that

both proved and disproved Santa's existence" (620; see also Blair, McKee and Jernigan). In his dissertation, entitled "On Discovering the Truth: Children's Reactions to the Reality of the Santa Claus Myth," Carl Anderson reports the unexpected finding of the "prevalence and impact of the transitional process from belief to doubt to disbelief" (158).

The notion of the "transitional child" implies that this is a fixed stage through and out of which a child passes. Though that may be a defensible observation of some children, regarding selective specific topics, it fails to address the possibility that ambivalence may not be a discrete stage, but rather a lifelong element of the construct *belief*. As Bern observes, "the consistency theorists. . . have taken the. . . step of postulating that men possess a drive toward cognitive consistency. . . . Inconsistency, they seem to be trying to tell us, motivates belief and attitude change" (34). But not all ambivalence is necessarily perceived as dissonance, as motivation for testing hypotheses. Doubt is not necessarily denial.

For example, during a group session Alice described her personal experiences of first doubting, and then entertaining, the possible efficacy of knocking on wood. She said:

A couple of years ago, me and my mom were walking along, and we were just talking; and I said like, "I haven't been stung by a bee in two years," and my mom says, "Knock on wood." I go, "I don't believe that" And I'm not kidding, the next day I got stung by a bee. And it's kind of coincidental or it's, it's kind of weird.

I asked Alice, "So would you say it is something that you would believe in now? Like would you knock on wood if someone says, 'nothing bad ever happens to me'?" Alice answered:

Yeah, I'll knock on wood, but I'm not positive I'll believe it But I still knock on wood. Like last night I was lying in bed just thinking, and I was thinking, I kind of had this weird feeling. I was thinking about dying and stuff, and I said, "I hope I don't die," and I knocked on wood. I had to do it. I was just lying there, and I said, "I don't have to do this." And like ten minutes later I just had to do it."

For Alice it is not simply a matter of "believing" or "not believing," of unquestioning acceptance or rejection of the advice to knock on wood. Her conception seems to include ambivalence, that mixture of doubt and possibility. Lying alone in the night, facing her own anxiety about death, she is receptive to considering the possibility that knocking on wood might be an efficacious practice.

In short, the assumption that there is a fixed sequence--belief to doubt,

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doubt to disbelief-does not address belief as being a part of complex, transformational, cognitive processes. It is, rather, an approach that is wedded to assumptions about stages of development for individuals and, by extension, for whole societies.<sup>5</sup> Consider the letter a grown woman left for a shopping mall Santa Claus in California (Thorne 4): "At 50, I get all tingly about Santa." Isn't it possible that ambivalence, or cognitive inconsistency, is a life-long characteristic (cf. Bern 34)?

Without exception, all the children in the second and third cohorts of my study answered my questionnaires by saying, "I know there is no Santa Claus." In fact, when I asked the children during one group session to give me lists of things they "believed" and lists of things they "knew," they chanted as if in a chorus, "I know there is no Santa Claus," "I know there is no Tooth Fairy," "I know there is no Easter Bunny."

During that group session the children also described their gradual or shocking discoveries that there was no Santa Claus. It therefore came as some surprise to me when one participant of that session later told me that she wanted to change some of her questionnaire responses. Mary, who had turned nine during the sequence of interviews, said, "Well, I believe in Santa Claus, but I know that he's not real. So, I'll put 'believe' there ..... If I hadn't begged my dad, I would probably still think he was real. I don't know why, I just think he is still real even though I know he's not." I asked if she was sorry that she had begged her dad to tell her. "Yeah," she sighed. "It's funner having an imaginary thing. Even if it's not real it's still fun thinking of things like that."

As part of his characterization of the different stages of belief about organizational symbols and the uses of those stages in organizational research, Thomas Dandridge delineates his notion of stage four belief. Describing how a person who is operating at the fourth stage of belief might react to organizational symbols, Dandridge writes,

The person now acts only 'as if' he or she believed, because in doing so it is possible to experience closer identification with the organization. . . . Such a person might say, "I know the story isn't true, but it makes me feel good when I hear it. . . ." [T]he fourth is the imaginative [stage] (144).

For both Mary and the woman described in the newspaper article, it appears that their willingness, or need, to act "as if" Santa were real is a conscious maintenance of ambivalence. Even though Mary understands the disconfirming evidence, she has constructed a personal assessment that allows her to continue to "believe."

Mary expresses her ambivalence directly. Other children express their ambivalence through stories or through verbalized musings that at first

glance may appear to contain logical inconsistencies, but which I think actually illustrate this "push-pull" attribute of opposing emotional feelings. Furthermore, ambivalence may be a dominant feature in younger children's accounts because they have not yet learned to *deny* their hope or desire that such fantasy figures exist; older children, on the other hand, may not express ambivalence even if they feel it, perhaps because they are aware of the strong social assessment regarding age-appropriate behavior. Finally, it is likely that even young children entertain doubts while simultaneously expressing what sounds like certainty or denial. As one of the older children in my study commented, "I'll bet even little kids aren't 100% positive about the Tooth Fairy."

What accounts for this ambivalence? As a fundamental human characteristic, the ability to entertain ambivalence may be related to the ability and the need to be able to deal with uncertainty. Ambivalence may be the result or the perception that some notions are untestable. For example, Robert A. Georges hypothesizes that legends are the "metaphorizations of basic kinds of relationships sets in which one or both parts or the nature of the relationship that is conceived to exist between these parts is incapable of being tested to the satisfaction of every man" (18). I wish to illustrate this point in my last example, where I briefly characterize my observation and interviews with four children regarding their experiments with calling "Bloody Mary."<sup>6</sup>

As Sam, Alice, Gary, Barbara and I sat discussing the kinds of ideas the children might call *belief*, Barbara related: "If you say at twelve o'clock, if you say, if you stare into the mirror and it's dark and you say 'Bloody Murder' one hundred times, someone, a lady will come out and chop your head off." The children argued among themselves, discussing just how this was done. They finally decided to try calling Bloody Mary that night at a sleepover. Although I was not present at the sleepover itself, I did return later to talk with the children about their attempt.

Alice reported that they had indeed tried calling "Bloody Mary" the night of the sleepover. She said, "Gary and Barbara ran out of the room when we turned out the light. But we just couldn't do it." I asked with great interest why they decided not to do it. "We just started freaking out with the lights out," Alice replied. "It was freaky. Not totally scary like falling from the rock you are climbing. . . but I thought of what would happen *if it were true*" (emphasis added). I asked her, "So did you think maybe it was true, definitely it was true, or completely wasn't true?" She quickly answered, "Wasn't true. But we were still freaky. . . Sam got up to thirty by himself. He wouldn't go up to 100." Alice reported in laughter that she had left at the count of two.

