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FROM THE EDITOR

At the 2000 American Folklore Society meetings in Columbus, Ohio, the Children's Folklore Section sponsored a session entitled "The Monstrous Child: Folklore Responds to Columbine and Adolescence." The panel was chaired by Simon J. Bronner, and papers were presented by Bill Ellis, JoAnn Conrad, Allen Berres, and Charlie McCormick. In spite of the 8:15 AM hour, the session was standing room only.

This double issue of the *Children's Folklore Review* presents those papers with an introduction written by Simon J. Bronner especially for this publication. The Executive Board of the Children's Folklore Section felt it was important to present the panel as a whole and authorized the presentation of them in volume 24, numbers 1 and 2, as a single publication.

In a way that no one in the popular media has been able to do, the authors of these essays examine the traditional and popular culture elements pertaining to adolescence and the Columbine shootings and shed a good deal of light on a difficult subject. We are sure you will find these essays fascinating.

In addition, this volume contains the 2001 Newell Prize winning paper by Jesse Gelwicks, a student of Jay Mechling's, the minutes of the annual meeting, and the usual notes and announcements.

C.W. Sullivan III

THE 2000 AFS COLUMBINE PANEL

INTRODUCTION: FOLKLORE RESPONDS TO COLUMBINE AND ADOLESCENCE

SIMON J. BRONNER

It may surprise you to know that this issue on adolescent folklore is a first. Its special claim is being a thematic set of essays focusing on adolescence as a social category of folkloric production by teenagers and for folkloric response by adults and children. This is not to say that folklorists have not been listening to teenagers since adolescence became known as a prominent life stage in the twentieth century. Especially in American colleges, folklorists fill archives with collections by and from adolescents, but they have rarely used these materials for a focused inquiry into the age. At the same time that some of the best known American folklore genres, such as contemporary legends and initiation rituals, derived largely from teenagers, it may be argued that, overall, age as a social category of folkloric production has been slow to be recognized, and adolescence as a vague period between childhood and adulthood has been given even less. To drive the point home, one can note that standard reference works in the field such as *The Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend* (ed. Maria Leach, Funk and Wagnalls, 1949), *American Folklore: An Encyclopedia* (ed. Jan Harold Brunvand, Garland, 1996), *Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Beliefs, Customs, Tales, Music and Art* (ed. Thomas A. Green, ABC-CLIO, 1997), *A Dictionary of English Folklore* (ed. Jacqueline Simpson and Steve Roud, Oxford, 2000), and *Penguin Dictionary of American Folklore* (by Harry Oster and Alan Axelrod, Penguin, 2000) lack entries for adolescence. This omission is compounded by folkloristic neglect of perspectives from psychological and human development or family and youth studies, with which studies of adolescence abound. Indeed, such perspectives, associated with sociological and psychological disciplines, have not been commonly incorporated into culture studies; although, family and youth is one of the pillars of folklore's "social contexts."

And why should such perspectives be incorporated into culture studies? The contributors to this issue may answer that inquiry into the ways that cultural expectations of age are formed suggests perspectives on *aging*. Within folklore studies, the field of children's folklore has been a location for observation of the cultural adaptation to aging. If the argument is made that folklore is a force in everyday life, then aging as a process all humans endure should be fundamental to

the expression of folklore. Further, if the argument is made that folklore persists in the modern world because it serves social and psychological functions for us as individuals and members of groups and society, then age relative to family and community raises many of the questions for which we seek answers of adjustment. In childhood above other ages, folklorists recognize rapid social change leading to cultural production as individuals age and form identities. Therefore the folklore in childhood that forms to communicate within a large semiliterate, age-stratified group is a conspicuous cultural marker. Folklorists are hardly alone in seeing the social connections that result from separation of children into school grades and affiliation with families. Still, they may be drawn to cultural differences by race, ethnicity, and gender precisely because they stand out physically before the ordinariness of age. They may also be lured to the analysis of texts categorized into genres or the context of region before age, because of the artistic composition inherent in folklore.

Then came the tragedy at Columbine High School in 1999 and a cascade of commentaries in the popular press on the troubled and at times menacing teen as a problem of age. Looking for explanation, early reports speculated that the tragedy was racially motivated, but interviews with participants revealed that scenario to be unlikely. Turning to questions of what was occurring culturally, and emotionally, for the pair of killers at their age, commentators tended to exaggerate the exotic life of the American teen with folkloric overtones—rumors, legends, beliefs, rituals, pranks, cults, and dress. Writers separated the innocent child from the menacing teen, since the assumption could often be heard that the troubled youths were "normal," happy children until they entered the dark door of adolescence. In the movie *Planet of the Apes* released in 2001, an ape warns a parent thinking of adopting a youthful human pet, "Be sure to get rid of it before puberty; one thing you don't want in your house is a human teenager." Implicit in such popular texts is a search for an explanation for the violence, rebellion, and alienation that seemed to be in the chemical mix of adolescence and, in the case of school shootings, were thought to have fired affected teens to the point of combustion.

The kind of folklore reported in the popular press through the spate of school shootings during the 1990s stressed the adolescent search, assumed to be characteristic of the age, for eerie supernatural realms, bizarre bonding rituals, and sexual adventures. Journalists voyeuristically documented shocking signifiers of identity in dress, hair, body-piercing, music, and tattooing, and a subversive development of alternative or counter-mainstream lifestyles (including formation of

gangs and even attraction to satanic and diabolical cults). For some, these are signs of a culture in decline, and folklore as a repository for anti-social values. For others, it shows a cultural creativity that comes with recognition of adolescence as an increasingly differentiated social movement at the heart of a vibrant popular culture. To be sure, it was not uncommon for published ethnographies and filmed documentaries to show high school culture to be essentially conservative, with revival of civic rituals of conformity and class loyalty surrounding football games, graduations, and proms.

Statistics kept on juvenile crime showed a decline in assaults and violence during the 1990s, and yet opinion polls revealed a popular perception that youth violence is spreading and juveniles are increasingly considered dangerous and feared. "Teen violence, school violence, and gangs" consistently shows up as a significant problem "facing the United States" in public opinion polls. When a national sample of Americans was asked shortly before Columbine by the Public Agenda Foundation for the "first thing that comes to your mind" to describe teenagers, the largest percentage, 27 percent, replied "generally negative comments." The next largest group was "Disrespectful/Rude/Lacking manners" at 12 percent followed by "Rebellious/Uncontrollable/ Wild" at 10 percent (Roper Center, 1999). And one thing for sure, they thought that teens faced more problems than they did (80 percent). A different survey organization asked parents of teenagers shortly after Columbine, "what is the most important problem facing people their age," and the leading answer was "social pressures (popularity and 'fitting in'), at 29 percent; "crime and violence" was at 8 percent (Roper Center, 1999). Especially indicative of this view is the answer with folkloristic implications to the question, "If your teen had to choose between fitting in with friends or becoming outstanding in some way, which would your teen choose?" The survey sponsor was surprised by the high number of Americans who replied "fitting in" (43 percent), and yet that observation leads to consideration of the intensity of the social groupings in adolescence that often rely on expressions of folklore for a sense of identity.

Against the background of such social surveys, folklore can be seen being "expressive" for teenagers and "attitudinal" for adults. Consider these examples of folklore of (production), and about (response), school shootings.

-October 1,1997, Pearl, Mississippi. At the June 1998 trial for Luke Woodham, 16, charged with entering his high school with a rifle under his trench coat and killing two students and wounding seven oth-

ers, he testifies that he was influenced by a group of youths calling itself "The Kroth." The youths engaged in violent role-playing games and conjured spells against their enemies.

-April 28, 1998, Pomona, California. Two boys, 14 and 17, are shot to death at an elementary school playground after a fight escalates between two rival "party crews," which stage parties with music and disc jockeys. A 13-year-old boy, whose name is withheld by authorities, is taken into custody and charged as a minor.

-April 20, 2000, Columbine, Colorado. Reports on the lifestyles of Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold who murdered 12 classmates and a teacher before shooting themselves speculate on the planning of the assault to commemorate Adolf Hitler's 110th birthday. They are connected to a group called the "Trench Coat Mafia," described by columnist Joe Conason as "young alienated wannabes." Their preoccupation with "industrial" music, the columnist asserts, "suggests the possible influence of a fascistic youth subculture that has inspired horrific violence elsewhere."

-November 25, 2001, New Bedford, Massachusetts. Police arrest Eric McKeehan, 17, and two 15-year-olds whose names were withheld because of their age, for conspiring to commit a Columbine-style attack on the high school. The *Boston Globe* quoted Eric McKeehan's mother, as saying her son was not guilty. Ms. St. Hilaire, 52, said her son had been in rebellion since the sudden death of his father in September and had started wearing dark clothes and a Mohawk hairstyle and piercing various parts of his body. The *New York Times* on November 27 quoted parents of the three boys portraying the group as "harmless teenagers, somewhat troubled perhaps, but not capable of the violence they were accused of plotting."

Added to the above suggestions of youth forming "esoteric" or subcultural folklife, are examples of "exoteric" adult lore about the shooters circulating on the Internet and through faxes:

1999. One of the boys who murdered his classmates in Littleton prepared by designing new computer games levels that resembled his school and peopling them with representations of his classmates (declared "false" on the Urban Legends Reference Pages at [http:// www.snopes2.com](http://www.snopes2.com))

1999. Chain letters are circulating with the text, "This forward is dedicated to all of the students of Littleton, Colorado. For every person this forward is sent to The City of Denver, Colorado will give .25 cents to the town of Littleton. Now this may not seem like much to you, but as soon as this gets around it all starts to add up. Please. If you just take the time to send this it will help the victims of the terrible incident that happened today. Send this to as many people you can and start building a new hope for the students." (Declared a

hoax, on Urban Legends and Folklore page at <http://urbanlegends.about.com/library/blchain4.htm>)

1999. Chain letters are circulating with the text, "As of right now, there are 25 confirmed dead CHILDREN and faculty and over 30 critically injured in yet another (High) school shooting spree. I'm asking you, as fellow members and friends to please pray and keep in your hearts these poor families of the victims." (Declared of questionable origin on Urban Legends and Folklore page at <http://urbanlegends.about.com/library/blchain2.htm>)

Probably the first folkloristic commentary on Columbine was published in the *New York Folklore Society Newsletter* by Steven Zeitlin in the Fall/Winter 1999 issue. Zeitlin, co-author of the book *City Play* (Rutgers University Press, 1990) and *Giving a Voice to Sorrow* (Perigree, 2001), warned against over-reacting to violent fantasies expressed in folklore such as "I met her in the attic with a semiautomatic" by thinking of them as confirmations of the violent intent of youth. He worried that "in the wake of Columbine, many teachers and administrators have tried to squelch children's fantasies." He drew attention to the shooters' creation of "adolescent folklore": they proclaimed death to all enemies, dressed in black, formed a club, hosted a web site, devised a suicide pact, even adopted a catchy name, the now infamous "Trench Coat Mafia"—and projected it on to reality." But despite spotlighting the folkloric aspects of a public issue, Zeitlin still casts his net widely over "American children's folklore" and treats these teens in a cast of "schoolchildren."

Bill Ellis in his book *Aliens, Ghosts, and Cults* (University Press of Mississippi, 2001) also warned of public over-reaction to "rumor-panics," often connecting teenagers to the threat of, or the attraction to, devil worshippers. Documenting oral reports in May 1987 in Lansford, Pennsylvania, that a satanic cult planned shooting students attending a high school prom, Ellis focused on the event's multiple meanings for (production) and about (response) adolescents.

For some adolescents, making such a prom deadly may have heightened its status as a rite of passage, making their attendance doubly a proof of their adult status. The participants may not have been simply adolescents dabbling in the occult; the Lansford death threats, police later discovered, were written by a parent who had grudges against administrators and used the cult stories as an opportunity for revenge. For some school administrators, turning the prom into a show of force may have been a way of assuring edgy parents that they were, after all, in control of their children. . . . Finally,

for a few participants, the event may have been seen as a hoax proving that adolescent "quasi-satanic" rebellion was justified, since grown-ups are prone to hysterical delusions and really do not understand what [musician] Ozzy Osbourne is all about. Hence the event carries the seeds of future panics, and indeed, as we will see, the same material was recycled in the area in 1996, with similar results. (218)

Implicit in these interpretations is the treatment of adolescence as a special age because it is a cultural "coming of age." That "coming" could suggest a development as much onslaught as transition. It implies a vulnerability of a young initiate leaving childhood, and the threat of new virile power confronting adulthood. By relativizing the subject of adolescence in other cultures, Margaret Mead in her classic study *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928) tried to show that adolescence need not be as troubled as it was in America. Her observations for the cultural expectations of the 1920s still echoes in reports after the school shootings of the 1990s: "Adolescence was characterised as the period in which idealism flowered and rebellion against authority waxed strong, a period during which difficulties and conflicts were absolutely inevitable" (1). Her relation of her experience in Samoa to the United States in the 1920s, however, differed in two respects from the concerns raised during the 1990s. One is that she admired the casual parental atmosphere that she thought led to an easy transition into adulthood. Many reports took the shootings of the 1990s to show the failure of permissive parenting. Second, she highlighted the experience of girls, not only because she thought that as a woman investigator she could be more intimate with her girl subjects, but also because she considered them more vulnerable as well as under-studied. In light of the reports of the 1990s that shooters were almost all boys, attention shifted to struggles of male identity in formation. Boys, once thought more in control of their situation than girls, suddenly appeared at risk, and much of their plight seemed cultural. In a post-feminist world, they could be seen questioning the proper expressions of various masculinities in American society.

As a coming of age, adolescence intensely involved folklore because it appeared to be a liminal state in need of ritual clarification. In Michael Moffatt's *Coming of Age in New Jersey* (Rutgers University Press, 1989), he found college students segregated by age particularly affected not only because of their "coming" stage of life, but also because of their transition between the "school life" they viewed as juvenile and the real world of the future. Much of the ritual clarification they sought concerned new social affiliations and sexual awaken-

ing. In folklorists reports of legends, rituals, pranks, and jokes as the common expressive genres of "coming of age" implied ritual components to claim new group identity apart from family, a departure from childhood, and an anticipation of the power of adulthood. The kinds of questions asked of teenage folklore become revised when challenged by the events of Columbine. Instead of concerns for narrative competency and genre definition found in many legend collections from the 1960s to the 1980s, approaches are possible that address perceptions of teenage angst as well as menace. A reinterpretation of cultural collections along some of the theoretical lines found below inform, or misinform, "the restlessness of youth" (Mead):

1. *Disease Theory.* Adolescence is an incurable or unpredictable pathology. Hormones rage, and strange bodily outbreaks of body piercing, satanic expression, and hair coloring are symptomatic of a problem outside of the individual's control. In much of the folklore stemming from this disease, there can be demonstrations of strength and bravado, and occasionally violence. There is the observation that the condition may be unrelated to the person's identity before or after adolescence, and indeed, these symptoms are something that individuals "get over." And some adults may consider "quarantining" as a response. Although the root cause of the disease is debatable, one common culprit is puberty, which is often assumed to be coming too early, or problems arise for individuals when it comes too late.

2. *Psychoanalytical/Anxiety Theory.* Adolescence is a period fraught with anxiety, and may be the time filled with the most conflict between individual desires and societal taboos. Anxieties of repressed sexuality, conflicts of identities (sexual and social), guilt over separation from parents (and occasionally attraction to parents), and issues of peer conformity and adjustment. Folklore is particularly used in adolescence as a fictive plane to symbolically confront or resolve various anxieties and adapt to psychological conflicts. Indeed, psychoanalytical interpretations have arguably been applied to adolescent legends and rituals more than they have to the traditions of other age groups because of the perception that anxieties especially need expression and resolution during adolescence. Although related to the disease theory, anxiety theory posits a psychological rather than pathological response to the age.

3. *Organizational Theory.* With the onset of adolescence, individuals gravitate to one another, and in that formation, create subversive, destructive organizations adults may think of as pernicious "gangs," and many teenagers view as identity-marking "cliques." There is the implication that these formations undermine the traditional val-

ues imparted through family and community. Another ramification is that these groups naturally compete for dominance rather than moving toward consensus. Alternative explanations for shooters are that they either fall outside these formations and become dangerous because of their alienation, or they come from one of these groups seeking to eliminate others.

4. *Societal Theory*. Adolescents suffer from lack of parental attention or inability to properly raise children, which results in asocial or amoral behavior. Teachers and school administrators as surrogates of society may also be responsible because they do not respond to the needs of teenagers or continue to treat them as children rather than take them seriously as young adults. An explanation for shooters according to this theory is that they seek revenge against parents and teachers because of their treatment. There is also the implication that the new society that adolescents dwell in is a mass society, reinforced by the growing size of consolidated schools. Individuals may feel increasingly lost within this mass culture.

5. *Mental States Theory*. This concept points to the rebellion of adolescence that results from states of boredom or alienation common to the growing number of teenagers growing up in suburbia. Although depictions of "juvenile delinquents" of the 1950s were set in the inner cities, and a number of gang violence scares of the 1990s were also placed in the inner cities, shockwaves of concern could be felt because of the location of teen violence in suburban environments assumed to be healthy. Some explanations for trouble in suburbia include a need for "action" in a dulling environment, some form of special middle-class paranoia, increase of recreational drug use, and the unnatural extension of childhood in high school and even through college. This view often comes with a questioning of the effects of affluence and materialism on creating a civil society among teenagers.

6. *Hegemonic Theory*. Popular culture receives blame for spreading messages of violence and revulsion in this theory. It also may be credited for creating new subcultures revolving around fads and alternative lifestyles. Campaigns against violent or sexually explicit song lyrics, videos, magazines, and movies are based on the special reception that teenagers have for the extreme limits of popular culture. Teens are seen as dupes of corporate marketing of material settings of malls, shocking fashions, and rousing concerts. They are victims of cultural hegemony spread over adolescence by profit-hungry, amoral capitalists who seem insensitive to the destructive results of their marketing.

7. *Moralistic Theory*. A different take on the messages of violence and revulsion encouraged in popular culture which result in formation

of new adolescent folk cultures comes from a theory of moral decline. In the historical decline of structures of "traditional values," the theory holds, centers of moral education such as families, schools, and churches have lost their grip on teenagers, and there is a growing acceptance of once unacceptable behaviors. Instead of a value placed on following authority and the lessons of a previous generation, there is an attraction to defying authority or standing alone often in anti-social ways. Some will blame the decline on breakdowns in the loss of community, the breakdown of the traditional family, the rise of selfish individualism, or post-modern cynicism of organized religion.

8. *Regional/Environmental Theory*. From American studies, there are ideas of some regional or community environments that encourage aggressive forms of adolescence. One can hear references to the violent legacy of the South, for example, or the "hunting heritage" of Pennsylvania and the Upper Midwest, and the "gun culture" of the West. As teen shootings were reported in all corners of the United States, this theory was increasingly challenged, but questioning still occurred about the connection of the regional background of teenagers to their cultural behavior.

9. *Emergence Theory*. Performance theory suggests that adolescence is a particularly ripe age for emergence of new cultural forms. The desire to differentiate from other teens in school with whom adolescents are segregated, perhaps the need to symbolically express identities or confront suppressed desires and anxieties, the need for attention-often revealed in shocking or creative ways-and to structure experience around novelty and fashion lead to a constant renewal of cultural creativity. In this view, the formation of new cultural groups such as Goths and Wiccans, often with reference to tradition, is a natural and healthy process, but individuals who turn the emergent performance into sociopathic spectacle show the risk inherent in an open society.

Then there is the theoretical question of when adolescence begins and ends as a distinct physiological or cultural period. Popularly, adolescence is thought of as the teen years, or physiologically as a period between puberty and physical maturity. One cultural marker is the sharp break between a sense of adolescent production, or cultural creativity, and adult response indicated in a survey conducted by *American Demographics/Harris Interactive* (December 2001, 10). It asked a sample of Americans to associate visible tattoos or body piercings with certain characteristics. The survey was driven by the observation that young adults are the most active body artists, and demographic factors of race, gender, and ethnicity are not as much predictors of who is likely to have such work as age.

**PERCENT OF ADULTS WHO ASSOCIATE THE FOLLOWING TERMS
WITH VISIBLE TATTOOS OR BODY PIERCING,
BY AGE**

CHARACTERISTIC	18-24	25-29	30-39	40-49
Rebellious	63	49	71	68
Experimental	57	59	53	50
Immature	29	32	45	47
Freakish	29	34	37	32
Alternative	58	77	42	41
Artistic	53	34	29	23
Normal	46	19	20	19
Stylish	29	25	13	16
Fun	34	27	15	10
Gay	12	10	16	9
Sexy	22	25	12	12
Tough	8	10	9	7

One way to read these responses is the large change among age groups as to the issue of whether the behavior is "normal." The response for the group in their late twenties to the one from the late teens to early twenties dropped 27 percent. This response suggests a perception of some customs as normative for adolescents. Note, for instance, the rise of the perception of the custom as immature from 29 percent among the group in their late teens to early twenties to 45 percent among the group in the early thirties. The group in its early thirties also felt more strongly than the group in its late twenties that the behavior was "rebellious." In this regard, one wishes that the survey had also asked about the characteristic of "adolescent," to see if there is a correlation between a perception of rebellion and adolescence. One of the traits one has to notice in the above survey is that the youngest group felt much more artistic than the group in the late twenties. One has to question the largest change in viewpoint concerning "alternative" from the group in its late twenties to the group in the early thirties. This response might suggest that the group in the thirties associated the distinction of the body markings with adolescence while a considerable portion of the group in the late twenties considered the markings still an option or choice that could be "sexy," "fun," or "stylish," rather than a sign of a younger age. But the answers to "immature" and "artistic" beg the question of traditions associated with a period we might designate as adolescent. From there we might question how "adoles-

cent" becomes not only a marker of age, but an adjective for kinds of behavior and customs. So we are left again to ask about folklore as an expression of age.

I could argue that folklorists have to get over their sense of surprise at adolescent folklore before confronting theoretical questions of age. In folkloristic literature, authors frequently express surprise that recognition to adolescent folklore came so late, and further, they express astonishment that adolescents produce as much material for folklorists as they do. The surprise in the former stems from the admission that many folklorists are teachers of adolescents, and yet have not adequately examined them as a folk group. The shock in the latter probably owes to the perception that adolescents discard the rhymes, songs, and tales abundantly collected among pre-pubescent children. What is not anticipated are the new materials generated in the form of legends, jokes, speech, and rituals. And what is generally not interpreted are the ties of this material to a sense of cultural disconnection. Oriented as they are to finding continuities, historical and social, folklorists are challenged by adolescent material to explain the cultural emergence, and frequent social fragmentation, common among teenagers.

The late folklorist Sue Samuelson expressed amazement in her review of adolescent folklore published in 1995 that the first American study to consider adolescent folklore separately from childhood was Martha Dirks' "Teen-Age Folklore from Kansas," appearing in *Western Folklore* in 1963. Dirks' point was to show that teenagers, often dismissed as tradition-bearers, had a formidable repertory of humor, slang, customs, and songs. Her survey sought to find continuities of this material with other traditions, but lacked a developmental approach. Even before Dirks' survey, groundbreaking studies by Brian Sutton-Smith sought connections between distinctive genres of adolescence and the developmental needs of the age. His "The Kissing Games of Adolescents in Ohio," first appearing in the journal *Midwest Folklore* (1959), posed the question of the social and psychological function of such games in the post-pubescent sexual development of teenagers during the 1950s. Other "adolescent" genres receiving this treatment included drinking games (see Monique Young's 1981 M.A. thesis at the University of California, Berkeley), graffiti (see Peter Peretti, Richard Carter, and Betty McClinton, "Graffiti and Adolescent Personality" in *Adolescence* 1977, and Susan Gelman's "Toward a Study of Postal Graffiti: Text and Context in an Adolescent Girls' Genre" in *Western Folklore* 1978), scary and sexual legends (see Gary Alan Fine and Bruce Noel Johnson, "The Promiscuous Cheerleader:

An Adolescent Male Belief Legend" in *Western Folklore* 1980, and Sue Samuelson, "The White Witch: An Analysis of an Adolescent Legend" in *Indiana Folklore* 1979), legend trips (see Patricia Meley, "Adolescent Legend Trips as Teenage Cultural Response," *Children's Folklore Review* 1991), gross jokes (see Simon Bronner, "What's Grosser than Gross?" in *Midwestern Journal of Language and Folklore* 1985), ritual insults (see Millicent Ayoub and Stephen A. Barnett, "Ritualized Verbal Insult in White High School Culture," *Journal of American Folklore* 1965), ritual and play (see Michael Licht, "Some Automotive Play Activities of Suburban Teenagers," *New York Folklore Quarterly* 1974), and material culture (see Ariane Sains, "The Latest Teen Rage? Embroidery" *Children's Folklore Review* 1990). It is not coincidental that the word "rage" frequently enters into the rhetoric of these works, both to reflect the quick circulation of material among adolescents and the trope of aggression in adolescent folklore.

There is a decided emphasis in these previous studies on defining the limits of adolescent genres and documenting characteristics of folkloric performance, but interpretations of social and psychological function can lead to more developmental approaches. Kenneth A. Thigpen in his extensive survey, "Adolescent Legends in Brown County" (*Indiana Folklore* 1971) for example, declares his textual purpose of "a survey of legend content of a segment of a community," but concludes with a developmental observation of the "basic adolescent need for adventurous involvement." What he means by this is a distinctive theme of using legends in adolescence for tests of daring designed to show maturity. He noted a sense of danger, a simultaneous attraction to and revulsion by death, and a building on tensions between teenagers and adults that is inherent in these adventures. Although he did not comprehend the full implications of folklore representing subgroups, or friendship cliques, of teenagers, he offered balance to the stereotypical view of the menacing teen. One group he called "Middle American" is characterized as "highly individualistic; politically, religiously, and socially conservative; rebellious against authority as it pertains to them individually, but not opposed to the concept of the present system; preferring alcoholic stimulation, particularly beer and liquor, as symbols of maturity and substances of experimentation and titillation" (209). The other he called "counter-culture: communal in social orientation (especially within the peer group); politically apathetic, though leaning toward liberalism; religiously apathetic, though tending to substitute ideas associated with the occult for traditional religious concepts; preferring non-alcoholic drugs (except for wine) such as marijuana, as symbols of maturity and substances for experimentation and titillation" (209).

In light of Columbine, the adolescent social landscape appears more complex and ideas of adolescent imagination more challenging. One needs to account for previously unheard of groups such as "The Trench Coat Mafia," as well as more widely spread labels of Goths, Raves, Skinheads, Jocks, and Wiccans. The commentary on school shootings was as much a cultural critique of adolescence and its baffling social landscape as it was a political concern for school violence. Folklorists as cultural professionals frequently working with teenagers began reviewing their positions. The Children's Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society opened discussion on the folkloristic response to Columbine at its meeting in 1999 and invited participants to share research that would shed light on the traditions of teens in modern society. The hope was to promote more studies that would offer folkloristic views on the publicized problems of teenagers and schools. The gathered panelists in 2000 spoke to a standing-room only crowd, and the heated discussion inspired this publication to continue the initiative for folkloristic inquiry into adolescent traditions-both dangerous and benign. *Children's Folklore Review*, as a location for this folklore first, is appropriate because of its inclusion of developmental approaches to age-related folklore in its illustrious publishing run, but the essayists hope that other journals will subsequently take up the theme.

The theme intentionally goes beyond Columbine and the issue of school violence to the cultural worlds of adolescence today. It has to integrate the folk culture that adolescents construct for themselves and the popular belief that adults express about naturally rebellious or violent youth. The essayists tackle the interconnections of identities that adolescents pursue and the threatened feelings about those identities that popular culture perpetuates. Bill Ellis, for example, considers the significance of "Hitler's Birthday" as an occasion for the rumors of school violence that circulated. JoAnn Conrad deals with the cultural implications of political reactions to violent youth in California. Responding to the public perception of the danger of "Goth" identity among school shooters, Allen Berres separates the esoteric lore of Goth identity that adolescents commonly practice and the exoteric beliefs about Goths in popular culture. Charlie McCormick reminds readers in his essay on "cruising" about precedents for the kind of discourse on the menacing adolescent encountered in school violence discourse. This issue's theme of "folklore that responds to Columbine and adolescence" is therefore both in the form of practice traditionalized by adolescents and narrative or belief expressed by

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adults. As evidence for a developmental study of culture and a reflection on folkloristic purpose, it reveals the coming of age.

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HITLER'S BIRTHDAY: RUMOR-PANICS IN THE WAKE OF THE COLUMBINE SHOOTINGS BILL ELLIS

On April 20, 1999, two students, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, came to Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, armed with a variety of weapons and thirty homemade bombs. There they opened fire randomly, killing thirteen people before turning the guns on themselves. The date was the hundred-and-tenth anniversary of Adolf Hitler's birthday, and police later found a handwritten diary showing that the attack was planned with this date in mind. The two youths were notorious at the school as being members of a misfit group that called itself the "Trench Coat Mafia" because they allegedly came to school wearing black clothing and sunglasses. (EmergencyNet News, 1999).

Rumor panics immediately broke out in many other high schools, nationwide, on subsequent dates that were also said to be "Hitler's Birthday" or some such occasion for mayhem. By April 29, The Emergency Response and Research Institute reported that its Watch Center had been inundated with reports of scares coming from all parts of the United States and Canada. Such cases were especially prevalent in Eastern Pennsylvania, where at least 52 threats in 22 counties were reported to the ERR! Watch Center. An informal poll of my students documented such scares in Easton, Pocono Mountain, Wilkes-Barre, Hazleton, Berwick, Bloomsburg, Mountaintop, and Allentown. While the details of the rumors varied, in general they claimed that a group of students intended to come to school and open fire on students or detonate bombs. In many cases, a "hit list" of students to be assassinated was said to exist. In fact, nothing unusual occurred at any location, but here as nationwide the panic was used to justify tough new restrictions or harsh penalties laid out to students found responsible for some infraction at the time.

The area had also been affected by rumor panics during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Previously, I have described events that were eerily similar, as they occurred in three local high schools in the spring of 1987. In this case, a "satanic cult" was said to have encouraged a local teenager to commit suicide. As their next act, they were rumored to be prepared to attend their high school's prom and commit a massacre there. An intense panic occurred, in the course of which two reputedly "weird" students were physically beaten by a mob, and unusual security measures, including the installment of metal detectors at the prom location, were instituted. One view of these panics, I noted then, was in terms of "hysteria" or "collective delusion," a rather deterministic approach that assumed that rumors provoke a contagious, illogical response from a group. Using con-

cepts drawn from Veronique Campion-Vincent (1988) and Joel Best (1989), I argued instead that such events were logically based on narrative themes existing, often unexpressed, in the worldviews of those involved. They are, I suggested, a means of telling a story in a structured format through real-life action rather than through oral narration. First, some social unrest or crisis must be present as an underlying cause. A "triggering event" dramatizes this unrest in an "exceptional and traumatic" way, and a following period of collective action embodies the community's reaction to the threat. This leads to a "showdown," or climactic moment in which the legend is "fulfilled." When such legend-derived panics occur, participants can adopt one of several stereotypical roles, and *all* such activities constitute a performance of the legend through ostension, or the patterning of real-life actions on a shared narrative model.¹

In the case of the 1987 Prom-Panic, I noted that the underlying stresses behind the panic were based on widespread assumptions that Satan was a real and influential supernatural force in the world and also that teenagers, in increasing numbers, were practicing Satanism. Hence when a real suicide occurred, it was logical that these beliefs would form the structure of the collective action that occurred in response. In fact, in 1996, another teenage suicide in the Wilkes-Barre area provoked another similar panic at Wyoming Valley West High School. This event led to public meetings, circulation of the usual danger signs of Satanism, and a special workshop for local police on the threat of cults, held at the local Penn State branch campus (*Aliens, Ghosts, and Cults* 238-40). More disturbingly, on April 24, 1998, a 14-year-old boy *did* come to a prom in Edinboro, Pennsylvania, and opened fire, wounding two students and killing the teacher who was the event's organizer and chaperone. Questioned afterwards, he said only that he had intended to make the dance "memorable."

Sociologist Jeffrey Victor has viewed such rumor panics as part of a moral crusade set in action by interest groups with an ultra-conservative, often evangelical agenda. This approach is certainly valid and helps explain why certain themes (such as alleged satanic symbols in graffiti) appear repeatedly in the information circulated during such panics. However, the Wyoming Valley West scare was unusual in focusing on Satanism. A few years earlier, the Jim Thorpe Area Junior High School, in a more rural area south of Wilkes-Barre, experienced an intense panic based on a rumor that "the KKK and skinheads" were planning to commit a massacre. According to one student, it was surprising that the rumor reached the intensity that it did, because the school was mostly white, and no friction between them and the minorities who attended had been felt. Nevertheless, when a "suspicious van" was seen parked outside the school, tensions grew to the point that students began bringing weapons to school.

for self-protection, they claimed. "Teachers attempted to comfort students," the student recalled, "counseling was offered, and local police patrolled the hallways, to insure safety." While many students disregarded the story, he added, "Others were in a state of shock and fear, some were even crying." It took some two weeks for the affair and the community to settle down.

A similar panic, complete with suspicious van, occurred in the South London suburbs in 1989. This scare focused on a gang called "The Chelsea Smilers," and officials blamed it not on Satanism but rather on violence inspired by fierce loyalty to football clubs (Roud, 1989). Since such panics have continued to occur, even after the Satanism scare died down, they probably are not caused by evangelical interest groups, though these factions can and do exploit them for their own purposes. Rather, it seems likely that rumor panics, like other kinds of narrative, have a structure and rule system of their own. Set on foot by existing stresses in the community, they express and incorporate these stresses in narrative logic. Satanism and ready access to guns have been blamed as causes for real-life massacres and the rumor panics that mimic them. But the content of such rumor-panics suggests that the core issue, as defined by the participants themselves, is the unresolved "jock/head" conflict as it has developed in American high schools.

This paper will examine details from a number of these 1999 panics to study them as an emergent form of folk narrative. The gruesome details of the Columbine massacre created stress that the panics dissipated in an essentially therapeutic fashion. They involved a complex interplay of ostensive actions modeled after existing traditions. Many of these acts of ostension—perpetrating hoaxes and making bomb threats—were criminal in nature, but they did not involve violence, and the ordeals they gave rise to cleared the air and made most parties feel as though they had defeated any similar threat. However, as I argued ten years ago, rumor panics may communicate the seeds of the violence that they warn against. As folklorists, we need to be concerned about whether some forms of folk narrative might contribute to the social problems that give rise to them.

The rumor panic took a number of forms when it occurred in North-eastern Pennsylvania. At Hazleton Area High School, "The rumor began . . . that it was Adolf Hitler's birthday and that this is the way they [the killers] were going to celebrate it. The shootings were supposed to occur during the lunch period." One version had it that "Supposedly there was going to be a bomb set off at 12:15 the one day, and someone was also supposed to open up fire and shoot people." Another added, "everyone at my school didn't want to go to school on Hitler's birthday because they were afraid someone is going to come and start shooting." At another

local school, "The rumor was that two students much like the two that killed others were planning to bomb our school."

As with the 1987 panic, school proms were frequently mentioned as "showdown" dates. At nearby Berwick Area High School, "Rumor had it that on May 4th someone was going to open fire in the school." Another student recalled, "There was a rumor that at our prom a group of younger students were going to shoot and kill all the senior football players and cheerleaders. There was supposed to be a list with all the names on it." Similarly, at Crestwood High School, a story held that "after the Columbine shootings that this one kid. . . made a hit list and was supposed to kill the certain few people whose name was on the list at the prom." In the Pittsburgh area, a similar rumor emerged, claiming that a bomb would be detonated at the prom at Highlands High School. Tensions increased when police arrived at the school on a routine drug search, locked students in classrooms and opened lockers. A school spokesperson emphasized that the prom would be more secure than ever, with security guards present to guard locked doors and, if necessary, use hand-held metal detectors. But students responded with skepticism and fear (Everett). At Easton Area High School, the date was an annual school-pride celebration called EAHS Day, during which a school king and queen would be chosen in a mass assembly. The morning of the event, the school received a bomb threat, stating "that since everyone in the school would be in the same place at the same time, they [the caller and his friends] would go on a shooting rampage and then set bombs off."