When I spoke to Sam two weeks later, I asked him if he had tried "Bloody Mary" during the sleepover. Significantly, he gave a somewhat

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ambiguous answer: "Well, just sort of, because you're supposed to say it a hundred times." Perhaps he felt he had not made a full attempt, since by Alice's reporting he said it only thirty times. "Well, we just said it a couple times and then we got too scared," he said, laughing a bit (perhaps nervously). I asked if they had made the room dark. "Yeah," he replied. "There's these big mirrors on the wall, and so we, uh, [shudder] too scary." He added that he had tried it alone, then with Alice and Barbara; Gary did not want to try at all. "What made you scared to do it?" I asked. Sam replied, "I don't know, just the fact that it *might be true*" (emphasis added). Then he laughed.

Perhaps children entertain the *possibility* that "it might be true" because the stakes for a full test are so high. Who wants to go up to one hundred and risk head-chopping? As Michael Owen Jones, observes, "Most of us in daily life have occasion to operate in terms of metaphors and by means of untested, inadequately tested or untestable hypotheses" (3). Ambivalence is an outcome of living with untested hypotheses. If beliefs can be thought of as hypotheses, then there may be something in the nature of an untested-or at least as yet not disproved-hypothesis that perhaps contributes to people's expressive continuities through time and space that we study as folklore (cf. Georges 18).

Finally, as I have argued, the construct of *belief* often rests on an individual's recognition of her lack of personal certainty or a lack of social consensus. Ambivalence is a significant characteristic of this construct, *belief*; as such it may be inferred from people's discussions of their sense of the possibility or uncertainty with which they assess various phenomena or ideas. Ambivalence is an outcome of experience, of noticing evidence, of living in a social environment. Ambivalence is not part of a fixed sequence in an individual's life. The recognition that ambivalence is an integral component of belief may help us understand why speakers of American English do not use the category of *belief* as a synonym for that of *knowledge*.

*University of California at Los Angeles*

## Notes

1. I read a slightly shorter version of this paper at the American Folklore Society Meeting in Philadelphia, October 21, 1989.
2. Quoted with permission.
3. I want to acknowledge the contribution Prof. Michael Owen Jones has had on my thinking and writing about the issues discussed in this paper.
4. My data and analysis derive from my dissertation research with elementary school-age children, Topanga, California, 1985-1986. All names are pseudonyms.

5. See, for example, Erving Goffman, Interaction Ritual (Chicago: Aldine, 1967) 179, who equates ambivalence with the decline of belief.
6. Stories about Bloody Mary--also known as Bloody Murder, Mary Whales and Mary Worth--are widely reported. See, for example, Jan Harold Brunvand, The Mexican Pet: More "New" Urban Legends and Some Old Favorites (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1986) 81; Simon Bronner, ed., American Children's Folklore (Little Rock: August House, 1988) 168-169; Bengt af Klintberg, "Black Madame, Come Out!" Scandinavian Yearbook of Folklore 44 (1988): 155-167; Mary Knapp and Herbert Knapp One Potato. Two Potato: The Secret Education of American Children (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1976) 241-242; and Janet Langlois, "Mary Whales, I Believe in You, " Indiana Folklore: A Reader, ed. Linda Degh (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980) 196-224.

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# The Tooth Fairy: Perspectives on Money and Magic

*Tad Tuleja*

As an embodiment of magical munificence, the tooth fairy is second only to Santa Claus in the folklore of American childhood. Juvenile belief in the figure is as widespread and durable as belief in old Saint Nick, and the iconic elements of the accompanying ritual—the pillow, the unseen visitor, the transformation of the tooth into money—are as stereotyped in popular culture as the stocking by the chimney or carrots for the reindeer. So firmly does the tooth fairy dominate juvenile fantasy life, in fact, that discovering the "truth" about this shadowy benefactor constitutes a major negation rite in the prepubertal passage out of innocence: to say that someone "still believes in the tooth fairy" defines him as quaintly naive.

But while Santa Claus does not want for scholarly attention, the tooth fairy has been largely neglected. Psychologists (Blair et al., Prentice et al., and Scheibe and Condry) have provided useful data on her place in children's cognitive development. Rosemary Wells of the Northwestern University dental school has investigated popular representations and conducted a pioneering survey on custom details (1981). "Ethnodentist" William Carter and his colleagues have produced an extremely useful catalogue of dental folklore. The contributions of folklorists, however, have been scant. Leo Kanner's classic monograph does not mention the custom at all, and later American researchers do so only in passing. Even though American archives find elements of the custom dating from early in this century, no concentrated attempt has yet been made to trace the figure's genealogy, explain how she grew from folk belief to national custom, or analyze her contemporary functional significance. I will address those three issues here.

## **I: An Uncertain Genealogy**

Relying on Katharine Briggs's standard work, Rosemary Wells concludes, by weight of omission, that the dental sprite is "America's only fairy"—a creature "never referred to in European literature," and equally absent from Old World folklore (1981). True enough if you are looking for her by name. Seek a "tooth fairy" in European indexes of folklore motifs and you will come away disappointed. Nor are contemporary European children—with the odd exception in

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Americanized Britain--familiar with the figure or the ritual. Wells is certainly right. The stylized ritual of pillow-tooth-and-money is not only American, but of recent vintage; the archives support her reasonable guess of about 1900 as a starting point (1981).

But even though the spoor is faint, European precursors, if not prototypes, do exist. I have been no more successful than Dr. Wells in identifying a clear line of descent, but I have found European customs which *suggest* the tooth fairy ritual. Let me discuss a few of them briefly in an order of ascending probability.

A. The tooth coin as an example of "fairv gold." Among the commonly cited attributes of English and Irish fairies are their affluence and accompanying generosity: the pot at the end of the leprechauns' rainbow and the fairies' double payment of a debt to humans suggest a broad tradition of philanthropic pixies. With this tradition in mind, Jacqueline Simpson suggests that the tooth fairy exchange may derive from an old British custom of rewarding industrious servant girls with "fairy" coins, left surreptitiously in their shoes as they slept (1973).

The structural similarities are clear enough--domestic hygiene is rewarded by a mater familias acting on behalf of a phantom donor--but one critical element, the lost tooth, is conspicuously absent. In addition, the line of descent from shoe to pillow is inconveniently broken since the tooth fairy doesn't reach England until the 1960s. This first candidate thus seems more parallel than precursor.