At most locations, students and school officials reacted with concern. At Hazleton, the panic affected the entire district, and "the principal made announcements during the entire week of school that the students have nothing to worry about because the school is a very safe place and they have security walking around the hallways." Coughlin High School, in Wilkes-Barre, escaped the bomb threats that affected local schools. But in a variation on the "satanic graffiti" theme, students came to school one day to find "DWBS" spray painted on the walls. "Nobody was sure exactly what it meant," a student said, "but it was rumored that the letters stood for 'Die Wilkes-Barre Students.'"

At other locations, though, students engaged in a more disturbing form of ostension, calling in bomb threats and leaving death threats and even fabricated "hit lists" where they could be found. In response, school officials found students bringing weapons to school-knives, BB guns, and the sort-for self defense. At Pocono Mountain High School, for instance, "The rumor that circulated. . . was [that] on . . . Hitler's Birthday a handful of people picked out and put on a "hit-list" would be killed." These death threats tended to target "'jocks," especially at Berwick, whose foot

ball team has won several regional and statewide championships. One of the members of the team recalled, "None of us . . . really cared that much but some of the cheerleaders were worried about it." He added, "Also, many of the faculty were worried about it. They were worried because we already did have a lot of bomb threats and they thought that maybe this would be real." At Allentown Central Catholic, another school with a highly visible athletics program, a list appeared of "football players, cheerleaders, and band members that people wanted to kill." A student recalled, "Myself and a lot of my friends were on the list." Likewise, at Crestwood, a student was found with a similar prom hit list.

No actual incidents occurred in any of these cases. Most students claimed that they personally were not affected by the scare. A Wilkes-Barre student said, "Most people, including me, really didn't take this too seriously. . . . School went on as usual that day and nothing happened. It was apparently just more people trying to copy what went on at Columbine." But he noted that "there were some who were a little worried about it." Another said, somewhat cynically, "I wasn't on the [hit] list anyway so I didn't care." Nevertheless, at all locations many students stayed away from school on "Hitler's Birthday." At Hazleton, less than half the students showed up on that day, and when the school bell rang at 12:15, the predicted time of the massacre, one student recalled seeing one of his classmates dash for cover.

At Berwick, the rumor caused a community-wide uproar, with both parents and students expressing concern. On the day of the prediction, over half the students in all grades, including elementary school, stayed away. The school also considered canceling the Prom, but relented when seniors objected. Bomb threats also were called in to Pocono Mountain, saying that explosives had been planted on school buses. A tennis match had to be cancelled because experts had not had time to inspect the bus needed to transport the team.

On Easton's "EAHS Day," an elaborate rumor emerged that the public assembly was to be bombed. A student observed that as soon as students heard the rumor, they began to leave, group by group, and when the king and queen were crowned, only about a hundred of the school's three thousand students and faculty chose to attend. At another high school, the rumor circulated about two disaffected students who were said to be planning a Columbine-style bombing and massacre. On the predicted day, a bomb threat was in fact phoned in, supposedly from these two (who later turned out to be innocent). Nothing happened, but a witness recalled, "what I remember the most was the scared little face of the students in the middle school. After the bomb scare many of them went home because they were so scared."

In most schools, the panic led to short- and long-range consequences. The Hazleton area schools imposed a set of new rules, the requirement of transparent or at least translucent book bags being the most visible. The new rule was imposed virtually overnight, forcing parents to travel to nearby cities to get legal book-bags when stocks in Hazleton disappeared quickly. In Berwick, students were subject to searches when they arrived at school, and there and in Wilkes-Barre, police were permanently assigned to patrol school entrances.

Students found responsible for writing false "hit lists" or calling in bomb threats were frequently given unusually harsh punishments. In the case of a Crestwood student who fabricated a prom hit list, a classmate noted that "Normally nothing would have been done about it, but it was right after the Columbine shootings and so they gave him a three-day suspension." Ironically, though, the punishment was light enough that the student actually showed up later at the prom. A somewhat more severe penalty went to another student who

was counting down the days until he saw Limp Bizkit (his favorite band) in concert. One day he came to school with a note on his shirt saying "3 more days!!!" In the midst of all the panic, he was falsely accused of being the kid that was making all the threats, and they interpreted the note as "3 more days until everyone dies in the school." He was suspended for 10 days.

At Hazleton and at Allentown Central, students were expelled for bomb threats, and at a nearby New Jersey school two students were given a month's jail sentence for making such a threat.

Such actions were not uncommon nationwide. In Chicago, metal detectors were installed at the entrances of public schools in the wake of an incident in which a 15-year-old was caught trying to smuggle a gun into school. At the Indiana School for the Deaf in Indianapolis, fifth-graders were seen standing up in a cafeteria, pointing their fingers like guns, while one reportedly signed "I'm going to kill you." The group was suspended for five days under a new "zero tolerance" policy forbidding jokes about the incident. In several areas, black trenchcoats were outlawed, and the state of Delaware instituted a new policy under which teens making threatening statements were forced to undergo psychological evaluation and kept under detention until their parents could come and pick them up (EmergencyNet News, 1999).

Another immediate reaction to the panics was renewed agitation in the area to have religious statements placed in public schools. Attempts to institute public prayer, in some form, have regularly been blocked by courts.

But the martyrdom story of Cassie Bernal gave local ministers renewed incentive to push for posting a copy of the Ten Commandments in public schools. The rationale, as one Lutheran pastor told his congregation, was that if God were kept out of schools by law, then inevitably Satan would enter in. This move linked the panic to many of the mythological concepts present in this area, which had motivated earlier rumor panics. But this development, as I suggested earlier, was probably an effort by religious groups to exploit public concern, in much the same way as political leaders used the event to advance gun control legislation. A closer look at the incidents suggests that neither God nor guns were central to the narratives being told.

In my study of the 1987 Prom-Panic, I noted that so-called "satanic" activities were best seen in terms of a traditional "jock" (athletic-oriented) versus "head" (alcohol/drug-oriented) rivalry. Typically, "jocks" identified themselves with "all-American" crew cuts and clothing with patriotic symbols, while "heads" preferred a disheveled look, complemented by t-shirts with heavy metal or allegedly satanic symbols (*Aliens, Ghosts, and Cults* 211). Kathleen Lowney, in her own study of teen Satanism, also noted that a self-defined "satanic" group in Georgia likewise defined its identity in opposition to groups that had gained approval from adults by participation in athletics or academics. In the case of the Columbine tragedy, and the rumor panic reactions it provoked, it seems clear that the main underlying stress was unresolved tension between such factions. Such an antagonism was clearly present in the notes left behind by Harris and Klebold, which included phrases such as "We want to be different, we want to be strange and we don't want jocks or other people putting us down. . . We're going to punish you" (EmergencyNet News, 1999). And the same tension has regularly emerged in other panics, where students who dressed in modes officially defined as "satanic" were subjected to official harassment. In the 1996 Wilkes-Barre Satanism panic, a 15-year-old girl was expelled from high school when, after two teens committed suicide, she came to school wearing a black outfit. It was intended as a protest against the current fad of wearing pricey clothes from The Gap, she explained, and her mother backed her claim that she was in no way involved with the occult. "I searched her room," the mother added (*Aliens, Ghosts, and Cults* 239).

In the wake of publicity over the Columbine shootings, many non-conforming high school students reported similar official persecutions. Jon Katz, an online supporter of free speech rights, received hundreds of messages from self-described "oddballs" who had suffered from similar acts of intolerance. One student from a southeastern high school described how a social studies teacher had initiated a discussion in class. The student said

that, while he could not condone the killings, he understood the feelings of the killers: "Because day after day, slight after slight, exclusion after exclusion, you can learn how to hate." This discussion had an unexpected result:

After the class, I was called to the principal's office and told that I had to agree to undergo five sessions of counseling or be expelled from school, as I had expressed "sympathy" with the killers in Colorado, and the school had to be able to explain itself in "acted out." In other words, for speaking freely. . . I was not only branded a weird geek, but a potential killer. That will sure help deal with violence in America. (Katz)

Another student, an enthusiast of online video games, was banned from the Internet in the wake of Columbine and referred to a school guidance counselor, who told the student that this was a chance to "re-invent" himself, to "mainstream." "This whole Colorado thing," the student commented, "it's given them an excuse to do more of what started this trouble in the first place-to make individuals and different people feel like even bigger freaks." "This is a whole new level of exclusion," a role-playing game enthusiast from New York City agreed, "another excuse for the preppies of the universe to put down and isolate people like me" (Katz1999).

Again, this was no new reaction. After the local media had exploited the "satanic" element of the 1996 Wilkes-Barre panic, an anonymous caller left this message on the paper's "Say So" machine:

You people are missing the mark once again, and making it harder and harder for young people to get help with the real issues they face. This sensationalizing is turning young people against each other in fear. It breeds paranoia, it stereotypes them, and it dilutes the real issues. . . . This amounts to using them and adding to their confusion about who to trust. Think about it. ("Satanic Déjà Vu" 8)

In fact, an especially unsettling element of rumor panics is the way in which they actually polarize existing conflicts between the two groups. In the 1996 Satanism panic, for instance, other students who regularly dressed in black received anonymous letters with messages such as "Die, freaks!" In 1999, this conflict emerged most dramatically at Central Columbia High School in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, where students had to deal with a double shock.³ On April 19, they learned that a popular student, J. P. Cleaver, had been killed instantly in a head-on collision with a drunk driver. As usual, the event was marked with a moment of silence and the posting of memorial ribbons in J. P.'s honor. But the following days brought the effects of the Columbine tragedy, and the two reinforced each other to pro-

duce an intense panic. The trigger event was an effort by two students to enact a similar tribute in honor of the two Columbine assailants: two days after the shooting became news, they came to school in black trenchcoats, playing allegedly "Satanic" music on their car stereo. They had been at odds with "The Militia," a group of athletics-oriented students that J.P. had belonged to, and the actions of the two provoked a series of confrontations with the dead student's friends, male and female. Rumors soon emerged that the two planned to murder members of the Militia, and the school was thrown into what one participant called "a state of total lockdown," with students' jackets and book-bags regularly searched for deadly weapons.

As happened in the 1987 Hazleton panic, official sanctions were supported by vigilante justice. Three weeks later, a group of Militia supporters, who had been trailing the two "freaks," set an ambush for them on their way home from work. The two were seriously beaten and kicked, one suffering a broken jaw and ribs, the other, a concussion. In retaliation, the two students pressed charges against their attackers. But when one of them put up photographs of their assailants and their friends up on his website, labeled "Wanted, dead or alive," police interpreted it as a death threat. Instead of prosecuting those who attacked them, authorities ordered the two committed to a local hospital for psychiatric treatment. Even with the "freaks" temporarily out of school, rumors still circulated that one of them was intending to show up "with a bomb strapped to his back and was waiting until everyone was leaving school to set it off." The standoff continued until the end of the school year, with Militia posses escorting the threatened students to and from school and work and shadowing the two oddballs.

Such, sadly, was the conclusion of many such reactions to the Columbine shootings. Rather than dealing directly with the tensions that underlie such acts of violence, both official and unofficial actions drove existing factions further apart in a way that may sow the seeds of further massacres. Given the widespread nature of rumor panics and the way they adhere to a stereotyped narrative form, school massacres may in fact be best understood as a traditional means of performing these legends.

For this reason, folklorists are socially responsible for recognizing the traditional elements in such violent actions and for connecting them to the less violent but still sociopathic elements in rumor panics that end in acts of hate and non-lethal violence. As free speech activist Jon Katz has stressed:

People who are different are reviled as geeks, nerds, dorks. The lucky ones are excluded, the unfortunates are harassed, humiliated, sometimes

assaulted literally as well as socially. Odd values-unthinking school spirit, proms, jocks-are exalted, while the best values-free thinking, non-conformity, curiosity-are ridiculed. Maybe the one positive legacy the Trenchcoat Mafia left was to ensure that this message got heard, by a society that seems desperate not to hear it.

It is unfortunate that, given the political weakness and internal divisions of the folklore community, the people whose messages we should be hearing and interpreting for our culture largely remain unheard, except through bombs, bullets, and the distorting medium of the popular press.

The Central Columbia panic, as ugly as it became, suggests another possible direction. While teachers and administrators, reportedly, were clueless as to how to resolve the matter, Meredith, a classmate of the feuding groups thought up a way of providing closure. In addition to J. P. 's death, sadly, a young girl had also passed away during her senior year, and Meredith suggested that both seniors could be quietly honored during the graduation ceremony. A local stationery store donated a box of stickers to the school, butterflies to honor the girl, Harley-Davidson logos to honor J. P. The latter symbol was an ingenious choice, as the logo could allude both to outdoor activities practiced by the Militia and to the motorcycle as a symbol of adolescent rebellion. In any case, the entire class, including the two freaks, graduated wearing both symbols. "I was totally shocked to the [the two] wearing them on their caps," a participant later commented to Meredith, adding, "I didn't know if it was a peace offering or just a fluke. . . . You would think that they would have just chosen not to do that." "I guess so," Meredith replied, "but then again it was our only way of incorporating them into the ceremony."

Thankfully, cases like the Columbine massacre and the "memorable" Edinboro prom remain the exception rather than the rule. In many places and in many traditional ways students find ways of working through panics without resorting to violence. As folklorists we could find ways of looking positively at the rumor panics that provide one of the inspirations for such tragedies. There are models of ordeals that provide closure by incorporating all factions into a newly found sense of community, the experience that Victor Turner (1977) called *communitas*. In any case, if we ourselves wish to be more than the oddball faction of academia, we need to be aware of the ways in which our scholarly craft can contribute to understanding the social implications of emergent events such as these.

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NOTES

1. This paper was initially presented at the 1989 AFS meeting in 1989 and published as Ellis 1990. A revised version appears in Ellis 2001 : 199-219.

2. BaptistFire: The Cassie Bernall Story <http://www.baptistfire.com/articles/other/cassie.shtml> is a useful compilation of reactions, both skeptical and religious, to this story. A book, *She Said Yes*, was written by Cassie's mother Misty Bernall and has also been highly promoted in religious circles.

See <http://www.Cassiebernall.org/>

3. Details on this panic come from a collection project written in April 2000 by Jess Shuman, a freshman at Penn State Hazleton, who was a close friend of many of the participants in this affair. My thanks to her for allowing me to use this material.

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THE WAR ON YOUTH: A MODERN OEDIPAL TRAGEDY

JOANN CONRAD

The Janus-faced angelic/monstrous child is deeply etched onto the popular imagination. Adult attitudes towards children can be typified as ambivalent—swinging between the dual images of the threatened child and the threatening child which mirror a fear/fantasy complex and which manifest in a confused and contradictory array of imagery, ideology, and policy. Literally emblematic poster children for the Missing Children's movement allow for a public show of concern and elicit calls for child protection which bolster America's self-image as caring and child-friendly, while the public voting record shows a steady tendency to gut the very social programs that would ensure the well being of millions of (faceless) children. Positive images of childhood and youth today appear stable, in fact, only in the imaginary past. There, good kids, nostalgic simulacra of now-aging Baby Boomers, live relatively uncomplicated and safe lives in the good old days that never were; the promise of the future insured by the uncontested adult-controlled social order.

The conceptual category of "adolescence" or "youth" as a differentiated age group, one which is governed by special rules, restrictions, and protection, only fully emerged in the U.S. public imagination in the post-WWII period, when the economic and ideological requirements of peace time demanded a longer period of "immaturity," fostering more dependency, leisure, and consumerism—an about-face reversal of the practice of determining young males to be psychologically mature to satisfy the demands of war time conscription (Enright 541-59). Adolescence thus constituted the third leg of the triangulated American nuclear family—"purified of toxins [and] fully adapted to the requirements of discipline within an advanced capitalist system" (Ivy 97). Adolescence, however was an inherently volatile, fertile, and ambiguous site—the source of adult fascination and emulation as well as fear. The boundaries of adolescence were also flexible and permeable, difficult to fix and maintain.

If, in this period, we can say that adolescence represented an extension of the privileged space of childhood, with a few additional freedoms, the concept a "juvenile criminal justice system" also provided for a legal and vernacular space for "wayward" youth that sought to protect them from the adult judicial and penal systems. But the very articulation of the category of "juvenile delinquent" provided the basis for an official discourse on youth as potentially falling into the category of deviant which was threatening to the institution of the American family. Public imagery reflected a dual epistemology in which youths within the normative sphere were extended the same privilege as their younger siblings, while both children and youth outside this racially and class-segregated sphere were

consistently denied access to the protected space of childhood. Policy responses to this dual system hinged on the concept of "containment"—the increased control, management, observation, and restriction of movement of all youth—in the maintenance of the separate normative and pathological spheres.

Real-life children and youth today don't "conform to the imperatives of adults and mainstream culture," and have become "alien and sometimes hazardous in the public eye" (Giroux 13), embodiments of a racial, economic, social, and cultural future which appears threatening and foreign to many adults. In the past two decades, significant demographic shifts and economic restructuring have signalled a crisis in our collective understanding of youth—the "face" of the future is increasingly multicultural, and children, once thought of as economic assets are now seen more as liabilities or as competitors for an ever-shrinking resource pool. This paper is about the ideological response to this crisis—those mediated and narrated reconfigurations of the adult-youth relationship which can be seen as recuperative strategies which encompass all youth into the potential pathological sphere. In addition, this paper seeks to investigate the convergence of public perception, ideology, media, and politics which has emerged as a generalized and naturalized discourse on youth, and which is manifest in the educational and criminal justice systems. The paper is based on the premise that contemporary popular representations of youth are a dominant form of cultural politics which reinforce the normalization of certain adult-based violent behavior as they demonize and commoditize youth, validating the claim that those relegated to childhood and adolescence—disenfranchised minors—are consistently denied voice and power in contemporary American culture.

On April 20, 1999, two students from Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, opened fire on their school mates, killing 15 people (including themselves) and wounding 23 others. This, the deadliest school massacre in U.S. history, coming at the end of a series of similar-appearing school shootings beginning in October 1997, has been portrayed as the watershed mark for American youth. Events and policy implementation are conceptualized as being "pre-" or "post-Columbine." We are now in the post-Columbine age—a new era of "killer kids" and "zero tolerance" where a generalized "Columbine Effect" determines school policy.¹ But this kind of rhetoric suggests a causality inherent in the event itself. Rather, I would like to suggest that the event makes the story but the story conceptualizes the event (Oring). In other words, the meaning that accrues around the event is dependent on the particular representation of it. Representations of Columbine, thus, constitute the event, and the ways in which we make this event meaningful, the ways in which it is narrativized and represented,

are dependent on an already in-place communicative system, a set of culturally agreed-upon signifying practices. Additionally, the consumers of such images are implicated in the production of meaning, and this shared cultural map pre-exists in an ideological and discursive field which is hospitable to a particular representation of these school shootings.

In this ideological field, contemporary youth have been collectively demonized, with individual instances of violent behavior generalized and presented as trends or epidemics. This growing "epidemic" of juvenile lawlessness, addiction to violence, drug abuse, and general monstrosity has been presented by politicians, lawmakers, and news media, and has sedimented into public consciousness—into the stories we tell and the ways in which we order reality. These stories have helped to construct a generation of deviants through what Foucault has called a "literature of criminality," affirming that an "ever-present [juvenile] criminality is a constant menace to the social body as a whole" (Foucault 142).

- *More and more teenagers, acting individually or in gangs, are running amuck.*
- *. . . juvenile crime appears to be more widespread and vicious than ever before.*
- *Adolescents have always been violence prone, but there are horrendous crimes being committed by even younger adults.*
- *The teen crime wave flows across all races, class and lifestyles* (Toufexis 52),
- *Crime may be down, but juvenile crime is way up* (Alter 30).
- *Juvenile offenses have soared since the mid-1980s, while adult violent crime rates have remained fairly steady* (US News and World Report 29).
- *In the last three and one-half years, the crime rate is down, but the violence among young people under eighteen is up* (Males 82).

This public belief in the growing problem of violent youth, which is disproportionate to current statistical information,² and which is, furthermore, in contrast to most adults' actual experiences, should be seen as what Lawrence Grossberg calls an "affective epidemic;" a fetishized site, disconnected and disproportionate to its actual worth, ideological in intent, and fed by the "daily economy of saturated panics" (Acland 284).

Since 1997, the highly-exposed and repetitively-aired school shootings in more suburban, or rural, middle-class white schools have been conflated with the already-existing category of the inner-city gang in a perverse affirmative action which criminalizes all youth. The serialized, repetitive

presentations of this violence in the news imply that it is "routine," ubiquitous, and is occurring at younger and younger ages. Pathologizing and marginalizing such youth by means of psychological analyses and after-the-fact profiling and typologizing transforms individuals into "types," their behavior into "patterns," obscuring the common social and cultural milieu in which these events not only arise, but in which they become newsworthy, and denying the fact that violence is "jointly constructed through the interaction of agent and institution, individual and society" (Devine 3).

We need to read these moves to fix the meaning of youth as ideological, but we also need to understand the processes by which these cultural constructs have become so natural, so commonsensical in popular perception. The narratives which organize our everyday experiences are increasingly being guided by the visual logic of mass media. That is, visual pop culture regulates "conventional" meanings and social practices. Thus visual imagery, and the visual logic of commercial media which relies on shallow but repetitive impact which is "cognitively diminished but emotionally charged," provides the basis for our cognitive and narrative categories. We need to interrogate the repetitive, serialized images of school shootings, particularly of Columbine—how do these images, embedded in periodic news stories that revisit the sites, tend to attenuate affective response while they build consensus through volume, through constant repetition? The naturalization of such ideological and cultural constructions of youth tend to carry over into policy when the organization of reality that is increasingly structured according to a mediated logic carries over into other areas of public life, notably the educational and criminal justice systems.

The representation and popular perception of children and youth as "out of control" and antagonistic toward, if not dangerous to, adults and adult privilege is politically potent, and has spawned a host of mean-spirited, ideologically conservative, racist and ageist policies and pedagogies that are far ranging in scope, but singular in purpose—the repression and restriction of youth. The public perception that youth generally constitute a threat to society has resulted in predictable "solutions" that are increasingly punitive,³ and which call for greater restrictions and surveillance of all kids, such as the imposition of curfews and the use of metal detectors and surveillance cameras in schools, the early identification of "problem kids," and their subsequent institutionalized removal from the social sphere, either through the use of psychotropic drugs or through incarceration—"zero tolerance no nonsense tough love." The latest of these "solutions" is California's Proposition 21.

On March 7, 2000, Californians voted 62% to 38% in favor of Proposition 21, known as the "Youth Crime Initiative," or "Gang Violence and Juvenile Crime Prevention Act," but perceptively dubbed the "War On Youth" by its opponents, most of whom were under-age teens of color. Riding the crest of the public panic about "killer kids" that was spectacularly brought to prominence by school shootings such as Columbine, this redundant, punitive initiative targets youth—particularly loosely-defined "gangs" lowering the age at which youths accused of serious offenses would automatically be tried and sentenced as adults to 14,⁴ and the age at which they could be incarcerated in adult prisons to 16, while it stiffens many of the penalties for crimes committed by gang members, although the definition of "gang" is nefariously vague and racist in implementation. Prop 21 effectively rolls back a 100-year-old juvenile criminal justice code that sought to protect and rehabilitate children and youths more than it sought punishment or retribution, and more generally follows a growing California tendency of building prisons while gutting the educational system, so that today there are more youths in the penal system than there are attending the University of California. The rhetoric surrounding the initiative is generally presented in terms of "us versus them," those with power versus those without, and adults against youth. Former California Governor, Pete Wilson, who sponsored Prop 21, spoke to voters' visceral fears of "kids gone bad," and framed the initiative in clearly generational (and false) terms, saying: "While adult crime has been falling dramatically, the same cannot be said for youth violence and gang violence" (Ellis B4).

Prop 21, and its run-away support by voters, is the latest in a series of measures that are fed by special interests and by fear mongering, but that also gain strength and credibility, in part, by tapping into a pre-existing cultural landscape of sedimented folklore, belief, and popularized psychology which aggregate around the intergenerational strife narrative—Oedipus. The Oedipal complex was primary to Freud and his "family romance," and Freud, and a vernacularized Freudian psychology, has been thoroughly imbricated into popular American consciousness in the second half of the 20th century. Accordingly, Oedipus has become, according to Marina Warner, a "dominant tale in our time" (Warner 68). The privileging of this tale, and the subsequent silencing of others that place more emphasis on murderous, cannibalistic, and rapacious fathers, and the dominance of the Freudian reading of the Oedipal tale itself, which obscures the original crime of Oedipus's father Laius, is a master plot of the late 19th and 20th century, and is echoed in contemporary "get tough" policies toward youth.

We have to reintegrate this master plot of the symbolic imagination into the cultural and ideological context out of which it emerged. The

Oedipal complex as a by-now naturalized psychoanalytic construct is historically situated within the discourses of modern capitalism, and in this sense, the Oedipus complex is the "figurehead of imperialism" (Foucault xx), one of the most persuasive agents in the modern micro-physics of power. Seen in this light, we can begin to divest the Oedipus tale of its individualistic family romance status and read it as a metaphor for society. Freudians and folklorists alike become complicit in their unquestioned reaffirmation of the patriarchal privilege in their embrace of this tale and its normalizing interpretation which are reinscribed in the legal, social, and political complex that emerged in the early modern period which naturalized paternal authority, infantilized citizenship, and bifurcated the concept of the child, who could be either incorporated or incarcerated in the maintenance of patriarchal privilege. Today's rhetoric in support of measures such as Prop 21 seemingly upholds such a Freudian Oedipal logic and is also putatively defensive: protecting us from "the most violent juvenile criminals and gang offenders" (California Voter 48), justifying the escalation of draconian measures directed against youth.

The classic Oedipus begins with a prophecy, as do contemporary narratives which flow from our oracle, the media, and from our prophets, the "experts." According to *Time's* cover article on "Teen Age Time Bombs,"

They are just four, five and six years old right now, but already they are making criminologists nervous [. . .]. By the year 2005 they will be teenagers—[. . .] "temporary sociopaths—impulsive and immature," in the words of Northeastern U. criminologist James Alan Fox. (Zoglin)

Similarly, under the headline "The Coming Mayhem," *LA Times* editor Richard Rodriguez echoes Oedipus's banishment in his demands to incarcerate contemporary youth:

. . . a growing population of teenage boys will mean an increase in murders, rapes, and muggings. A new type of criminal is emerging. . . Remorseless, vacant-eyed, sullen-and very young. . . We are entering a Stephen King novel. We are entering an America where adults are afraid of children. Where children rule the streets. Where adults cower at the approaching tiny figure on the sidewalk ahead," (Rodriguez 36)

Vladimir Propp's observation that the Oedipal "Prophecy does not determine the outcome; rather the outcome determines the prophecy" (Propp 83) perhaps illuminates a paternal animus that is occulted in the dominant Freudian Oedipal interpretation. The naturalized status of the Oedipal complex in modern discourses has, in fact, reaffirmed this animus

by only focusing on some aspects of the Oedipal plot and rejecting or ignoring others. This is the tyranny of Oedipus in which analysis is prior to data. The current focus on a generation of killer kids likewise tends to ignore obvious contemporary statistics to the contrary: not only are many more adults killed by other adults than by children each year, but more children are killed by adults than adults by children and youth in any given time period—including the 2,000 to 3,000 children and youths reported murdered by their own parents every year (Males 99). Couple this with staggering figures of child poverty, neglect, and abuse, along with the systematic abandonment of children in both the social and educational systems, and the case for paternal animus becomes fairly persuasive. Clearly there is a generational tragedy, but its story is just as clearly topsy-turvy.

The stories we tell and the narrative paradigms we use to construct them both derive and shape perceptions about our relationships as human beings, and "reality" is constituted and acted upon according to such conceptual and narrative models. Contemporary representations simultaneously project youth as the object of adult violence and rage, the object of adult moralistic anti-violence campaigns (violently implemented), and the object of adult desires. In our contemporary narratives about collective fears of monstrous youth, and the affective crisis that these narratives have engendered, what we can see are the *machinations of hegemony* (Acland 19), in a recuperative narrative strategy. Like the Family Romance, "Family Values," that thin smokescreen for a conservative economic drive in which "capital has taken upon itself the relations of alliance and filiation (Deleuze and Guattari 263)," is more appropriately seen as an adult fantasy which has "exonerated the real exterior family of any wrongs.

. .[by] posit[ing] autonomous repression [as] independent of social repression. . ." Abandoning the child in order to "substitute the individual fantasy that makes the real parents into so many innocents or even victims (Deleuze and Guattari 270)."

NOTES

1. See for example: "The Columbine Effect: 'Zero Tolerance' Sounds like a Good Way to Treat Violence in our Schools. But Does it Go too Far?" *Time* v154, n23 (Dec 6, 1999):51+.

2. In an article in the San Francisco Chronicle dated Oct. 18, 1999, entitled "Arrests for Juvenile Crimes Drop Across Nation," (A2), FBI "figures" are reported to indicate that "juvenile arrests for serious and violent crimes fell nearly 11 percent from 1997 to 1998."

3. For example the "Juvenile Superpredator Incapacitation Act," which passed in the House of Representatives on May 8, 1997. by a vote of 286 to 132 and which was supported by President Clinton. Rep. Bill McCollum (R) Florida sponsored the punitive bill by stating, ". . . there's so many new and increasing and alarming numbers on violent crime among teenagers. . . We need to provide a change, a repair in a broken juvenile justice system in this nation we have one out of every five violent crimes in America being committed by those under 18 years of age..." [not mentioning that 4 out of 5 are therefore over 18, but are not also a superpredator age group].

4. In California, prior to Prop 21, it was legally possible to try a 14-year-old as an adult, but on a judge's recommendation, whereas after Prop. 21 this is at the recommendation of prosecutors.

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**"EVERYBODY IS THEIR ENEMY":
GOTHS, SPOOKY KIDS, AND THE AMERICAN
SCHOOL SHOOTING PANIC
ALLEN BERRES**

One of the earliest details to leak out about Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold following their horrifying shooting spree at Columbine High School was that they were supposedly members of a clique that called itself "The Trench Coat Mafia." This name was readily snapped up by the journalists covering the story, and by the evening following the shootings, numerous news organizations were running pieces about this group in an attempt to shed greater light on the reasons why Harris and Klebold killed thirteen people and themselves. Although the Trench Coat Mafia clique was confined to Columbine High School, journalists quickly pointed out many supposed links between this clique and two larger music fan cultures whose members occasionally wear black trench coats that are found in almost every American high school: goths and Marilyn Manson fans. A wave of anti-goth, anti-Marilyn Manson sentiment immediately followed this over-hasty association, motivated by the overwhelming fear that any member of these black-clad legions could turn out to be the next school shooter.

The label "goth" (an abbreviation of "gothic") was adopted by a culture of music fans that started in the late 70s and early 80s as an offshoot of punk. Goths are fans of a variety of generally gloomy bands, including the Sisters of Mercy, Bauhaus, Siouxsie and the Banshees, and the Cure. They are also known for favoring black clothing, ranging from lacy gowns to biker jackets to band t-shirts. One of the bands that is occasionally included in the list of goth musical acts is a band named Marilyn Manson. Marilyn Manson is led by a front man of the same name, an Ohio native originally named Brian Warner. Manson has received more radio and MTV exposure in the 90s than any other goth-associated act, and as such he has spawned a horde of young devotees who are not yet aware of the wider range of gothic music. Manson fans, sometimes called Spooky Kids after the original name of the band, Marilyn Manson and the Spooky Kids, also often wear black. Some goths are Marilyn Manson fans (this researcher included), but many goths despise Manson for his popularity, and many young Manson fans will stop listening to Manson and follow some other musical fad in a year or so without ever expanding their tastes to other goth musicians. In fact, as of the publication of this paper Marilyn Manson's status as the bad boy of MTV seems to have been usurped by the rapper Eminem; Manson's third album, released in 2000, produced only two MTV-

broadcast videos; the first video was only in rotation for a few weeks, and the second has been nearly invisible.

Although the Trench Coat Mafia apparently included some students who were Marilyn Manson fans, Klebold and Harris were fringe members of the group at best. According to Dave Cullen of Salon.com, they did not like Manson's music or image, and there has been absolutely no credible evidence to the contrary (Cullen 4). There is also no evidence that they were members of the goth scene; the closest connection is that the two were fans of industrial music, a genre that has a lot of fan crossover with goths, especially the German bands KMFDM and Rammstein. It has been cynically noted by many commentators (including Marilyn Manson himself) that Mr. Manson (and, by extension, the goth scene that he is often wrongly equated with) became the center of the post-Littleton controversy only because of his previously established controversial reputation (he was a favorite target of former vice-presidential candidate Joe Lieberman and his conservative cohort William Bennett) and the extensive conservative Christian protests against his concerts. These later revelations, however, were no help in preventing the anti-goth media panic over the days immediately following the shootings.

Two news articles which were published on April 21, 1999, initiated the association of the Trench Coat Mafia with goth culture. One, "Trench Coat' Mafia Spun Dark Fantasy," appeared the *Washington Post* and was written by Marc Fisher. It maintained that

The shooters who turned Columbine High School into an unspeakable landscape of carnage yesterday were members of a small clique of outcasts who always wore black trench coats and spent their entire adolescence deep inside the morose subculture of Gothic fantasy. (Fisher 1)

Fisher goes on to explain that

Black trench coats are a consistent theme in the Gothic subculture that has attracted many teenagers to the poetry, music, and costumes of a scene that ranges from benign fantasy to violent reality. Inspired by fantasy games such as *Dungeons and Dragons*, Gothic has become a fascination of many American high schoolers, some of whom simply dress and paint their fingernails black while others immerse themselves in a pseudo-medieval world of dark images. (Fisher 1)

We can see a number of propositions here that remained prominent throughout the post-Columbine goth panic: 1) All goths are teenagers, 2) All goths are prone to confusing fantasy and reality, and 3) Their immersion in dark images has a strong potential to lead goths to participation in murder

sprees. Fisher, apparently inspired by reports of the killers' fascination with German fascism, also associates goths with neo-Nazis, noting that "Yesterday [the 20th] was Hitler's birthday, an occasion for demonstrations, mock funerals, and other macabre celebrations among both neo-Nazis and parts of the Gothic scene" (Fisher 1). In my six years of involvement in goth culture, I have never heard anything about Hitler's birthday celebrations; where Mr. Fisher got his information is anybody's guess, as he does not cite a source,

The second article, "Opinions Run Gamut on Suspects Among Neighbors, Friends," by Jim Hughes, is from the *Denver Post*. Hughes states that a classmate of the boys

said Klebold adopted the "goth" –short for Gothic—appearance in the past year, wearing black clothing and growing out his once-short hair. The "goth" scene draws from satanic worship and medieval Europe [*sic*] barbarism. (Hughes 17)

In Hughes' article we see the first post-Columbine association of goths (and Klebold and Harris) with satanism. This accusation had an extremely long life prior to Columbine; it is primarily due to the fact that goths wear black clothing, which is also supposedly the favored color of witches and satanists. While there are satanist goths and gothic satanists, the two identities are by no means synonymous. Hughes also seems to confuse our modern goths with Goths, such as the Ostrogoths or Visigoths, the tribes of barbarians active at the time of the fall of Rome (for a full discussion of the evolution of the modern use of "gothic," ask any scholar familiar with the development of the gothic novel). In any event, Hughes' picture of the latest barbarians at our gates associates goths with violence, ignorance, and, in a vein followed by many other commentators, the fall of civilization.

A third news article completed the foundation of the anti-goth narrative; it was a segment on the television news show *20/20*, broadcast on the evening of the 21st. This segment, rich in Marilyn Manson concert footage, featured a police officer from the Denver Police Department named Steve Rickard. The segment introduces Rickard as follows:

. . . for the last seven years, Steve Rickard of the Denver Police Department gang unit has been trying to spread the word of how the so-called Gothic Movement has helped fuel a new kind of teenage gang - white suburban gangs built around a fascination with the grotesque and with death. (Ross)

Brian Ross, the segment's reporter, claims that "There have been a series

of violent episodes around the country linked to teenagers who call themselves Goths" (Ross). Rickard portrays goths as a new, even scarier form of gang:

With traditional gangs, their enemies are pretty well-defined. With suburban groups, their enemies are not defined. I think everybody is their enemy. . . . anybody who would get in their way, I think they would potentially kill. (Ross)

In this scheme, the goth is even scarier than the usual (ethnic) gang member in that they could attack and kill anyone, presumably even white kids who are apparently minding their own business.