B. The tooth as placation or self-defense. Both Irish and British folk traditions are rich in doleful stories of fairy changelings: healthy infants who are exchanged in their cradles for sickly, inconsolable pixie clones. Although it may seem churlish to suggest so, there are structural links between the tooth fairy ritual and folk practices designed to foil such kidnapers.

Since teeth have long symbolized imperishability, they function worldwide as talismans against evil. Might not the tooth of an innocent child, set near it as it sleeps, be seen both as a kind of "guard-all" and, more complexly, as a surrogate sacrifice--a *pars pro toto* consolation for spirits who seek to snatch the child itself?

This notion, whimsical, as it may seem, is lent credence by two peculiarities of the tooth fairy ritual. One appears in the most common variant of the custom, in which the tooth, instead of being placed beneath the pillow, is set near the bed, in a glass or on a plate, after having been sprinkled with salt. As Ernest Jones's classic monograph pointed out fifty years ago, salt--probably because of its "magical" preservative properties--has since antiquity symbolized purity, protection, and eternal life. One need not accept Jones's Freudian conclusion to appreciate the significance of salt as a shield from evil, and indeed it is specifically mentioned by

the Radfords and by Vance Randolph as a bane against malevolent pixies.

The second peculiarity is that other typical pixie banes also suggest the pillowed tooth. Iron has been used for centuries as a means of protection against evil--both in its familiar horseshoe shape and in the form of a cross or a knife. To guard sleeping children against evil fairies, one source suggests a knife under the pillow--and no less an authority than Katherine Briggs makes the link to the tooth fairy explicit when she cites a knife held in the mouth! (1981).

Furthermore, surrogate offerings have been made to water spirits throughout northern Europe and the British Isles, and between at least one water spirit and the tooth fairy there is a linguistically suggestive missing link. I mean Lancashire's most famous "nursery bogey," the "cannibal witch," Jenny Greenteeth.

Typically, this demon lurks in stagnant ponds, awaiting the arrival of careless children, but in spite of --or perhaps because of--her gruesome nature, she is also sometimes enlisted as a way of eliciting obedience ("Go to sleep now or Jenny Greenteeth will get you") and as a kind of free floating dental assistant. She serves this latter function because the pond scum known as Lesser Duckweed (*Lemna minor*) is thought to resemble green teeth (Simpson and Vickery). As Rosemary Wells has pointed out, modern dentists enlist the tooth fairy for the same hygienic purpose, and in some families the going rate for a baby tooth is reduced for each cavity the tooth contains (Muro).

C. The Italian "tooth fairy": Marantega. Throughout most of Italy, the Christmas season benefactor, corresponding to northern Europe's Saint Nicholas, goes by the name of Befana. Gaunt and toothless, she resembles the stock crone figure of popular legends, yet unlike other witches, she can be kindly to children: it is Befana, the Old One (*La Vecchia* or *La Stregua*) who dispenses presents to the deserving at Epiphany.

The Venetian version of this witch is Marantega, and Marantega displays generosity not only at the Christmas season, but also when children lose teeth (Riegler 1920). A shed tooth is placed under the child's bed or under its pillow, and in the night Marantega--thinking, perhaps, of her own toothlessness--exchanges it for a coin. Again, the lines of descent here are faint, and admittedly the American archives hardly hint at an Italian connection. I mention the Venetian figure, even as a dark horse candidate, because the similarity of detail is so remarkable. There is also a possible linguistic link in that occasionally tooth fairy citations name a "witch" rather than the more conventional fairy.

D. French connections. Similarly isolated, and similarly provocative, parallels appear in French archival material. Recall that Wells has traced the American custom to about the turn of this century; at least two Gallic tooth rituals are roughly contemporary. The first, from 1887, has the child

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put the tooth beneath its pillow, and the exchange for money or a toy being accomplished by no less a figure than the Virgin Mary (Daleau). The second, from 1902, has a "good fairy" as the benevolent dental agent, with the reward being not money but candy (Carter et al.).

Chronology favors these French connections, but again the genealogy is hazy. In contemporary French ritual, moreover, it is a mouse, not a fairy, who takes the tooth: in a recent dictionary of French superstitions, the fairy agent is relegated--one might say banished--to uncivilized "Anglo-Saxon" countries (Lasne and Gaultier). And, although French Canadian children do offer their teeth to a *fée* (Des Ruisseaux), it is unclear whether she reached Quebec by way of New York or Le Havre.

E. The tooth fairy and the "tooth mouse". Finally, the folklore figure whom I consider, in spite of surface dissimilarities, to be the best candidate for the title of *Urfee*: the ubiquitous European "tooth mouse."

Shed teeth are offered to animals in virtually every region of Europe, with the commonest recipients of the teeth being crows, birds in general, and rodents. In the most widespread version of the custom, the child places the tooth in a mouse hole, or behind furniture, or near the hearth or oven; and, with a doggeral formula, asks the mouse to exchange the lost tooth for a better one.

Disciples of Max Muller in the 1920s saw this ritual as a survival of offerings to fire gods. They linked the mouse, quite ingeniously, to the sun, and thus explained at one stroke the three commonest methods of tooth disposal: whether the child hurled the tooth into the air, threw it into the fire, or offered it to a mouse, the common element was sun worship (Lindsay). In more recent psychoanalytical interpretations, the mouse becomes a phallic symbol, the surrender ritual an act of compensation, both mirroring and dramatically resolving the Oedipal fantasy (Lewis and Russell).

As charmingly provocative as such readings may be, I would suggest, *pace* Occam, that the obvious utility of the mouse is homeopathic. Whatever they may signify metaphorically, mice in fact are small rodents with great incisors and the good sense to nest in warm, dark places. One surrenders milk teeth to these rodents in the hopes of getting better, that is rodentlike, teeth in return. The logic is preserved, though inverted, in the companion belief that you should never leave your fallen teeth where a dog, or a pig, might come upon them--unless you want dogs' or pigs' teeth in return.

At first glance, the candidacy of the tooth mouse seems less solid than that of Jenny Greenteeth, the Virgin Mary or Marantega. But for three reasons I prefer this to the others. First, the range of the custom. The shilling in the shoe, Jenny Greenteeth, Marantega, even the French Virgin--all appear locally, isolated. The tooth mouse, on the other hand, ranges from

the Baltic to the Mediterranean, and also makes frequent appearances in both Americas (Svanberg and Rooth). The sheer body of evidence allows for numerous intersections--on both sides of the Atlantic--where the mouse could have, in effect, sprouted wings.

Second, there are hints in exchange formulas that hard molars and hard cash can be confused. In most formulas, the child asks the mouse for a "better" tooth, and sometimes for a "tooth of iron." Occasionally, however, he demands a more *valuable* tooth--one made of silver or gold (Svanberg and Rooth). From iron tooth to gold tooth to gold itself does require only a modest leap of logic.

Third, not only is there evidence, as we have seen, of the switch from mouse to fairy in 19th century France, but there is also what Carter lucidly calls a "credible mechanism" for explaining the shift. That mechanism, identified in Francois Loux's fascinating *L' Oare et la Dent*, is a popular fairy tale, "La Bonne Petite Souris," written by Madame D'Aulnoy at the close of the 18th century. In this tale, a nameless "good queen," imprisoned by a nameless "bad king," befriends a mouse which is impressed with her kindness. The creature turns out to be a fairy, and she not only frees the queen from her imprisonment, but also knocks out the wicked king's teeth, hides under his pillow to torment him, and eventually has him assassinated by his palace guard. A 1928 translation of the D'Aulnoy story depicts the fairy quite explicitly as a smiling rodent--with wings!

Does this prove that the tooth fairy was once a mouse? No. But, with range, chronology, and that "credible mechanism" on its side, it's the best candidate I have found. It's interesting to note that three modern children's authors seem to agree. A 1976 "history" of the tooth fairy uses the same mouse-to-fairy format as D'Aulnoy; in Lucy Bate's popular *Little Rabbit's Loose Tooth*, the fairy is a rabbit with wings; and in Stephen Kröll's *Loose Tooth*, the children and the fairy (that is, their parents) are bats. Perhaps the collective authorial consciousness is finally picking up on D'Aulnoy's insight

## II. From Folk Belief to National Custom

The tooth fairy makes isolated appearances in the United States as early as the turn of this century, but she only becomes nationally established after the Second World War. The term "tooth fairy" is first indexed in popular literature in 1949, when a Lee Rogow story by that title appeared in *Collier's* magazine. Rosemary Wells takes this as evidence that the custom was "ingrained" by that time; given the sparseness of citations from before the war, it's as likely that the story spurred, not just registered, a developing tradition. In both North America and Great Britain, "ingraining" only really happens in the 1960s; the best evidence for this is Wells's own observation

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that the first encyclopedia mention of the custom was Alan Dundes's 1979 article in *World Book*.

But why the 1950s? Why this sudden spurt to prominence of a long-practiced but obscure folk tradition? Or, to phrase it as a query about genre: What transforms the tooth fairy, around midcentury, from a relatively obscure folk belief into a national custom? Let me suggest three factors.

1. Postwar affluence. In my informal "field research" for this paper, I asked my father-in-law, who grew up in rural Arkansas in the 1920s and 1930s, whether his family had practiced the tooth fairy custom. "We were too poor," he told me. "Nickles were hard to come by. You certainly wouldn't waste one on a tooth."

It's a telling comment, and I think representative. Jacqueline Simpson has suggested that before the 1960s in Great Britain, wealthy households probably knew the custom, but poorer ones could not afford to (Hand). That is a useful speculation about America too. It seems likely that the greater availability of discretionary income during the postwar boom may have contributed to the spread of the custom.

2. The Cult of the Child. Childhood, as Philippe Aries and others have reminded us, is a relatively recent invention, and the notion of catering to one's child is recenter still. That notion enjoyed a heyday in the years just following World War II, when James Dean was canonized for being misunderstood, and all "good" parents knew (because Dr. Spock told them so) that their proper role was to serve their children's needs, among them the need to fantasize and to feel loved. The dominance of this new, child centered view of the family certainly made the 1950s fertile ground for what Wells calls "a symbolic ritual of replacement, born in sympathy, propelled in love and sustained in warmth and care" (Dent).

3. Media encouragement. In an instructive survey of European fairy traces in the New World, Wayland Hand calls publication an increasingly significant factor in the consolidation of folk traditions in modern times. The history of the Grimm brothers' tales, riot to mention the dime novelists' Pecos Bill or the Santa created by Clement Moore and Thomas Nast, bear out his observation. With regard to the tooth fairy, it may also be underlined by Madame D'Aulnoy's tale and, in the 1950s, by Lee Rogow's short story in *Collier's*.

More significant than these print examples, however, is the example of the movies. I do not think it is merely coincidental that the decade immediately preceding the proliferation of the tooth fairy custom saw the release of four feature films in which female pixies play a central role. In 1939, American children saw Billie Barnes, as a shimmering Glinda, the Good Witch of the North, teach Judy Garland the true meaning of home. A year later, in the Disney version of Carlo Collodi's tale, the "Blue Fairy" taught Pinocchio about truth. In 1950, Disney's Cinderella was rewarded for her

selflessness by a "fairy godmother" who, like, D'Aulnoy's character, works magic with mice. And in 1953, the most pixielike of all our fairies, Tinker Bell, was saved from death by the eternal boy, Peter Pan. All of these films reached massive audiences. It does not stretch logic too far, I think, to suggest that their influence may have helped prepare the ground-in concert with Dr. Spock and the gross national product-for the "nationalizing" of the custom (Carter et al.).

### **III. From Magic to Money**

Functional analyses of the tooth fairy custom, up to now, have been provided only by developmental psychologists, interested in the meaning for the individual child of this quintessentially domestic ritual. The tooth exchange has been seen, as a consequence, as a psychodrama of fantasy management or of condolence (Blair et al., Prentice et al., Scheibe and Condry, and Wells 1981). To my knowledge no one has explained the social utility of the ritual, or noted how with precise theatricality it validates specific economic behavior.

That the ritual "models" economic behavior, however, is clear from the psychological evidence. Clinical students of the custom agree that it is supervising parents, not peers, who introduce the belief to young children (Balir et al. and Prentice et al.). The tooth fairy is an adult creation. Given the "lesson" of the ritual, this is not surprising. For the economic message of the custom is an adult and modern one: "Produce and Sell." This message may be contrasted to the infantile (one might say "primitive") message "Produce and Hoard."

In a primitive, which is to say pre-exchange economy, one may legitimately expect reward for production, and for accumulation of product. We see this static economics in ancient Scandinavia, where children were rewarded when they *cut* a tooth. The Nordic "tooth fee" functions appropriately in a hoarding economy, where the mere possession of goods is a sign of value.

The market system, on the other hand, cannot function without the continual surrender of hoarded goods: free exchange is its lifeblood. And in such an economy the pithy quaintness of a "tooth for a tooth," even if it's iron (or gold) for bone, *must* give way ultimately to cash payment. That is the logic of both monetization and the free market, and it is the social lesson that parents teach (albeit unconsciously) when they direct their charges to place their teeth under the pillow.