In an apparent attempt to be fair, Ross states that "For most Goths, it's just an act, but apparently not for all" (Ross), and Rickard notes that "All Gothic young people are not the same. There's the Gothic scene where kids are just dressing the part, listening to the music" (Ross). "Just an act" and "just dressing the part" imply that the goth identity is essentially a violent one or that the goth is intentionally dressing to intimidate or threaten outsiders. According to this logic, dressing like a goth or listening to gothic music and then not engaging in violent or hateful behavior is thus a shallow act, devoid of its original meaning: a goth is either a murderer or a poseur.

On the April 22, the *Denver Post* ran an article documenting various threats made against goths in the Denver area. The article features a doctoral student at the University of Denver, Derek Sweet, who is quoted as stating that his research on goths indicates

They're not violent. They're not racist. They're not into this whole hate mentality. . . . These are not people who are out looking for trouble. They're just looking for a place to hang out and have fun. . . . But now this group is really scared. And they are angry that they're being alienated and attacked once more just for being different. (Briggs and Greene 11)

Although most of the article defends goths from the threats being made against them, the article ends, however, on a much more sinister note, quoting Yvonne Peterson, a San Antonio nurse: "I don't think the gothic movement created this situation at the school. But. I do think that the gothic movement can give teachers in the future some tips. These kids are in trouble. . . . They're looking for attention" (Briggs and Greene 11). In other words, even if goths aren't murderous, they are mentally ill and a threat to themselves.

The strongest example of this anti-goth attitude can be found in articles consulting or written by anti-Satanist Carl Raschke immediately fol-

lowing the shooting. With only the sketchy information about Klebold and Harris that was available following the first few days of media coverage, Raschke concludes the Klebold and Harris were part of the youth Satanist movement that he has been writing about since the early nineties. In an editorial piece he wrote, published in the *Rocky Mountain News* on April 25, Raschke maintains that the Columbine attack was "carefully planned and superbly executed terrorist violence" and goes on to explain that

These types of disquieting adolescents have been a routine item in suburban high schools and urban dance clubs since the early 1980s. They have gone by diverse and sundry names - punks, stoners, metalheads, skinheads, headbangers and, now, "goths." They are the minions of a flourishing youth anti-culture, which from year to year, concert to concert and album to album finds novel and creative ways of celebrating the emblems of apocalyptic violence and trashing minimal standards of human decency. They think of it as fashion, if not "art." "Revolutionary" art. They aim to frighten and to shock. (Raschke 1B)

In Raschke's view, goths and Marilyn Manson fans set out to "frighten and shock" the moral and decent world, and as such they are terrorists just as much as Klebold and Harris were terrorists; he bitterly claims that Columbine administrators ignored the "obvious" threat posed by the Trench Coat Mafia because had they acted, "they would be branded by various educated apologists for teenage excess as too authoritarian and intolerant of those who opt for 'alternative lifestyles'" (Raschke 1B).

It is not too difficult to see Raschke's plan for preventing future school shootings in this complaint: make the "misfits" conform to mainstream conceptions of normalcy. They are not protected by free speech or any other protections because they are supposedly using their freedoms only to oppress, threaten, and harass normal people. Showing sympathy towards goths or excusing them as troubled or mentally ill just perpetuates the problem; Raschke declares that

We are so mesmerized by the saccharine rhetoric of the "human services" professions, which has convinced us there is always an excuse for someone's outrageous criminal behavior, that we can't imagine a set of circumstances when someone is self-conscious about what they are doing and, as Saint Paul once put it, without excuse. (Raschke 1B)

In this scheme, even those whom Ross and his informant Rickard would regard as harmless poseurs or Yvonne Peterson would classify as mentally ill and needing therapy are an "anti-culture," deadly threats to social order and civilization itself.

A plausible explanation for the widespread insistence on goths as a convenient explanation for the school shooting crisis is offered by Robert Snyder in an essay for *Anthropology News*:

The typical narrative for suburban teens might thus go as follows. One should grow up to be a good student, athletic, monetarily care free (in a dual income household), religious and bound [or college. Suburban, middle-class teenage "massacre" does not fit the traditional narrative that has been socialized into North American society. The Littleton massacre is a prime example of media attention to an event that does not follow a "traditional" social narrative. . . . High tech video games, sci-fi movies and Goth subculture are created as the primary social pressures that corrupt middle-class suburban teenagers. (Snyder II)

This "corruption through invasion" metaphor is prominent in Carl Raschke's work, but there are other examples as well. In June 1999, the conservative publication *The New American* ran an article referring to "Manson's anti-hero acolytes Harris and Klebold," describing Marilyn Manson as "an androgynous creature who works at being as repulsive as possible (and succeeds wildly!) [parenthetical aside in original]" whose "music" revels in nihilistic rebellion, rage, alienation, death, and despair" (Jasper). The article goes on to comment that "the Columbine killers and their fellow teen sociopaths imbibed deeply of the toxic waste that courses through the culture of death now engulfing our whole society"; this "toxic waste" has filled "the God-shaped vacuum" created by "the militant secularists of academe, the decadent culture vultures of Hollywood, and the left-wing activists in the courts and legislatures" (Jasper). Manson, at the head of a phantom army of drooling, psychotic fans, serves here as a powerful symbol of an invading force that is the ultimate cause of everything that is wrong with the United States.

Another call for action against the goth menace is *She Said Yes*, the story of the supposed martyrdom of Cassie Bernall, one of Klebold and Harris' victims, as written by her mother, Misty Bernall. It was widely believed following the shooting that one of the shooters had approached Cassie and asked her if she believed in God; she was said to have said yes, and that is when she was killed. The way Misty tells it, Cassie was a basically good child until she fell in with an ill-behaved, black-wearing, pink-haired friend named Mona (a pseudonym) in her early high school years. One of the key signs that Misty and her husband, Brad, focused on as an indication of trouble was the music that Cassie and Mona were listening to:

I don't know exactly when it was, but at some point Brad began examining some of Cassie's music and realized that it wasn't "just" entertain-

ment. Despite the innocuous covers, the lyrics themselves often carried an unmistakable message. (Bernall 45)

Misty then includes a brief sample of lyrics from one of Marilyn Manson's songs, claiming that the group was "a favorite of the two boys at Columbine who killed [Cassie]." The quoted song is "Get Your Gunn," the two n's on "Gunn" referring to a murdered abortion doctor, David Gunn (Manson). Misty misquotes the song's lyrics, however, transforming the song's refrain from "get your gunn" (as indicated clearly in the album's liner notes and on any internet listing of the song's lyrics) to "get your gun" (Bernall 45). With a slight misrepresentation of its lyrics, the song is transformed from an ironic commentary on a murder committed by pro-life zealots into an apparent endorsement of gun violence.

The possibility that Cassie and Mona posed an immanent danger to Brad and Misty's lives is confirmed for Misty when she discovers a series of letters from Mona that Cassie was hiding in her room:

There was endless talk about the "sexiness" of black clothes and makeup, the "fun" of contraband alcohol, marijuana, and self-mutilation, and the adventures of a classmate whose girlfriend went to "this satanic church, cult thing where you have to drink a kitten's blood to get in." Several of the letters advised Cassie to do away with us and thus solve her innumerable problems. One ended, "Kill your parents! Murder is the answer to all of your problems. Make those scumbags pay for your suffering. Love you, me." (Bernall 38-9)

Misty and Brad see these letters as a sure sign that Cassie is up to no good, and they report the children to the police. At a meeting with a police detective and the Bernalls, Mona's parents don't see what the big problem is. Misty reports that Mona's mother "could not understand why we had the need to bring [the letters] to the attention of the law, or to involve her husband in the matter," but that

Thankfully the detective and the investigator took the situation as seriously as we did, and supported our desire for a restraining order to bar Mona from further contact from Cassie. Among other things, the sheriff told Mona's parents that the letters were the worst he had seen during more than a decade in juvenile crime, and he warned them that if Mona had had any sort of prior record, she would have been called before a judge. Still they showed no surprise or remorse. (Bernall 52-3)

The narrative we see developing here is one insisting on parental authority, specifically that Misty and Brad Bernall were right in splitting up Mona and Cassie's friendship. Mona's parents are presented as gullible, over

indulgent monsters; Misty reports that she was traumatized by their behavior, claiming

I can still feel their cold, level stares. Nor will I forget how Mona's mother walked her back to their car after our meeting, rubbing her shoulder and reassuring her, as if to say "Oh, honey, it's okay, the Bernalls are just mean people." (Bernall 52)

The proof that the Bernalls acted appropriately comes in the actions of other black-clad trouble children. Although Mona is never referred to again after her exorcism from Cassie's life, Misty mentions a case in 1997 when a fourteen-year-old from a nearby suburb "said he was going to kill his parents" and then subsequently stabbed his father the next day. Misty notes that "After the stabbing, satanic carvings and other Goth trappings were discovered in the boy's bedroom" (Bernall 61). She maintains that "In a time when supposedly peaceful middle-class suburbs like ours are breeding children capable of such things, you begin to realize that talk is never just talk" (Bernall 61).

The ultimate proof that the Bernalls acted in Cassie's best interests is that Cassie was a devout, genuine born-again Christian by the time she was killed at Columbine High School by the very type of black-wearing, Marilyn Manson-listening, murderous freaks that she could have ended up being. This is demonstrated when Misty sympathizes with the Klebolds and Harrises after she receives an apology letter from the Klebolds:

Even if Cassie were still alive, we would be able to understand their hurt and humiliation. Before she changed directions, we agonized over her in the same way the parents of her killer surely agonize over him now. And even if we could never compare the weight of our separate griefs, we have at least one comfort: the knowledge that our daughter died nobly. What balm do they have? (Bernall 131)

Misty Bernall's message to parents is that they must intervene when children rebel; even a minor rebellion or demonstration of a warning sign can have life or death consequences.

The overt anti-goth panic has largely disappeared now, more than two years after the Columbine shootings. A series of pro- (or at least not anti-) goth news articles that followed the anti-goth articles discussed here was partially responsible for the shift, and it didn't hurt matters that the media, for the most part, decided that the gun control issue was going to be their primary target issue. With this in mind, however, the image of the immanent threat posed by the gothic rebel child still retains its power in the discussion of school safety. A particularly vivid example appeared in April

2001 in an AP article by Dan Elliott, "Columbine Killers Icons to Some." Although most of the article discusses Klebold and Harris's appeal to generic "angry, disaffected youth," James Gerbarino, author of *Lost Boys: Why Our Sons Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them* is quoted as saying,

Thirty-five years ago, if a kid walked into your school with body piercing and black makeup, almost certainly somebody would say, "We've got to find out what's troubling this kid. . . . Adolescent culture has taken on this foray into the dark side. For troubled kids, this feeds their trouble. (Elliott)

Here we see the use of the goth as a potent visual metaphor; even though neither Klebold or Harris, or any other school shooter to date, fit the description above, the personal style of the goth is still specifically invoked as a symbol of sociological and psychological dysfunction and, simultaneously, as a sort of supernatural evil, as using the phrase "the dark side" inevitably conjures up both Darth Vader of the *Star Wars* trilogy and legends of satanic worship.

With the latest bout of school shootings following the shooting at Santee High School in California, however, most of the media's focus has shifted to a call for greater surveillance to spot potential troublemakers. A series of researchers have tried to create a typical profile of the school shooter, much in the same way that profiling is used to pursue serial killers. These profilers, especially profilers working for the Secret Service and FBI, appear to be very careful about dismantling certain stereotypes about serial killers, among them the anti-goth concerns discussed here. For example, a paper written jointly by members of the Secret Service and the Department of Education for a 2001 issue of *Psychology in the Schools* states:

Decision makers who rely on characteristics that appear to be more typical or representative of the category, to determine whether an object belongs in that category, may inadvertently render faulty decisions. . . . For example, a school administrator who believes she should be concerned about a particular student because the student wears a black trench coat similar to the ones worn by the shooters at Columbine High School would be relying inappropriately on such information to determine risk. (Reddy et. al. 163)

While this article points out that while a student's making threats should be taken seriously, it also maintains that a student making a threat is not always going to become a school shooter (Reddy, et. al. 168). Since

the Santee shooting, however, threats issued by students are popularly believed to be an accurate indicator of potential trouble. An AP article written by Greg Toppo, for example, ends with the following passage:

John Kotnour, a police officer with the Overland Park, Kan., police department, works in Shawnee Mission South High School. He said his job often makes him feel like "a small-town sheriff." The most effective deterrent to school violence, he said, is a staff that makes students feel comfortable sharing their fears. "Most of the people here at South don't want the liability of letting a rumor go unchecked," he said. Among the most important conversations he has with students and teachers, he said, are those that begin with these five words: "This may be nothing, but. . ." [ellipses in original]. (Toppo)

Among school administrators and local law enforcement, the fear of being held legally responsible for a school shooting because a threat was not taken seriously is very strong, and also very understandable, given the lawsuits filed after the Columbine shooting against Columbine High School and the Jefferson County Sheriff. In such an environment of fear, the caution advised by the federal authorities is likely to be abandoned in the same way that local authorities ignored national, official skepticism regarding satanic crime in the 1980s and 1990s (as documented in Jeffrey Victor's *Satanic Panic*, among other sources). As such, I am reluctant to declare the goth panic dead; as demonstrated by the previous examples, the anti-goth panic immediately following the Littleton shooting is probably best understood as part of a larger move to cement parental control over adolescents and over society in general. It is likely that as long as there are goths, anti-goth sentiment will continue.

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A FEAR OF ADOLESCENT CRUISING: ADULT REACTIONS
TO A TRADITION THAT WON'T GO AWAY
CHARLIE MCCORMICK

Growing up in Snyder, Texas, my friends and I spent our Friday and Saturday nights cruising—what we referred to as "making the drag." We drove down College Avenue-Snyder's main strip, turning around in the Bar-H-Bar parking lot on one end of our circuit and at the Sonic Drive-In on the other end. Were I able to go back and interview myself as I was then, I think I would describe those hours I spent on the drag as being "really cool." Whatever the phrase lacks in articulateness, its connotation is unmistakable. Cruising was important to me. It was important for lots of reasons but especially because of how it changed me: it made me feel tougher while I was out there commanding a few thousand pounds of metal to drive me around; it made me feel older than my years sneaking smokes and sipping beer from a can; it made me feel like I had sexual potential as me and my car full of male friends imagined—incorrectly as it turned out that the young women out cruising found us desirable and sexy; and it made me feel connected to something larger than myself since I knew from hearing them recount their own experiences on College Avenue that my older sisters, cousins, and parents had made the drag when they were in high school. "Really cool," indeed.

These days, my interests in cruising are much less experiential than they are intellectual, but I still find cruising "pretty cool." Apparently, some towns and cities across the U.S. do too since cruising remains as traditional today as it has been for the last fifty years in these places. I have been surprised, however, to find that in an increasing majority of locales around the nation, this folk performance has come to be regarded by many adults as the scourge of their community.¹ I explain these differing adult perceptions of adolescent cruising by arguing that as adolescent cruising—one of the traditional and informal performances of white middleclass adolescents due to its socialization and enculturation potential (McCormick)—became appropriated by those outside the target audience (i.e. ethnic minorities and those presumed to be in the lower class) its legitimacy was attacked. Therefore, when cruising the mall emerged as a new means of facilitating socio-cultural reproduction among middle-class adolescents, many communities had voices calling for the criminalization of the performance and its performers. Ultimately, then, these differing perceptions of adolescent cruising—as traditional activity and as criminal activity—have much less to do with the performance's changing nature and much more to do with the fear of middle-class adults that they will be

unable to make the adolescents for which they are responsible grow up to be middle-class adults.

In explanation of this position, let me briefly sketch the relevant data in this case a sequence of events which traces the development of adolescent cruising on the strip—on which I base my argument.² Cruising's golden days began in the mid-1950s due—in large part—to the entertainment industry's strategic use of the hot rod culture as a marketing tool. A flood of movies like *Rebel Without a Cause*, *Drag Strip Girl*, *Hot Rod Gang*, and *Ghost of Drag Strip Hollow*; songs like *I Get Around*, *Little Old Lady from Pasadena*, *Little Deuce Coupe*, and *Mustang Sally*; and even texts like the *Hot Rod Happy* comic strips all exploited the taboo of the hot rod culture in the hopes of attracting a newly emerging and potentially powerful market segment: baby boom teenagers. In doing so, the idea of a tripartite performance of adolescents, automobiles, and commercial strip was aggressively marketed to these teenagers. It became so attractive, in fact, that by the mid-1960s adolescent cruising on the commercial strip had become an increasingly traditional way for adolescents to spend some of their non-institutional time. By about 1975 (though I don't mean for any of these dates to be precise, they're meant to be touchstones which give the historical sequence a rough placement in time³), adolescent cruising on the commercial strip began to be transformed. The oil embargo and the rise of the regional shopping mall were two economic reasons for this transformation, but social and cultural forces—which I will address momentarily—were also at work. By 1985, the future of adolescent cruising on the commercial strip was no longer just in jeopardy, it was being actively dismantled in newspapers and local political meetings around the nation. None of this is to say that cruising is dead or dying, because it certainly isn't. In fact, adolescent cruising was reborn in the shopping mall. Interestingly, cruising the mall seems to have followed the same sort of development as cruising on the commercial strip. It was accepted by the middle-class—if not eagerly than at least willing—as an appropriate way and place for their teens to hang out, it was traditionalized, and very recently, cruising the mall has begun to show signs of having its legitimacy challenged by voices in the local community.

Given this data, adolescent cruising on the strip appears to have developed unidirectionally through time. In fact, letters, editorials, and articles in newspapers from around the country seem to indicate that, in today's performance of adolescent cruising on the commercial strip, kids hurt each other—even kill each other—and property is damaged. The seemingly level-headed response to these charges would be to keep adolescent cruising from occurring. But the level-headedness of this response can be challenged by correlating the perception of cruising's increasingly dark

menace with its shifting demographics: from a performance which was controlled primarily by white, middle-class adolescents to a performance which is increasingly being adopted by those outside the white middleclass. Examining cruising's receptions in their historical context suggests that as adolescent cruising becomes increasingly performed by those outside the white middle-class, the white middle-class apparently finds adolescent cruising less effective at reproducing its target population, and it therefore has no reason to perpetuate the performance.