Moreover, the tooth fairy custom, like any other free-market ritual, is constantly affected by broad market forces. Nothing so clearly shows how the ritual models behavior than the fact of tooth exchange inflation. Between 1900 and 1975, Rosemary Wells has found, the "going rate" for a lost

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tooth rose from 12 to 85 cents (Wells 1983). Granted, that's still a relatively modest sum, but if the ritual were as innocent as is commonly supposed--if it were merely a vestige of sacrifice or an enactment of parental concern--then a nominal price would point the lesson quite as well. That the fairy's bill consistently rises along with the consumer price index suggests an integration of the custom into domestic economy that belies its common presentation as a "caring" game.

Or rather, it *is* a caring game--managed by parents who understand the importance, in a market economy, that their kids know the value of a buck. Wells has it right: The exchange ritual, she admits, has a "mercenary aura." It reflects a "reassuring image of good capitalist values" (Muro 45)

Thus magic itself--whose essence is transformation--is itself transformed. We move from an image of the generic "good" fairy, turning bone teeth into nominal nickles, toward an image of the "tooth" fairy (now a specialist), predictably exchanging molars at the market rate. With the encouragement of mortgage-carrying parents, children now grow more than mere teeth: they "grow" the system by putting their products on the market

The process of market cooption has long been understood with regard to everybody's sugar daddy, the American Santa. The tooth fairy holds a shorter and less visible pedigree than that saint of the second fiscal quarter, but her economic function, in today's society, differs only in degree. In a sense, I suppose, she may even be seen as more rationalized, less personal, than the Christmas sprite. Santa, after all, still brings presents, while the tooth fairy translates everything into cash. The message of Santa Claus may be seen as a relatively humanized one: "being good" will get you Barbies or a Rambo doll. The tooth fairy's message is more direct: anything--even your own body--can, if you work it right, be turned to gold. That, in its final, reductive wisdom, is precisely the necessary magic of free enterprise.

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## Show Biz: Performance and Text in the Children's Show

Elizabeth Wein

When contemplating the play of my childhood in terms of performance, one specific play frame comes to mind over and over again: the "show." A "show" was what my siblings, cousins and friends called any kind of planned display of our play, where parents and other friends were called together and asked to pay attention to what we were doing. The key word is "planned"; shows were not necessarily rehearsed, but they were always discussed ahead of time. Sometimes a program would be written, either for us to follow informally, or to be formally distributed to the audience. Indeed, a "show" was directly intended to be a performance, with a designated audience and specific keys to indicate where the performance began and ended. A pattern does seem to emerge in the development of these "shows" in my own life; over the years they grow more oriented towards a written text and less towards play. The performance becomes less fluid, more rehearsed, more rigid, more like "a play" than "play." Of course, if one looked for it enthusiastically enough, any pattern might emerge. It would be interesting if a truly empirical study were to be carried out concerning the development of children's "shows" other than my own.

In order to most effectively communicate the transition from a performance-oriented show to a text-oriented show, it would be best if I defined some of these terms as I understand and use them. My notion of "text" stems from the literary theory of Roland Barthes. Barthes submits that while "the work can be held in the hand, the text is held in language, only exists in the movement of a discourse" (157). "Text" does not exist on paper, though that is where it is recorded; rather, it *exists* as a thing in itself, separate and immutable regardless of typeface or individual interpretation. My concept of performance and how it relates to text is based on Richard Bauman's suggestion that "performance represents a transformation of the basic referential uses of language"; the suggestion that

performance sets up, or represents, an interpretative frame within which the messages being communicated are to be understood, and that this frame contrasts with at least one other frame, the literal. (9)

"Performance" I take to mean any interpretation of the

unchangeable, luminous text. Thus every performance of *Hamlet* is a unique interpretation of the actual text; any reading of *Hamlet*, even if it is read over again by the same person, is also a unique interpretation of that text. More to the point, a performance of the last chapters of *The Lord of the Rings* (one of the later shows performed by me and my cousins) is a unique interpretation of that particular text. In the Platonic sense, the performance is the shadow of the real text, and the real text of a work of written literature can never actually be approached. Ideally, however, text and performance should be one and the same: unique, not interpretative but complete and irrecoverable. Barthes claims that "the Text is experienced *only in an activity of production*" (157; ital. Barthes); performance is just such a production, and the synthesis of text and performance can be achieved in the young child's "show."

The earliest version of the show that I can reconstruct from my own childhood is a performance of "Little Red Riding Hood," when I was four years old. The story was acted out in our living room; there were simple costumes and basic props. My father was acting the part of the wolf, and I was Little Red Riding Hood. There was no rehearsal or preparation; both I and my father knew the story and the expected text, and we were going to perform for an audience that consisted only of my mother and two year old brother, who knew the story also.

My father and I often acted out stories. The reason this particular occasion was memorable is that it was a conscious attempt at performance. My father and I enacted stories and poems that I knew; I can remember waiting under a lilac arbor in trepidation, "sword" in hand, while my father came "whiffling through the tulgey wood" towards me in the person of the Jabberwock. I "feared" the approach of the "monster" my father enacted; we had no audience except each other. I *became* the character I was playing. In our performance of "Little Red Riding Hood" I was acting out a prescribed character whose feelings did not overlap with mine, and there was a designated audience. I was not afraid of the wolf, as I had been of the Jabberwock, but I was "afraid" of the audience. Because of the presence of an audience, no matter how informal, my attitude towards the performance changed, and this in turn changed the text. When the "wolf" questioned, "What's your name, little girl?" I began squirming self-consciously and answered not "Little Red Riding Hood" but "Poofy Snooze." I do not remember if the exercise in performance had been intended as an object lesson ("don't talk to strangers") or merely as an experience in drama, but the effect of my *answer* was to channel the performance toward humor. We started the show seriously enough, but after the heroine introduced herself the rest of the play became comedy and parody. Our performance of "Little Red Riding Hood"--or "Poofy Snooze"--is an example of text and performance as a unique, integrated existence, completed on a single evening

in 1969, and unrepeatable.