Make no mistake, I understand that it seems like I am, at best, making an argument that is purely academic or, at worst, naive. Cruising, after all, has been and is the venue for fearful activities: assault, rape, homicide, drug abuse, and property damage. This is all well documented (if, I believe, exaggerated in terms of its epidemic proportions and endemic nature). But my reading of the performance suggests that cruising has always had the specter of menace hovering around it.⁴ The significance of this menace—whether it is seen as pranksterism or as criminal—I believe, is contingent on whether or not the performance is perceived as achieving its reproductive potential.

In Paul Lyons' book, *Class of '66*, the perception of white, middle-class adolescent menace as pranksterism in a white, middle-class town in New Jersey is evident. He reports these memories from a middle-age, middle-class informant:

"We hung the assistant principal in effigy the first week he was at school. . . . He was a real nice guy, Mr. Turner; it was just that we disliked the idea of having an assistant principal. About two weeks after he arrived, we passed the word that we were packing guns, and within two or three days, they did a complete search of the whole school building—we didn't have any guns." Dave, roaring with laughter, tells of boyish pranks: "We did a mock shooting on the steps of the local diner. Davy Hunter had a '57 Chevy; he pulled up in front of the diner and got out, and we had these cap guns, but they were real loud; [Davy] pulled it out, pulled up in front of the diner, shot this guy on the steps, ketchup packets all over, picked him up off the steps—this was Saturday night, busiest night of the week," he interjects, "threw him in the trunk of this car, and sped off. . . . we drove [the cops] crazy." (46)

Even more relevant to my argument, Howard and Barbara Myerhoff reported on the way in which the menace of adolescent cruising—menace as pranksterism—was handled by the authorities in early 1960s California. They wrote that

[t]here is a mischievous, often amusing overtone to all these incidents; they are not the kind likely to be malicious or violent. Rather, they are

spontaneous and gratuitous, proving nothing but providing "kicks." An incident was observed in which a boy was picked up for drinking and curfew violation. In the patrol car he expressed his concern lest the occasion jeopardize his chances for entering college. The officer, who had until that point been rather surly, hastened to reassure the boy that such a possibility was quite unlikely, and implied that nothing would come of the visit to the station. (285-86)

In these examples, the menace of adolescents—while frustrating to adults—is finally laughable—even capable of evoking nostalgic remembrance some-time later—because it appears to be developmental: it was simply what kids did when growing up. Therefore, adolescent menace was considered pranksterism rather than criminal behavior.

Today, however, cruising and the menace which surrounds it is not viewed as pranksterism; instead, it is perceived as a much darker and more dangerous sort of threat. Adolescent cruising on Salt Lake City's State Street provides an example of adolescent cruising having its menace transformed into criminal behavior. Reporter Rebecca Walsh described the cruising on State Street in 1999 as

a night club on asphalt. Site of a mating dance of sorts, punctuated by stops for drinks at the Chevron, where tailing is flirting, and two drivers exchanging phone numbers can reduce traffic to gridlock. It's a social, at times violent, tradition Salt Lake City police want to end. Using two murders in two years as a catalyst, city police claim cruising State has spun out of control. Decades of harmless fun has taken on a sinister cast. ("Tracking taillights . . .")

Shortly after her report, the Salt Lake City City Council passed a ban on cruising State Street (Egan 1999: Online). Reading the newspaper accounts leading up to, during, and following the elimination of adolescent cruising on State Street, it becomes clear that the cruising menace which was once pranksterism had become criminalized. Assistant Police Chief Roy Wasden described his changing perception of the activity like this: "[Cruising has] changed a lot in 25 years. . . . There's just a lot more of everything: more traffic, more weapons, more violence" (Walsh, "Tracking taillights. . ."). Salt Lake City resident Don Steiner, in his public forum letter in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, supported this position as well. He asserts that State Street cruising "was not American Graffiti, where cute little kids honk at each other for attention; it had become a continual crime scene on weekends. I applaud Salt Lake City for its efforts to make State Street once again safe

for all citizens" (Steiner). Because of cruising's transformation into a criminal menace, it seemed self-evident that the performance had to be abolished. Therefore, when Salt Lake City decriminalized many traffic violations, it left cruising State Street—along with drunken driving, excessive speeding, and reckless driving—"a more serious criminal offense" (Kennedy).

The logic of cruising's criminalization, however, has been challenged by individuals who fear that criminalizing cruising only *appears* to be an appropriate response to cruising's menace. In Salt Lake City, it was among others—ACLU Legal Director Stephen Clark who urged City Council members to proceed cautiously with criminalizing cruising. He argued, "I'm very concerned about how the cruising ordinance will be implemented and enforced. It's one more opportunity for people who are marginalized in our community to be targeted and harassed" (Walsh "New SLC Law . . ."). And in Denver, for instance, it was Hispanic voices who noted in an article in *La Voz* that "[w]hat the media failed to see, but what was clearly evident to anyone on Federal [Street] over the weekend, was in its so-called 'random' stopping of vehicles, the DPD [Denver Police Department] systematically pulled over and impounded vehicles driven by people who were young and brown or who displayed Mexican flags. Anglos drove by untouched" ("Crusade for Justice. . .").

These voices of dissent argue that it seems to be part of human nature to fear that which is different and that is what is driving the criminalization of cruising. Researcher Doreen Massey concurs with the general principle: "Attempts to forbid behaviour which is different have always been part of the armoury of those who insist on establishing their own behaviour as 'normal' and 'natural', and therefore by some leap of logic to be conformed to by everyone" (127). The implication would be, then, that if cruising's performers were homogeneous they would not elicit the same sort of fear that a heterogeneous group of cruising performers would. According to this reasoning, cruising should have been much more homogenous when its menace evoked, at best, frustration than it is now when its menace evokes fear. James Bradley's 1971 master's thesis in sociology on a relatively unthreatening performance of adolescent cruising in San Leandro, California, seems to confirm this condition. In San Leandro, for instance, there were "few Mexican-Americans" (51) and no Blacks (49-50) who cruised. In other words, a lack of difference correlated with a lack of threatening menace. According to this theory, then, as cruising becomes a more diverse activity (as it had on Salt Lake City's State Street), fears would begin to surface. Tim Lucas unpacks the process through which the white middle-class fear of cruising becomes a public policy which criminalizes cruising. First, he argues, the word "gang" becomes confused

with "race" (146-47). Next, the media creates a moral panic around "gangs" (that is, "minority youth") so as to titillate an audience which assumes it is being informed (152). Finally, Lucas argues that this moral panic leads to the "terrifying visions of white suburbanites. . . of the migration of drive-by-shooting gangbangers in South-Central (LA) to the more prosperous (white) peripheral neighbourhoods" (152). To stop this migration, cruising becomes outlawed.

Compelling as this explanation of the adult fear of cruising which is characterized by its difference is at first glance, cruising seems less about the performance of difference than it is about different people coming together to perform the same thing. In fact, cruising is arguably much more about assimilation than differentiation. Certainly, there are good reasons for those adolescents outside the white middle-class to want to participate not only in cruising but in all sorts of middle-class leisure activities. As Regina Austin argues in an article on governmental restraints on black leisure in *Southern California Law Review*, the appropriation of middle-class leisure spaces and practices results in the creation of "real and symbolic capital" by those non-middle-class adolescents who appropriate them.

But assuming assimilation is trying to be achieved, the question remains why adults—and white, middle-class adults in particular—would criminalize cruising if difference was not heightened but diminished during the performance. Barbara Ehrenreich suggests an answer when she argues that the middle-class (she claims an interest in the "professional" middle-class alone, but I think her argument applies to a greater or a lesser extent to the middle-class generally) is not concerned with those who are different per se but about losing its own status. She writes that the middleclass is "insecure and deeply anxious. . . . It is afraid, like any class below the most securely wealthy, of misfortunes that might lead to a downward slide. . . . Whether the middle class looks down towards the realm of less, or up toward the realm of more, there is the fear, always, of falling" (15). If cruising is one of the traditional mechanisms for reproducing middle-class behaviors and values, then when this mechanism runs the risk of becoming either "clogged" by too many users or too effective at moving others into the middle-class (which results in either kicking others out or limiting the participation of all those involved), the mechanism itself comes under attack. Don Merten offers a brilliant case study of how this process is initiated when a burnout becomes a cheerleader. He argues that

having a burnout as a cheerleader was so problematic. . . . [because] it violated an implicit assumption that the hierarchies of status categories and activities were congruent. But at a far more fundamental level, sta-

tus categories and activities not only identified types of people but also separated types of people. Since status categories and activities were expected to be hierarchically congruent, people who were near the bottom of the status hierarchy were not supposed to be in high-prestige activities. Having a burnout as a cheerleader was not just an isolated violation of this expectation but rather, like a taboo violation, threatened the integrity of these two categorical systems and their assumed congruence. . . . In other words, if a burnout could be a cheerleader, was there any limit as to what could happen; were any expectations valid? (65)

Likewise, when cruising became perceived as inefficiently socializing and enculturating middle-class adolescents, it became feared, criminalized, and dismantled.

Still, though, the need to socialize and enculturate middle-class adolescents remained; therefore, new mechanisms were constructed to achieve these ends. Enter cruising the shopping mall, a landscape which serves as an escape from and defense against intrusions from outsiders—just as the commercial strip once did. I suspect that the recent challenge to cruising the mall's legitimacy as a middle-class leisure activity is a result of middleclass fears over the efficacy of the performance's ability to reproduce middle-class values and behaviors within the target population.

Given what I've learned about adolescent cruising, I don't think this will be the blow that finally destroys the performance. As much as middle-class adults fear cruising's menace, they also seem to fear the loss of its reproductive potential. Cruising, after all, changes people. I know that from personal experience. This is precisely why middle-class adults have a love/hate relationship with the performance. And because of the power in this traditional performance, people change cruising.

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NOTES

1. For example, I was surprised to find that in Abilene, Texas—my fieldsite—cruising has begun to come under attack. This, in fact, was what originally caused me to look to other attacks on cruising around the nation so as to understand the motivations for this attack.

2. This is not to suggest that cruising exists as some sort of transcendent, universal (or national) tradition. Rather, adolescent cruising is always localized from popular culture representations even as these localizations build the popular culture representations. This does not, however, preclude me from making general statements about the phenomenon.

3. For example, in my fieldsite of Abilene, Texas, it is only now—in the late 1990s—that this transformation to the tradition of adolescent cruising is becom-

ing manifest in the local government as it considers whether to enact adolescent curfews on the weekend.

4. This inherent menace is a result, at least in part, of the inherent menace in adolescent themselves. As ambiguous figures, adolescents pose a threat to the normative order, and their activities—however tame they may actually be—have at least the specter of this menace hovering around them.

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REDWOOD GROVE: YOUTH CULTURE IN A GROUP HOME

JESSE GELWICKS

On a shady street in a California Central Valley college town stands a tan and brown two-story house. Out in front of the carport rises a low basketball hoop; beside it lies a square of scruffy grass. Scattered around the house are the signs of children: a basketball, a bicycle helmet, some candy wrappers and a well-worn skateboard. Two boys aggressively bounce a ball back and forth while two others stand nearby. The ball skids past the legs of one boy, causing a boy in line to shout, "He's smokin' your butt like cheese macaroni," which sends all but one of the boys into shrieks of laughter. The first boy in line replaces the boy who missed the ball and the game continues. Unlike similar driveway games going on around the neighborhood, this game is not played in front of a family home. These boys, whose names I have changed to protect their anonymity, live in a group home I will call Redwood Grove.

From fall of 1999 through the spring of 2000, I worked part-time at Redwood Grove. The following summer I increased my hours to full-time. As a staff member I cooked and served the boys meals, helped them with their homework, read to them, took them to the park, and played with them. I also enforced rules, gave "time-outs," and occasionally restrained them. My role as researcher was secondary to my role as a caretaker; therefore, I could not be a completely neutral observer. Most likely I could never escape the relationship of staff to ward. On the other hand, the boys knew I cared for them, and they grew to trust me. I was a part of the staff/ward hierarchy; however, my familiarity with the boys enabled me to see their everyday lives and behavior, as opposed to the behavior the boys presented to visitors.

This ethnography examines the seven boys who lived in the group home over the course of eleven months (during which time one boy left and another filled his slot). The number of participants in the study limits my ability to make major generalizations about children's lives in group homes. On the other hand, the small number of subjects allowed for informal and formal interviews and in-depth observations over the course of a year. My study builds on previous studies and research on children in institutions by psychologists and folklorists (see, for example: Polsky, Cohen and Eilersten, Horan, and Mechling).

In this paper, after a brief introduction to the group home and the rules and structure that govern it, I discuss the way behavior is charted and the way the staff imposes hierarchy. I then show that the boys in the group home constitute a folk group that creates a social hierarchy of its own in opposition to the one created and maintained by the staff. Then I

explore the various ways the boys construct frames and how their framed relationships create and maintain a social hierarchy. Following that section, I present two folk performances—storytelling and teasing—that the boys use for maintaining their hierarchy. Then I present two examples of the staff's influence on the folk culture.

In the second half of the paper I present a photography project in which I gave the boys the assignment of taking photographs of their important material possessions. I detail the process of taking the photographs and then situate the boys' photographs and perceptions of their material culture in the context of the group home culture and hierarchy.

This is a case study of male preadolescent and early adolescent folk culture. Perhaps because these boys live in a group home and must cope with an unusual, stressful living situation, they employ an intensified version of the ways children use folklore. Part of the lesson here is that boys sometimes try to use folklore and it fails. Those areas of failure are instructive. By looking at the successes and failures, adults have the opportunity to monitor the feelings and tensions the boys cannot express explicitly. Adults can learn about how boys see and react to the world around them and how that affects their male friendship group hierarchies.

REDWOOD GROVE

Redwood Grove is one of two houses run by a small nonprofit organization that operates group homes for children between the ages of eight and thirteen. The six boys at Redwood Grove were placed there by the California juvenile court because their parents used drugs or because the boys were abusive sexually, physically, or emotionally (the abuse often accompanies the drug use). Some of the boys were born with drugs in their systems. Four of them took daily behavior modifying medication. All were first put into foster care, which did not last because of behavior problems.

The facility was designed as a Level 11 group home. The level of the group home indicates the degree of supervision and structure provided for the children—the levels range from 8 to 15, with the highest being the most heavily structured and supervised. This group home aims to put structure into the boys' lives by regulating their behavior, providing constant supervision, making sure they have regular meals and snacks, and giving them group and individual counseling, all within a safe and supportive environment.

While psychologists such as William Pollack believe that many boys experience premature separation from their mothers, the boys at Redwood

Grove are the extreme cases; their emotional deficits are much greater than normal. The group home staff assists in repairing self-esteem and self-confidence. They attempt to curb the negative behaviors and self-hate, but because the group home is an institution with paid employees, not surrogate mothers, the boys must learn on their own as well. One way the boys deal with their past and present situations is through their folklore. From the games they play with each other and staff, to social hierarchies they create, to stories they tell about each other and staff, they are learning to cope with the psychological and social stresses in their lives.

Redwood Grove is similar to what Erving Goffman labels a "total institution," except that the boys are not completely shut off from the wider society. They go to public school, occasionally participate in city sports or recreation programs, and (depending on their behavior) go out in the town to buy toys, visit friends, or play in the park. Apart from school, all outside activities are opportunities that they must earn based on their behavior. Most of the time the boys are at Redwood Grove interacting with Redwood Grove staff and residents. Each day is tightly structured, "with one activity leading at a prearranged time into the next, the whole sequence of activities being imposed from above by a system of explicit formal rulings and a body of officials" (Goffman 6). The activities, from the type of education to counseling to daily interactions, are designed to meet behavior modification goals set for the boys.

Weekdays during the school year are the most heavily structured days. From the moment the staff wakes them, the boys follow a tightly scheduled routine posted in the hallway, including school, daily chores, tutoring, meals and bedtimes. They earn free time in the afternoon if they finish their homework. If they have been behaving well, they can play outside. After dinner, they have free time until it is time to take a shower and go to bed. Bedtime is determined by their level on the behavior chart. Those who are behaving well that week stay up later and, consequently, earn more free time.

Before coming to Redwood Grove the boys had little structure or stability in their lives, while at the same time they had limited control over their lives. In some cases they took care of younger siblings. In the group home, they have both structure and stability, but almost no control. "Children are an underclass perpetually in the one-down power position" and "nowhere is this more true than in the residential institutions established for children" (Mechling 273). Staff create and enforce the rules that the wards live by. The boys act out and rebel against the rules and the staff react accordingly.

POINTS AND PRIVILEGES

A central element in molding the boys' behavior is a behavior chart on which the staff keep track of the boys' privileges and the amount of supervision they require. At any time upon entering Redwood Grove, staff can immediately determine each boy's behavior by consulting the chart in the dining room. The boys' initials are printed in erasable pen next to their step and level, which correspond to certain privileges; the three most important deal with supervision, video game time, and bedtime.

The chart was devised as a series of incentives to entice the boys to try to follow the rules. The boys can move up or down the chart each day depending on their behavior. The staff record how they behave on a point sheet. The boys' behavior is constantly scrutinized. Almost everything they do, from peer interaction, to following directions, to going to bed on time, has a corresponding point value. If they do their daily chores, they earn three points. If they make their beds, they earn one point. If they have good peer interactions during dinner, they earn four points. When they go to school, they turn in a behavior log to the teacher, who fills out points, grading them on their school work, homework, classroom behavior, and recess behavior. If they talk back to staff or will not follow directions, they cannot earn all their points.

The boys are often scattered across the behavior chart, although they more regularly tend to occupy the bottom half. Occasionally, one boy will be a level or two above the rest and enjoying privileges and freedom the others are not. At other times, the boys are grouped together closely. The disparity between the boys' levels and privileges creates a hierarchy in the group. This staff-monitored hierarchy competes with another hierarchy, created by the boys, which is based on power rather than good behavior. Just because a boy behaves well does not mean that he has much influence over the other boys; in fact, they often resent his superior position.

The boys' social hierarchy works counter to the staff-monitored hierarchy, minimizing the privilege of a high position on the behavior chart. The group can exclude a boy high on the behavior chart or induce him to misbehave in hopes that he will be caught and brought down with the rest of the group. While the boys' hierarchy does not directly break the rules, it is part of what Mechling describes as the "folk offensive in the political struggle over 'whose institution is this, anyway?'" (Mechling 276).