Another example of a scripted performance that went awry occurred when I was seven. In this case, a group of friends and I decided to put on a show that was based on a story I was writing at the time. My four year old younger brother, Jared, was cast as the younger brother of a character in the story. At a critical moment I was supposed to inform him that his "sister" had been kidnapped. We rehearsed this several times, and Jared was fairly bored with the scenario by the time we presented it to an audience—a group of about ten neighborhood children. When I told Jared, "Your sister's gone!" he said disgustedly, pointing offstage to where his "sister" was hiding, "So what? She's over there." Because of this departure from the script we had to improvise the rest of our carefully rehearsed production. For different reasons, Jared did exactly the same thing to the performance that I had done in "Little Red Riding Hood" when I was his age. He changed the performance by changing the text, and created a performance free of any text except its own.

All my shows were in some sense oriented towards a script, as these first two examples indicate. If there were no younger players to find the script unnecessary or uninteresting, there might not be as many players as the script called for. On one occasion, when I was seven, a friend and I decided we would perform scenes from one of my favorite books as entertainment for my mother. At first we performed theatrically, with my mother seated in front of a "set"; my friend and I wore costumes and acted behind an imaginary line which separated the two of us "on stage" from my mother "in the audience." However, for our second scene we had to enlist my mother as a third character, causing her to cross that boundary; and by the third scene we no longer thought of ourselves as putting on a show, but were playing in earnest. By this time my mother was in the kitchen washing dishes; when the occasion called for an extra character we involved her, but for the most part we continued to act out the story without an audience. In this instance play and performance mixed effortlessly, and became one and the same. There was no dependence on the audience; the quality and significance of our performance remained unchanged whether or not my mother was watching.

In my first two examples the text was created by the context of the performance. The third example used text to shape the performance, but here text was secondary to the mechanisms of performance and play. At this point the "script" began to occupy an increasingly significant position in my shows. Traditionally, every time my siblings and I were together with our cousins we put on a show; originally, these were in the form of pageants or tableau-like Nativity scenes, but as time went on the shows grew more elaborate. Costume was always important; rehearsal was secondary, but there was at least a specific plan to be followed. I did most

of the planning; I was the oldest of the cousins, and after my brother was injured in a car accident there was a five year gap in age between me and the next in age. In the later shows I did not actually participate as an actor, and wrote plans for plays which contained sections of script that were more or less followed word for word. Our most memorable performance was a production of some of the final scenes in *The Lord of the Rings*; this was memorable mostly because of elaborate costumes and a carefully constructed volcano that actually glowed with a baleful red light (effected by a flashlight shining through red cloth). There was no written script for this production; the youngest performer was seven years old, and the oldest eleven. The children knew what to do in each scene, and followed general guidelines; but the final text was created before the adult audience as the show was performed. "The Abduction" was a three-minute silent film of the same vintage as our production of *The Lord of the Rings*, and it was created in exactly the same way. I planned it, my cousins rehearsed it once, and we filmed it. Silent film would have been ideally suited to any of our shows at this time, for they were governed by rigorous rules as far as costume and action were concerned, but were then still flexible in terms of text.

The last show performed by my cousins and me was produced when I was seventeen. It was called "A Midsummer Day's Eve's Dream." The plot had nothing to do with the Shakespeare play of similar title; but it did follow an actual script, and was based on a specific poem by Eleanor Farjeon. I had by this time formed my own sense of what Bauman explains to be Goffman's "keys" to performance (16); "A Midsummer Day's Eve's Dream" had a narrator's introduction and a closing disclaimer plagiarised straight from Shakespeare. Also, text and performance were becoming for me the two separate entities that I now see them as being. The text of "A Midsummer Day's Eve's Dream" exists in its own right, pastiche of Shakespeare and children's poems though it is. It could be performed again, using the same text, although the original *performance* could not be reproduced. At about the same time that this show was produced, a friend and I videotaped a play my friend had written called "The Tragedy of the Thane of Cawdor." Like "The Abduction," it was rehearsed only once before being recorded. Unlike "The Abduction," "The Tragedy of the Thane of Cawdor" included sound; it also relied heavily on scripts. The final performance, the one that is recorded for posterity, shows all the characters with scripts in hand—sheaves of white typing paper, which are especially evident in the case of one near-sighted actor who had to hold his manuscript two inches from his face in order to be able to read.

What caused this shift in emphasis from performance to the written word? Part of it is inevitable in our culture, and stems from the notion that anything on paper is privileged over anything communicated orally (even

the television reporters shuffle sheaves of paper before them on their desks; we trust they are not making up their information). Part of the shift also has to do with Rivka R. Eifermann's notion of "mastering performance" (141). Although she speaks of a solitary act in her childhood as performance and I speak of performances that were most often designed with an audience in mind, our experiences are similar in that we were both "performing creatively" as well as playing. By shifting from improvisation and free play to a designated script the child can prove his mastery of language, his memorization ability, his acting ability. And in this society, acting from a designated script is a more valid and more widely recognized mode of performance than improvisation. What separates the games and unplanned "shows" of childhood from the games and studied theater of adulthood is fundamentally the same thing that separates oral from written literature. It is almost impossible to conceive of a written text as its own being, unchanged by interpretation; but the oral text *is* its own being. There are no repeated oral texts; each occurs only once, in the context of its original performance, and is nearly impossible to record. One can tape or videotape a children's "show" just as one can tape a folkloristic storytelling session, yet neither performance is reproducible in the way that a Broadway musical is reproducible.

The "show" is in a sense an ideal situation, because it brings text and performance together. Unfortunately, the text that occurs during these performances is generally not of a very high quality; it surely lacks the superior verbal qualities of certain literary texts. Yet literary texts cannot ever truly exist as pure "text"; they are always subject to interpretation. As text and performance become more sophisticated, they also grow apart from each other, more separate. The categories of childhood's performance became more clearly delineated as I grew older. Actors and directors, audience and performers ceased to be one and the same; the categories became bounded. Roles became clearly defined; the show became organized. But as an adult, the "show" no longer exists. The new awareness of boundaries causes enthusiasm for the show to die out. At fourteen I was no longer an active performer in our shows; I organized them for a few years after that, but when my cousins grew older they no longer wanted to perform in them either. I cannot say whether we suddenly thought of the shows as "childish," or whether we had finally achieved whatever mastery the shows gave to us. We look back on these performances as good performances, but we do not miss them.

*University of Pennsylvania*

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*Wein*

Bauman, Richard. Verbal Art as Performance. Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc, 1977.

Eifennann, Rivka R. "Children's Games, Observed and Experienced." In The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child. Vol. 42. New Haven: Yale U P, 1987.

## Children's Folklore Section: 1990 Annual Meeting

Twenty current (and prospective) members of the Children's Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society gathered on Friday, 19 October 1990, for a business meeting and breakfast. President Priscilla Ord called the meeting to order at 7:14 a.m.

As those present feasted (so to speak) on a continental breakfast, Priscilla reviewed corrections to the 1989 meeting minutes, and the minutes were passed as corrected.

Vice-President Tom Johnson reported that no 1990 Newell Prize was awarded because no entries were received during the submission period. The reason, perhaps, was the recent change in the submission date. Entries for the 1991 prize (for papers written during the calendar year 1990) are already coming in. The submission deadline is March 1. For more information, contact Tom Johnson.

Secretary-Treasurer Danielle Roemer reported that, as of 31 August 1990, the Section had a balance of \$3610.57 (which included the \$2000.00 endowment for the Opie Prize) and had earned more than \$100.00 in interest during the 1990 year. Currently, the Section has 77 members: 52 domestic and 25 foreign. Danielle also reminded those present that Section renewal notices are now being sent out as part of the AFS yearly renewal notice. The Section is working with the AFS/American Anthropological Association office to correct any glitches in the system. If a member has problems with his or her Section membership or renewal, he or she should contact Danielle Roemer. June Factor asked if Section members needed to be members of AFS. Danielle explained that, according to Tim Lloyd (AFS Secretary-Treasurer), AFS will send renewal notices to all CFS members, whether they are AFS members or not.

Archivist Simon Bronner asked the membership to send the Archives copies of papers on children's folklore, written and/or delivered.

*CFR* Editor Chip Sullivan passed out copies of the *Review*, appearing for the first time in its new journal format. He reported that the cost of this format is approximately the same as that of the previous newsletter. Chip also announced that the Section's Executive Board had approved opening the journal to advertising. He will notify by letter those publishing houses that might be interested. A question was raised concerning the criteria, if any, for Ads accepted for the

*Review*. The Executive Board will take up the question during the coming year. Simon Bronner asked about the relevance to the *Review* of papers and other materials treating the folklore of adolescents and suggested that Chip offer guidelines in some future "From the Editor."

Chip also announced that Judith Haut has agreed to serve as Book Review Editor for the *Review*. Members should contact her if they have books they wish to review or wish to suggest for review (2733 Halsey Road, Topanga, CA 90290).

Linda Morley moved that the Section express its appreciation to Chip for his editorial efforts in moving our publication from a newsletter to a review journal. The motion was seconded and passed by acclamation.

The Opie Prize Committee (Joe Edgette and Danielle Roemer) announced the winner of the 1990 Opie Prize to be Simon Bronner for his *American Children's Folklore*. Those present congratulated Simon with a hearty round of applause.

In discussion, members raised the possibility of changing the Opie Prize award to something other than a solely cash award. Jay Mechling will investigate the feasibility and cost of additional means of recognition such as a certificate, a trophy, or the like. Members were reminded that contributions to the Opie Prize Fund are tax-deductible and very welcome. Contributions can be sent to Danielle Roemer.

The following officers were then elected or re-elected by acclamation: Judith Haut as Vice President and Danielle Roemer as Secretary-Treasurer. Appointments reconfirmed by acclamation were Simon Bronner as Archivist and Chip Sullivan as *CFR* Editor.

The discussion turned to raising Section dues. Chip reminded us that mailing rates will increase, and Danielle summarized the cumulative impact on the treasury of the various prizes we award. At present, only the Newell Prize is completely paid for by annual earned interest. Members present voted to raise the dues to \$10.00/year effective 1 January 1991. However, anyone paying for a 1991 membership on or before 30 December 1990 can receive a membership for the old rate of \$5.00/year. The members present also approved the category of Section Life Membership. Monies acquired in this way will be added to the Opie Prize endowment. Linda Morley moved that the Life Membership rate be calculated at twenty times the subscription rate of 1 January 1991. The cost would therefore be \$200.00. The proposal was seconded and passed.

Linda Morley then reported on the Lifetime Achievement Medal. In spite of the Section's prior decision to allocate \$200.00 plus the matching funds from the AFS Centennial Committee, there was a cost overrun of \$194.00. Joe Edgette moved that the Section authorize payment for this overrun. The motion was seconded and passed. Danielle moved that the Section express its gratitude to Linda for her efforts in bringing out the

medal. The motion was seconded and passed by acclamation. It was suggested that a letter of appreciation be sent to artist Armond Szainer thanking him for his valuable contribution and assistance.

It was announced that any Section member can nominate someone for the Lifetime Achievement Award. Members present then discussed and agreed to establish a nominating committee, appointed by the CFS President, for the next Lifetime Award

Tom Johnson then led a discussion of possible changes to the Section's Constitution and By-Laws. It was suggested that the title of Vice-President be changed to that of President-Elect; that the out-going President serve for two years as Past-President, that the Executive Board appoint a Book Review Editor for *CFR* who would not be a member of the Executive Board, that the *CFR* Editor appoint an Editorial Board for *CFR* which would be separate from the Executive Board, and that the *CFR* Editor's term be for three years and be renewable. Simon Bronner moved that the proposed changes be sent to the membership for a vote. The motion was seconded and passed.

With the introduction of new business, Priscilla turned the chair over to Tom Johnson, in-coming President.

Jay Meching and Gary Alan Fine raised the possibility of the Section's awarding a prize for the best children's book incorporating children's folklore or to the best book of folklore for children and that the prize be called the Brian Sutton-Smith Prize. Linda Morley suggested that the Section announce its decision as to the best book rather than offer a cash award. Margaret Read MacDonald expressed her support for the prize, saying that the Section's accolade would be valuable to publishers and readers of children's books. Chip advised that we would need to be very clear about the criteria of the prize to distinguish it from the Opie Prize. Gary moved that a committee be established to investigate such a prize and that it make its recommendations to the Executive Board. The motion was seconded and passed. Judith Haut moved that this be an ad hoc committee of two who would propose guidelines for the prize and make their recommendations to the Executive Board. The motion was seconded and passed. Gary Alan Fine and Linda Morley agreed to serve on this committee.

Judith Haut raised the possibility of a Section-sponsored panel at the 1991 Newfoundland AFS meeting. She expressed the concern, shared by others, about attendance at that meeting. It was suggested that authors unable to attend might ask someone else to deliver their papers. It was pointed out that it is against AFS policy to write a paper with the explicit intent of having someone else deliver it. Bill Ellis raised the possibility of a Section-sponsored open forum at Newfoundland. Judith will investigate offering a panel/forum. Edith Fowke volunteered to chair a panel on children's folklore.