The social hierarchy created by the boys structures the group home culture and frames the social interaction between boys. The boys develop the frames in their everyday interactions, such as playing games, arguing, sharing, teasing, excluding and including others. Their tacit understanding of frames and the manipulation of frames cannot be underestimated. While

they may not be able to articulate the behavior, they understand the subtle nuances and body language that send the metameessages such as "this is play" and "this is a competition that looks like play."

POGO AND CREATING FRAMES

One afternoon Jerod, age twelve, and I were outside playing Pogo, the boys' version of the classic schoolyard game Two-Square. Although the structure of the game was traditional, the boys' names for certain hits and rule variations identified Pogo as their own folkgame. After two games, Jerod asked if I wanted to keep score. Keeping score was a common device the boys used to transform a simple Two-Square game into a more complicated and competitive game in which each time one person got the other "out" they won a point. They played either to a set number or until one finally gave up. The boys could only keep score when nobody stood in line; otherwise, the line rotated in with each "out."

During the first game, Jerod "played on" for my benefit when I made a mistake, and in return I "played on" for his, thus establishing the frame of a friendly game. I tried to continue that frame by "playing on" some of his questionable "scizzards," the boys' name for a fast and low hit that almost skids across the ground. He did the same for me. At the same time we were playing hard, "scizzarding" and "babying," a common name for the smallest hits, all over the court. Our play established that, although this was a friendly game frame, it was also competitive. I won a couple of games and got ahead of Jerod. As our scores reached the "teens" (near game's end), Jerod stayed just two behind me. I tried to tone down my playing a bit, but he would not let me lose enough for him to catch up. We both played hard, but we also made stupid mistakes to let the other win. We played "the twenties" harder, and finally, Jerod pulled ahead when I said I would play only three more games.

I realized Jerod planned out the whole game. Jerod had let me win before, but never as cleverly as this. I thought I was playing in a particular frame that we had both established, but really Jerod was creating that frame and manipulating it as we played. He was playing this game to keep me playing as long as I would. He manipulated me through the frame, just as a con artist might hustle a sucker; only instead of money, all Jerod wanted was one-on-one attention.

Boys often connect with others through actions such as initiating a game with a boy with whom they want to become friends (Pollack 182). Jerod sought connection with the other boys and staff through Pogo. For a period of eight to nine months the boys played Pogo more than any other

game in the house. Jerod often initiated those games, asking another boy or staff to come outside with him after he finished his homework. Pogo provided a medium for interaction.

Jake, age eleven, approached Pogo differently than Jerod. Jake was extremely competitive. Jerod, who loved to play Pogo, would often try to adapt to whomever he was playing—to play at the same level of competitiveness. One afternoon Jake and Jerod were playing Pogo and Jake took more advantage of the rules concerning lines, "do-overs" and interference than did Jerod. Jake was quick to point out when Jerod's hit was out of bounds, and Jerod was willing to go along with that. Jerod did not mention when a ball should have been called "interference" or "out back boundary" or "liner" or any of the other ways the boys identified when they should "redo" the point. Jake manipulated the frame so that he was winning. Jerod manipulated the frame so Jake continued to play; Jerod's desire for connection superseded his desire to win.

Play involves a negotiation of frames, and games can be personal or impersonal, depending on the frame the players establish. In some cases, the play frame extends beyond the single game and is reflective of the players' relationship. In the example above, the game was situated in the middle of a restructuring of the boys' social hierarchy. Jake was vying for the opening position at the top the hierarchy as Joshua, age thirteen, was leaving. Jerod, who was older than Jake, did not make any strong attempts at that position. Similar to the way he played Pogo, Jerod took a less competitive approach to the social hierarchy. Through Pogo, Jerod developed methods of interaction he could use outside of the folkgame.

SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE: JOSHUA AND THOMAS

The boys maintained and challenged their socially constructed hierarchy every day in the way they interacted with each other. In turn, the hierarchy framed their interactions. As they stayed within the frames created by the hierarchy or reinforced those frames, the hierarchy's structure strengthened. In the following examples, the boys construct and maintain those frames through a series of interactions.

One Friday, all the boys, except for Thomas, age eleven, who was staying at the house due to his poor behavior, were in the van about to go to their weekly counseling group for victims. Before the van could pull out of the driveway, Thomas ran out to the van to try to join the group. Thomas and Joshua started exchanging words. Joshua, who was sitting in the front seat, lunged through the window with his fists clenched and screamed at Thomas that he was going to "kick his ass." Joshua knew that

he could not attack Thomas (the car door was in the way), but he could make a dramatic display by lunging out of the open window at Thomas yelling and waving his fists.

Joshua displayed his power and potential for violence in front of the other boys without risking much. He would lose peer interaction points and perhaps drop a level for threatening behavior, but he did not actually make contact with Thomas. Joshua was playing the role of the "tough guy" without actually having to prove it, a behavior characteristic of what Pollack describes as the "mask" of masculinity. Joshua's stylized performance of aggression may actually be "an invisible shield, a persona to show the outside world a feigned self confidence and bravado, and to hide the shame he felt at his feelings of vulnerability, powerlessness and isolation." (Pollack 5).

Joshua's display left the other boys to decide whether it was a bluff or he actually was that mean and vicious. Joshua framed the boys' relationship with him in terms of his own projected violence, thereby taking the dominant role in their future interactions. This frame would help Joshua maintain his position at the top of the social hierarchy, rewarding him for his masculine image.

THOMAS AND FRANCISCO

The week following Joshua's display of aggression, another incident of symbolic violence took place. On the way to group, Thomas, who was having yet another horrible day, provoked Francisco, age 10, into exchanging rapid insults. Before the van had left the home block, the name-calling had escalated to the point where Thomas was lunging at Francisco, who was sitting in the seat in front of him. I was sitting next to Thomas, so I easily held him back, just as the car door had held back Joshua.

The previous week's events made an impression on Thomas. He tried to recreate the dangerous and powerful image that Joshua had created without actual physical violence, just as Joshua had done. Thomas followed the same pattern by choosing a target lower on the social hierarchy than he and by choosing a time when he would be held back from actually making contact.

The stylized symbolic violence by Joshua and Thomas sent a message to the other boys about potential actual violence, as well as a message about the structure of the social hierarchy. Joshua demonstrated symbolic violence as an effective means of displaying power. When Thomas copied Joshua's behavior he did not move up the social hierarchy as much as reinforce people's existing positions within the social hierarchy. He solidi-

fied his position over Francisco as well as reinforcing Joshua's behavior and position.

MAINTAINING THE HIERARCHY: THOMAS AND THE OLD CEREAL

One of the various ways of maintaining position in the social hierarchy at Redwood Grove was teasing. The teasing was structured around the boys' fears, which were translated into negative attributes that induced shame, the fundamental control mechanism boys use to create and maintain their group culture (Pollack 33). Insults about being gay, feminine, weak, contaminated, dirty, different, or without friends, were rooted in the boys' fears about sexuality, masculinity, safety, inclusion, protection, love, and the shame of being identified as having any negative or unmasculine characteristics.

A reoccurring theme in their teasing was centered on the boys' fear of dirt and of being contaminated by their food. This particular fear of contamination manifested itself in two ways at the group home. First, the boys were uncertain of the purity of their food. They rarely saw it prepared, and they were not given a choice about what they would like to eat. They were also uncertain about what it would do to them. They had only a vague understanding of the cause and effect of eating spoiled food. Second, the boys used that uncertainty to control. They exercised control by not eating foods they felt were spoiled.

The control exercised by one boy upon another, exemplified in their teasing, is a form of social exclusion. The next few examples trace a particular tease from its possible conception and show how that tease was modified over time and became absorbed into the boys' folklore.

One morning, when Thomas was on the highest level and also the last to the breakfast table, he poured himself some cereal that was past its expiration date, which he did not notice. The other boys had already seen the date and avoided the cereal. They waited until Thomas had taken a bite and then chimed in together about how he had eaten old rotten cereal. They went on and on. "Moldy cereal! How could you eat that?" Thomas left the table crying and would not eat breakfast.

For the rest of the day, the boys continued to tease Thomas, their teasing ranging from overt to more cryptic forms in which the boys would merely mention a single word that referred to the morning's events. They inserted the words "cereal," "mold," and "rotten" at the end of sentences, or they just casually said the word alone. The boys manipulated and advanced the tease so that it was only apparent to those in the group. A staff

person arriving for the afternoon shift might not pick up anything until Thomas reacted to the teasing. Only through close observation of the boys' behavior could a staff member recognize the teasing.

The tease ostracized Thomas from the group and in doing so united the group against him. While the group as a whole, all six boys, may not have grown stronger, the group of five did. Despite any previous conflicts, they connected by ostracizing one. They could all agree that he was not worthy of being part of the group because the old cereal contaminated him. They were also united by level. Thomas was higher on the behavior chart than everyone else. He was at the top of the adult-regulated hierarchy. The group reminded him that he was not better than the rest. While he might be at the top the hierarchy on the behavior chart, he was, at least for that situation, at the bottom of the folk social hierarchy.

As teases, such as the Thomas cereal tease, lasted beyond the incident and beyond the day of the incident, they entered the group folklore. Like a story that everyone in the group knew, the cereal tease became a tease that everyone knew, remembered, and reacted to. As long as they used some version of the tease, it stayed alive. Because everyone knew it and because it had already been encoded on the first day, it was easy to maintain. When the boys teased Thomas about the old cereal, they did not need to recite the whole tale, just enough for Thomas to know what they were teasing him about.

THOMAS AND THE NAPKIN

A perfect example of how this encoded tease was carried on happened when the boys were eating dinner a few weeks after the initial event. Joshua and Bobby, age 10, were both on the lowest level of privileges and seated on the perimeter of the room, while Francisco, Jerod and Thomas were eating at the table. Thomas asked for the salt. Joshua and Bobby chimed in asking for some too. A staff member gave the salt to Thomas and asked him to pass it on to them when he was finished. He walked over and handed it to Bobby. Instead of just taking it from Thomas, Bobby held a napkin so as not to touch the saltshaker. Jerod and Joshua erupted into laughter, and Thomas ran crying out of the room. The effects of the napkin tease were the same as the initial event: Thomas left the room crying. But the actual teasing was limited to a simple action rather than a barrage of remarks. The tease was just as powerful even though it was simplified.

Thomas later explained what happened. The teasing had begun earlier in the week when Joshua started acting as if Thomas were contaminated, and he would not touch objects Thomas had touched. Bobby only partici-

pated in the teasing for the first time at that meal. At some point the boys had made a big deal about Thomas and his contamination, so much so that they only had to act out part of it—the napkin grab and the laughter—to send Thomas into tears.

The napkin incident was not completely a direct result of the cereal incident. Once the cereal incident became encoded and became part of their folklore and folk culture, the boys mixed that event with other similar events. The events previous to the cereal incident laid the foundation for the cereal tease to be as powerful as it was. The cereal may not have been the beginning of the tease, but the spoiled cereal theme became part of an ongoing and developing folklore about contamination and Thomas.

JOSHUA AND STORYTELLING

Around the same time, a story emerged that Joshua told. It may have been told before or may have been created on the spot for the particular situation. Its validity is uncertain. Joshua recalled how Thomas had been forced to dig in the trash by an older boy when Thomas had first moved in. Joshua described Thomas's action with disgust and contempt. As he told it, the other boys began to remember the incident and some tried to add details, but Joshua kept control of the story, repeating or dismissing what they added. Even Bobby, who had not been there, thought he remembered the event.

Joshua told the story to illustrate Thomas's contamination. The story was characteristic of other folklore that had grown out of past events at Redwood Grove. Joshua told the most stories or, rather, the most successful stories. He was the oldest and had been at Redwood Grove the longest. He was also at the top of the group hierarchy. His perspective could not be disputed. Often the stories were exclusive. They were a roll call of who was there, unifying and empowering those included, a reward for their time spent at Redwood Grove. Thus, when Bobby remembered the event, he was ridiculed because he was not there and therefore not part of the group that could remind Thomas, though he could still laugh at Thomas's behavior.

The stories would often go back to a time when a few of the boys were not there yet, such as the time one of the old residents threw a bike on the roof or when all the residents were on the highest level on the behavior chart at one point the previous summer. The bike incident would be recalled to make comparisons to current behavior, to show that although Francisco punched and hit staff, his behavior was not nearly as bad as the behavior of previous boys. The "high-point-in-behavior" story would

be recalled when they were dealing with difficult times on the behavior chart during school. And, of course, there were stories used to tease. The stories served Joshua well, reminding the other boys that he was on top in size, age, and time served, and that those could not be challenged.

When Joshua left, storytelling, for the most part, died. Jake tried to revive it to help maintain his position at the top of the group hierarchy. While Jake was the strongest, he was not the oldest, and he had only come a month before Thomas, so his exclusive stories were limited. He never developed his storytelling skills, so he resorted to other methods.

CREATING NEW WAYS TO TEASE

While the boys were dealing with each other and their social organization, they also had to deal with the staff, who were constantly observing and intervening. The boys' teasing and storytelling had to work around the staff. Teasing in general was not condoned and usually punished, but impossible to stop. When the staff picked up on teasing, the teasers were given appropriate punishments, often separation for a short period of time. Staff would also try to squelch continual teases such as the cereal tease and negative storytelling, both of which were virtually outlawed by increasing the penalties for whoever repeated them.

Limited by his lack of storytelling ability and outlawed forms of teasing, Jake created a new form of teasing. One day at the table during afternoon snack, Jake began quizzing the other boys in spelling or mathematics. He aggressively questioned Thomas, and brought Thomas down, as he stumbled over the answers. The other boys were questioned as well. As they struggled to come up with answers, Jake positioned himself at the top of the hierarchy.

At the time, Jerod and Francisco were both at the bottom of the behavior chart and were not allowed to interact with the group, which was fortunate for Jake, since they were two of the smarter boys and Jerod was a grade ahead of Jake. The second time Jake tried quizzing the boys, Jerod was able to participate and Jake's questioning was less effective because Jerod knew the answers.

The new approach stood out in contrast to other forms of teasing because it positioned one boy more or less opposed to the rest of the boys. A less powerful boy could have the group turn on him, ostracizing him from them. As it was, Jake manipulated the situation to put others down and build himself up by comparison. Although he was neither the oldest nor (probably) the smartest, he was able to make himself seem the smartest by not allowing himself to be questioned. As long as he controlled the questions, he always had the right answer.

UNEQUAL POWER RELATIONSHIPS: "STEVE" FOLKLORE

The fears the boys dealt with ranged from abstract—such as abandonment—to the immediate fears about particular people and places. The way the boys dealt with unequal power relationships was similar to the way they dealt with fear; they incorporated it into their folk culture. The following example illustrates how the boys of Redwood Grove integrated a power conflict with a staff member into their joking and teasing.

One staff member, Steve, had a very confrontational manner. He constantly displayed his power over the boys by the way he told them to do their chores and pick up their things, bossing them around rather than asking. He made extra rules, like not letting boys on the lowest behavior levels change the television channel. Steve induced fear in the boys, not by hurting them, but by wielding his authority punitively. If they came in conflict with him, they received harsh consequences, often the extreme consequence for the behavior.

Steve got results, but at the expense of shoving the boys' powerlessness in their faces. The boys dealt with Steve by incorporating him into their vernacular folklore. The boys talked about Steve when he was not around. His name was used most commonly as an insult, aimed at each other as well as a staff member. For instance, one boy would tell the other that he was "as fat as Steve" when they commented on how much they were eating, which was a comical insult most often heard around the table at meals. An awkward movement, like hitting a ball poorly, was mocked by saying the person hit the ball so badly, he hit it "like Steve." The boys diminished Steve's power by making him the object of their jokes and insults. Steve was a negative figure that the boys could agree on. When he was on his shift, they might obey his orders, but when he was not around, he was mocked. While the boys complained when other strict staff came on shift, the other staff were not ridiculed the way Steve was.

Ridiculing Steve, the boys felt powerful. Like all children in institutions, the boys at Redwood Grove were able to find power in seemingly powerless situations. They found satisfaction in distorting the adult authority. Where there was little power available to them, they invented new forms, such as when Jake asked a few of the boys seemingly legitimate questions in math and spelling, knowing they wouldn't be able to answer them. He might have been attempting to recreate the power relationship he felt between the teacher and student.

Storytelling and teasing are time-honored ways children establish a social hierarchy outside adult control. The power of them is heightened in a group home setting where the boys spend almost all their time together and have so few other possibilities for participating in alternative social hierarchies.

Behind the boys' hurtful teasing, I believe, is their anxiety about the behavior-chart hierarchy. The behavior chart draws attention to the boys' positions in relation to one another, creating a competitive atmosphere that promotes social ranking. They react to the behavior-chart hierarchy established by the adults, and in an attempt to undermine it, they create a new social organization in its image. Rather than the boy at the top being rewarded by his peers for his good behavior, the rest of the group punishes him. He is also encouraged to play the role of the victim, for if he stands up for himself, responding with anger or aggression towards the teasing, he risks dropping on the behavior chart.

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.

MATERIAL CULTURE IN A GROUP HOME

Along with the social frames that regulate the boys' experience is the material setting that is the background for their interactions. From the house they live in to the coveted Gameboy games in their toy chests, their material environment effects their social culture and hierarchies. When I first entered the group home, I began to make a list of what seemed to be the important items in the boys' lives: the *round* red rubber ball, video games, bicycles with shocks, Pokémon paraphernalia, batteries, and other items that could be borrowed or traded. The most easily identifiable items of importance were those in highest demand. The importance of personal items of comfort and pleasure, such as teddy bears and worn action figures, were harder to judge since they were largely ignored by all the boys except the owner.

As I became aware of their material culture at Redwood Grove, I sought to answer the question posed by Jon Wagner in a recent edition of the journal *Visual Sociology*, namely, "What aspects of their own material and social circumstances do kids notice and why?" For a researcher to answer that question, he or she must feel confident in having a child's perspective. To feel confident I had the perspective of the boys in the group home, I relied on three methods of obtaining information: observation, interviews, and photography. The boys' photography allowed me to see through their eyes, and the interviews gave the boys an opportunity to explain what they saw.

The object of my project was to have the boys record the toys, memorabilia, gifts, and mementos that were important using their own camera. Rather than observe what toys were played with the most, what objects

were the most treasured and valued, I placed the decisions into the hands of the children.