*CFS*

Under announcements, the following were reported:

(1) The Association for the Anthropological Study of Play (TAASP) will meet 14-16 March 1991 in Charleston, SC. The meeting will be held jointly with those of the American Ethnological Society and the Society for Applied Anthropology;

(2) Edith Fowke announced that the Canadian Folklore Society will meet prior to the AFS meeting in Newfoundland;

(3) The *Handbook* is (still) being put on computer disks.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:29 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Danielle Roemer  
Secretary-Treasurer

## BOOK REVIEW

COSBEY, ROBERT. **All in Together, Girls: Skipping Songs from Regina, Saskatchewan.** Regina: University of Regina, 1980. 101p. pb.

This small book is the first analytical study of children's lore in Canada. Robert Cosbey, an ex-American then teaching at Regina University, collected skipping songs from skippers between 1972 and 1978. He presents 114 different songs and 57 variants from 21 separate schools in Regina.

He begins with some comments on the range of skipping and its history and then questions the general assumption that skipping is a group activity of girls developed at the close of the nineteenth century. He argues that skipping was already an established tradition by the middle of the nineteenth century and that we have no way of knowing how much older than that it may be.

He presents skippers as a folk group, discusses the sources, transmission, and changes of the rhymes, and describes and analyzes the performance of skipping. He says that children follow rigid rules: everybody gets a turn, and there is no competition. He analyzes the content of the texts, noting that some are used to foretell events, others express anxieties about sickness and death, some contain a somewhat satirical attitude toward adults, and some exhibit a complete naturalness about sexual encounters. He quotes:

Along came Johnny swinging on a chain,  
Down went his zipper and out it came.  
Three months later you could really tell.  
Nine months later out they came  
Two little greasers swinging their chains.

He notes that the informant who gave him this rhyme remarked: "It was not that the song was bad, but the adults always took it the wrong way. They took it literally while we took it as just another skipping song."

*Edith Fowke*  
*Toronto*

## **Sue Samuelson (1956-1991)**

*Simon Bronner*

Few people imagined that Sue Samuelson's address at the 1990 AFS Meeting would be her last. Having already made her mark in folklore and folklife scholarship with college teaching positions, consultancies, papers at professional meetings, articles, book chapters, and books, she was too young to contemplate the end of life, no less the end of a career. But sadly she died on 17 January 1991 after more than two years of fighting lung cancer. She was 34 years old.

Sue received a B.A. in anthropology at the University of California at Berkeley, where Alan Dundes introduced her to folklore scholarship. She was awarded the Steager Folklore Prize there her senior year. She entered law school, but withdrew after a week and went to UCLA for an M.A. in the folklore and mythology program and then to the University of Pennsylvania for her Ph.D. in folklore and folklife. At Penn, she wrote her dissertation on Christmas celebrations in America and developed the research interests in festivals, foodways, the folklore of children and adolescents, modern legendry, and applied folklore that would remain with her throughout her career.

In recent years, Sue was especially active in the Children's Folklore Section (as Secretary-Treasurer and as Vice President) and the Foodways Section (as Conveener) of the American Folklore Society. She prepared a chapter on the transition from childhood to adolescence for the forthcoming *Handbook* on children's folklore sponsored by the Children's Folklore Section, and she collaborated with Ted and Lin Humphrey on the introduction to "*We Gather Together*": *Food and Festival in American Life* (1988). The Foodways Section has named its prize for the best student paper after Sue.

A more complete tribute to Sue, along with a complete bibliography of her scholarship, will appear in an upcoming issue of the *Journal of American Folklore*.

*Penn State-Harrisburg*

## NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The *Children's Folklore Review* is available only to members of the Children's Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society. To become a CFS member, send \$10.00 yearly dues to Danielle Roemer, Literature and Language, Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights, KY 41076.

### *Additions/Corrections to Volume 13. Number 1:*

Volume 13, Number 1, should also be identified as Fall 1990.

The articles by Nicola Hurlston and Linda Riley, identified as the 1990 Newell Prize winners on the Contents page, were actually the 1989 Newell Prize winners.

The article ending on page 24 should have as its last sentence: "They're the men who don't want to admit they're doing it, because it's not a macho activity." A correction slip was included in 13.1.

The cover of 13.1 is Millais' "The Woodman's Daughter" (1850-51).

### *ALA Awards*

The American Library Association has honored folk guitarists Dave Van Ronk and Doc Watson. Each received an

ALA 1991 Notable Children's Recording Award. Van Ronk received his award for *Peter and the Wolf*, adapted for jugband by Billy Novak and narrated by Von Ronk who conceived of the project. Watson received his award for *Doc Watson Sings Songs for Little Pickers*, a collection of traditional songs, most of which were recorded live at a concert in Atlanta. Watson's album has also received a Grammy nomination in the Best Children's Album category. Contact: Alcazar Records, Box 249, Waterbury, VT 05676, for more details, a free catalog, or to order.

### *Youth Culture in Sweden*

The research program *Youth Culture in Sweden* aims at exploring central aspects of today's Swedish youth culture. It focuses on four themes: Modernization, Gender, Style, and

Spheres. It was started in 1988 and is the main responsibility of musicologist and youth culture researcher Johan Fomas. The program, which now includes about 50 researchers and post graduate students, is financed by the Swedish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences and is also supported by Allmanna Bamhuset. For additional information, write: Johan Fomas, Media and Cultural Theory, University of Stockholm, S-106, 91, Stockholm, Sweden.

**Folklife in Education**

Special Issue of *Southern Folklore*

Camilla A. Collins, Editor

Nancy A. Nusz, Special Editor

A 1988 American Folklore Society panel provided the impetus for this insightful overview of the development of folklife in education and its implementation in specific programs. The papers that evolved from that session and the additional ones solicited for this issue constitute a marker of the progress made by folklorists in public education and critically examine the future of this field. Topics addressed include the historical development of folk art in education programs, intercultural education, collaborative efforts between folklorists and art teachers, folklore in prison education, curriculum materials for folklife education, and folklore and teaching English as a second language.

Special Editor Nancy A. Nusz provides an Introduction and a Selected Bibliography.

Contributors include Peggy A. Bulger, Karen Compton, Kristin G. Congdon, Gregory Hansen, Michael Kline, Rita Moonsammy, Nancy A. Nusz, and Janis Rosenberg.

*Folklife in Education* is available from the University of Kentucky Press at a cost of \$10.00

*CFR* will accept manuscripts on 3 1/2" disks if the manuscript was typed using Microsoft Word or MacWrite on a Macintosh computer.

We request that, if possible, authors using typewriters or dot-matrix printers have their manuscripts redone and a laser printed copy made. This will enable us to scan the copy, thereby eliminating rekeying the manuscript.

Please send manuscripts to:

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