I built upon the questions raised and approaches taken by photographers Jim Hubbard, Lauren Greenfield (see Levin), Marjorie Faulstich Orellana, Wendy Ewald, and the young photographers they worked with. These professional photographers sought to empower youth by giving them control of the camera to capture their world on film and speak to people through their photographs. Osofu Washington, a young photographer who worked with Greenfield on *Picture LA*, said "if people can understand our landmarks, they can see things from our point of view" (Levin 4). The premise of my photography project was based on Washington's words. By following the steps of seeing the photograph and understanding the photograph, then hopefully it is possible to see things from the child's perspective.

The boys at Redwood Grove faced specific restrictions, which set the parameters of the photography project. They faced behavior-level restrictions, such as limitations on where they could go, what items were available to them, and when they could take the photographs. Items left with their parents were unobtainable, as well as items confiscated by staff. The boys on the lowest behavior level had most of their toys confiscated. Some of the boys could not leave the house or the yard. They were also limited to thirty-six photographs.

The boys may have also decided not to take some pictures because they would be sharing these photographs with other people. They may have selected their photographs to suit what they thought their audience might want to see. They may have been ashamed to identify belongings that they felt were not masculine enough, even though those items were important to them, similar to the way the boys in Pollack's study felt ashamed of expressing emotions and feelings they felt were feminine.

I explained the project to the boys in short information sessions right before giving them the disposable cameras. They were told to focus on "stuff," not people, but they could include people as they saw fit. I asked them to take photographs of the things that they felt were important to them. They were given no extra supervision when they used the cameras and possibly even a little more freedom by the staff. When they completed their roll of film, they returned the cameras to me, and I took the film in to be developed. Before I brought the photographs back to the boys, I went through them and made a list of the photographs. Once I had gone over their pictures a couple of times and made myself familiar with them, I went back to Redwood Grove and interviewed the boys as we looked over their pictures. The interviews were taped and then transcribed. After the interviews, the boys were given their photographs in a flipbook to keep. I

followed up on the project by checking to see how they manipulated their booklets.

TAKING THE PHOTOGRAPHS

On the day the boys received the cameras, they came into the office in twos. Jake and Bobby came first. They listened to the directions and expectations, and then I asked a couple of different times and in a couple of different ways if they understood. I could see their ears turned off as their minds started racing with ideas of what they would photograph. When they saw the cameras, they became restless and fidgety, their eyes darting about excitedly; their complete attention was on the yellow cardboard camera in my hand. They immediately wanted to touch the cameras, fool with them, and begin taking pictures. Their reaction was similar to the reaction Hubbard (*Shooting Back*) received when he worked with children at a shelter. They also wanted to know if they would get to keep the cameras and were disappointed when they heard the cameras were disposable. As I explained how to use the flash, they were bouncing in their seats, anxious to leave the office and take pictures. Finally, I opened the door and they ran out clicking and winding through the hallway.

Nicholas, age 8, and Thomas came in next. Nicholas, who had already seen Jake and Bobby run out with cameras, was anxious to get his. Thomas came into the office immediately exclaiming that he had not done anything wrong. Obviously, sitting in the office with a staff member created a certain frame for the situation, possibly augmenting the boys' anxiousness to leave and take pictures. Nicholas and Thomas were just as excited as Bobby and Jake. The boys did not want to listen to any directions. The power they would have with the camera seemed intoxicating.

Unfortunately, Jerod and Francisco were not on high enough levels to receive cameras; both were at the bottom of the behavior chart. It took Jerod two days to move up to a high enough level to receive a camera. Unlike the other boys, Jerod was much calmer and did not bounce around, and he asked questions. Jerod's approach may be reflective of his age and maturity or the diminished excitement of the group now that most had completed their roll of film.

It took Francisco two weeks before he raised himself from the bottom level and could participate in the project. Unlike Jerod, Francisco wore his excitement on his face; his eyes and his grin widened when he saw the camera.

The first four boys finished within the day, three within the first one to two hours, one within the first half-hour. When Francisco finally received

his camera, he finished it within the day, probably within a couple of hours judging from the photographs he took. When I picked up Jerod's roll, five days after I initially gave it to him, he still had a couple of pictures left, which he promptly took.

The younger boys finished their rolls of film more quickly than the older boys. Nicholas, the youngest, finished his first. Jerod, the oldest, finished last. What led the boys to take their photographs so quickly? Jake's roll in particular captured a stream of consciousness perspective, as if the viewer of his photographs was looking through his eyes for five minutes. The boys' excitement and desire surrounding the taking of photographs took on an almost libidinal quality—the instant gratification of taking a photograph, each one exciting and satisfying in its own right. Rather than seeming in competition with one another, the boys seemed to feed off each other's energy. After taking a photograph of the toys on his dresser, Nicholas raced outside to the bike rack, on the way snapping a photograph of Francisco posing holding a Pokemon.

The desire to snap off as many pictures as possible may also be linked to the uncertainty the boys felt about how long they would have the cameras. If they dropped to the bottom of the behavior chart, the cameras, along with their other toys, could be taken away. If they shot quickly, there would be nothing left for staff to confiscate.

Unlike the other boys, Jerod may have savored the experience, or he simply was not caught up in the excitement and forgot about the last few pictures.

During the interviews, which I did individually, a couple of the boys behaved differently than usual. Two of them used sweet baby voices and attitudes while answering the questions. They all demonstrated their best behavior, although Bobby became a little silly during parts of his interview. Their behavior may reflect their enjoyment of one-on-one attention from a staff member as well as feeling safe from ridicule from others when they were explaining their photographs. In addition, they knew an unknown outside audience would see and hear the results of the project, and they wanted to display their best behavior.

ANALYZING AND INTERVIEWING

Not surprisingly, none of the boys followed the directions completely. Rather than a collection of photographs of toys and other items the boys treasured, their photographs ranged from a dead rat to another boy's "special friends" (adults from the community who act as personal mentors), from pictures of other boys to pictures of their toys, from the staff at

Redwood Grove to Redwood Grove itself. Surprisingly, the photographs that proved the most descriptive about the boys' material culture, their social culture, and their experience at Redwood Grove were the photographs that fell outside the originally stated guidelines.

Nicholas took twelve pictures of other people's stuff, their toys, their rooms, and their posters. While some of the pictures included those boys who owned the stuff, making it unclear as to the focus of the picture, the pictures were still of items that did not belong to Nicholas. It is possible that Nicholas was merely taking photographs of his environment—the other boys and their stuff are major parts of that environment—but the interview revealed possibly another motivation.

When asked why Jake's Red Version Pokémon Gameboy game was important to him, Nicholas answered, "Because it is very important to me and I'll probably get it. . . for my birthday," which was untrue. Nicholas's statement translates to "I want it." Besides the Red Pokémon game's being a highly valued item in the house, Jake first took Nicholas under his wing when Nicholas moved in, letting him play his Pokémon games and Gameboys whenever Nicholas wanted. For Nicholas, the game may have had a double importance; it is fun to play, everyone likes playing it, and it also symbolizes his friendship or at least connection with Jake, the most powerful boy in the house.

Nicholas similarly describes a photograph of Thomas's radio. "I took a picture of that because I want that." He nodded when asked if he wanted Francisco and Nathaniel's bikes. This theme continued as he talked about and explained the rest of his photographs. Real insight came when he was explaining a photograph he took of some of Bobby's toys on Bobby's dresser. While listing the items in the photograph, he ended the list by saying "I want deodorant" and when asked, "You don't get deodorant?" he responded by blurting "Yes, I will!" While obviously Nicholas misunderstood the question, his outburst reveals his desire for deodorant goes beyond material desire. The deodorant represents more than just another boy's object. Nicholas is the youngest in the house. He is smallest, the last to arrive, and at the bottom of the social hierarchy. The deodorant represents growing up and becoming bigger like Jake and Jerod, who are entering puberty. Deodorant represents one of the signs that he is bigger, older, and more powerful. Boys towards the top of the hierarchy wear deodorant.

The boys took over forty percent of their photographs of people. Those pictures fall into three categories: those of themselves, those of other boys in the house, and those of adults such as staff and special friends. The two boys who took the most pictures of other boys in the house were Nicholas and Thomas. Eighteen out of twenty-four of Thomas's photographs were

photographs of people, and eleven of those eighteen included other boys. Nine of Nicholas's photographs were of people, and six of those were of the other boys. The rest of the boys only took one picture with other boys in it. Jake represents the other end of the spectrum; he took only one photograph of other boys out of eleven that were of people.

The two boys lowest on the hierarchy took the most pictures of the boys, and the highest on the hierarchy took the least. Jake may not have felt like he had to "suck up" or even show that he liked the other boys because he was at the top. He may not have even thought to take pictures of them, although that is unlikely since they all were clamoring to be photographed. It did not matter if they liked him. He was the strongest and the toughest. Nicholas and Thomas, on the other hand, were not particularly tough or strong, and both were struggling to move up the social hierarchy. Nicholas and Thomas may have been trying to build connections with Jake and the other boys by demonstrating their friendship. They may also have admired the other boys and wanted the power they had.

Thomas devoted two of his photographs to Jake and Jake's special friends, and then just Jake's special friends alone. While Jake may be important to Thomas, Jake's special friends are not. They do not spend much time around Redwood Grove playing with the other boys; instead, they take Jake out somewhere, to their house or the movies. Unless Thomas enjoyed Jake's absence, the special friends had no relationship to Thomas. In the interview, Thomas could not articulate why he took the photograph beyond saying "Jake's special friends are important because they're someone. . . [and] every living thing is important." Thomas did not even have a reason why they are special to him.

Why would Thomas take the photographs? Thomas has his own special friends. In fact, he has the most special friends of any of the boys in the house. Jake and his special friends may be Thomas's picture of the relationship between a boy and his special friends, a type of relationship that Thomas valued. Jake's special friends represent Thomas's special friends. He could have waited until later that week to take a picture of his special friends, but decided not to wait. On the other hand, Thomas's photographs may be similar to Nicholas's photograph of Jake's Gameboy game; Thomas may have been trying to please Jake.

None of the boys took photographs of traditional folk toys or toys of their own creation besides Bobby's photograph of his rock collection and Francisco's photograph of a feather. Either they did not value the folk toys they played with, or they thought the toys were inappropriate. As Simon Bronner notes in his article recalling his own favorite folk toy, the Gropper, "For several years, Gropper held an honored place among my other toys-cars, Teddy Bears, blocks, and soldiers-but at some point I

became self-conscious and a bit embarrassed about my fantasy and discarded Gropper, bag and baggage" (251). The boys may simply have been ashamed of their folk toys, too ashamed to show anyone. Bronner explains, "Yet often such creativity eludes the watchful eye of the parent, no less the curator or ethnographer. The child commonly keeps the creation private" (251). The boys may also have been taking photographs of items that they thought the ethnographer would want to see.

The boys play with their own creations, often alterations of mass-produced toys, such as action figures without an arm or a head. Bronner explains the importance of that type of folk toy—"Such experiences emphasized their control, their personalizing of things around them" (264). The boys also reused broken toys as if they were brand new-transformational toys, as Bronner would call them. They are also observed playing with creations of the imagination, such as in the sandbox or turning a stump into an action figure's hideout. These acts of autonomy may not be shared easily.

Children's folk culture may be too private. The boys have very little autonomy in the group home setting and may seek to create separate environments in their own imagination, environments that may be shared with another boy or kept completely to themselves. Although the group home at times seems to be overflowing with people, there are times when the boys are expected to play by themselves, especially if they are acting out and their toys have been confiscated and their socializing limited.

If any boys were ashamed of the things that were important to them, they might not have taken a photograph of it to avoid ridicule. Pollack identifies a rigid "boy code" that leads boys of all ages to hold back emotions and behaviors for fear of acting feminine (21). While the boys own stuffed animals and other toys that could reveal tenderness, thoughtfulness and creativity, they might not feel comfortable sharing that side because they feel that those items and emotions make them appear weak. They are afraid of others' ridicule. Thomas had a pile of Teddy Bears on his bed most of the time, but they were only included in a larger picture of his room. Those Teddy Bears might not have been masculine enough to be the focus of a picture. They might be very important to him, but he could not reveal that importance to the other boys.

One photographic subject most of the boys were not afraid to take a picture of was themselves. Everyone except Jerod took a picture or had a picture taken of him. Jake, Bobby, Thomas, and Francisco had multiple pictures of themselves. Hubbard provides insight into children's photographs of themselves. "On more than one occasion we have found that these kids carry the photographs of themselves every day to show others. Though they didn't take the pictures, the photographs are important none

theless. They proclaim: 'Here I am, I am real, I am of value' to the rest of the world"(*Shooting Back from the Reservation* xiii). Although the children Hubbard writes of are Native American, it is not a stretch to apply their feelings to the group-home boys. In many ways the two groups are very similar.

All the boys at Redwood Grove come from environments and life circumstances that destroy children's self esteem. When they enter the group home, staff try to continually remind them of their worth, to build them up from their negative self-images. The boys have pictures of their families or members of their families to remind them. Those photographs are treasured because in some cases those are the only connections they have. People in photographs are important, and the pictures the boys took of themselves are their way of reaffirming their importance.

One continual theme throughout the interviews with the boys was how, practical the object was. For example, Jerod described his photographs of the house, "the house, so we have a place to live in," and the washing machine, "the washing machine is important 'cause otherwise we couldn't wash our clothes and they would be stinky." Francisco also focused on the practicality of things, such as the bus; "I took a picture of the bus because it is kind of important. So if we didn't have a car we could go on the bus" and one of the staff's cars, "I took a picture of Andre's car cause, well, so we can move around quickly and so we don't have to walk or ride the bus and without the bus we would have to walk." This method of describing objects reflects the lack of importance of the object outside of its practical role.

The practical descriptions continued when the boys talked about their Pokémon toys and cards. Jerod, as well as the other boys, were very involved with the collecting of Pokémon cards. Jerod took five pictures of his cards, but none of them was of a specific card. When asked why he liked them he answered, "Cause I like to trade' em." He identified their importance as social. They provided entertainment in trading and prestige in having particular cards, but the particular card did not matter. His attitude was similar to Francisco's description of a photograph of Jerod's Pokémon toys. Francisco's description parallels Jerod's perspective on Pokémon; "These two are Charzards and Blastoids in Jerod's room 'cause I really like Pokémon." When I asked "Are those toys important to you?" he answered, "The Pokémon, not the toys. I don't really care about them." To Francisco the symbol of Pokémon was important. Pokémon affected the power relations within the house as well as at school, as having cards and games provided prestige to the owner.

AFTER THE INTERVIEWS

The photography project was not finished when I gave the boys their flipbooks with their pictures inside. Bobby, who had the least amount of pictures turn out, filled his book with other photographs that he had. At first he was a little bashful when I asked him to show his book, possibly since he thought I might be offended that he had removed all of the pictures I had developed for him. He explained who everyone in the pictures was and included a short anecdote with a couple of them. All the photographs Bobby added were of his family. A week later Bobby had removed almost all of the photographs he had taken and replaced them with all the photographs he already owned. Though he did not need the space, he may have been ashamed of his photography skills since he was unhappy with the way his photographs turned out, many of them dark and blurry. Of course it also could have been that the photographs he just took were not as important as those of his family.

Nicholas also added to his flipbook, placing his Polaroid of himself on Santa's knee at the back of his book. When Jake, the last boy interviewed, finished with the interview, he asked in as sweet a voice as I had ever heard him use if he could add pictures to his album. The photographs of the important material culture and the books I gave them were becoming material culture.

The boys did not demonstrate an overwhelming desire for material possessions. The important material items in their lives were physical links between themselves and others, symbolic of the connection they shared. Material items were also described in practical terms—cupboards holding the snacks or Pokémon to be traded.

The boys' lack of consuming commodity goods reflects their relationship to material culture. Outside the occasional pack of Pokémon cards, the boys bought very little. They did not have much disposable income, and they had very few opportunities to spend the little they had. Also, the uncertainty that surrounded their lives included uncertainty about how long they would possess a toy. The toys they had when they lived at home were gone. The toys they had at the group home were regularly confiscated, creating an uncertainty that may have decreased the desire for material possessions.

CONCLUSION

This is a case study of the folk culture of preadolescent and early adolescent boys living in a total institution. Although these boys live in an

unusual setting, they use the same-but more intensified versions of strategies boys employ in resolving their social and psychological tensions. Their folklore develops around common childhood experiences, such as when they created the game Pogo, and also around their need to deal with specific group home situations, such as when they used Steve's name as an insult in response to his inappropriate use of power.

The folklore sometimes creates the solution, as when the boys use a game frame to establish contact with a staff person or another boy, and the folklore is sometimes the problem, as in teasing. A game frame enables Jerod to establish meaningful relationships when his primary relationships have been damaged or destroyed, and the experience of connecting and creating those connections is empowering.

Teasing as folklore goes beyond playfulness and allows the boys to subvert the intent of the behavior-chart hierarchy established by the staff. The amount of energy and creativity that goes into teasing reveals the importance of this form of expression to the boys.

The boys' photographs of their material culture reveal a continual focus on each other and each other's possessions. Certainly, the other boys and their toys are a significant part of the material setting of the group home for each boy, but the items the boys value are also symbolic. They can be symbols of friendship or connection to a more powerful boy. In other instances, the important material items themselves symbolize age and power, as with the deodorant.

Studies of children's folklore such as this one can be instructive to adults working in children's institutions, revealing unintended consequences and the success (or failure) of strategies for modifying and shaping behavior. Attempting to see the world through children's eyes enables adults to examine the role of friendship groups, teasing, and playing beyond whether the behavior is obedient or disruptive. Having an awareness of the anxieties children experience, such as in response to the adult imposed behavior chart hierarchy, may lead adults to reevaluate and redesign the structure of children's institutions.

NOTE

I would especially like to thank the boys of the Redwood Grove for their participation, energy, and hope, and Professor Jay Mechling for his continued guidance and support.

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CFS: 2001 ANNUAL MEETING

President JoAnn Conrad called the breakfast meeting to order at 7:05 AM in the Prudhoe Bay Room of the Anchorage Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, Alaska. A quorum was present.

Minutes of the Columbus meeting were approved as published in the CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE REVIEW, Volume 23, Number 2, Spring 2001.

REPORTS

There was only one submission for the OPIE Prize. The Executive Committee deemed it best to withhold the awarding of the prize for this year. We really need to solicit more submissions in the future.

The AESOP PRIZE Committee (B. Ellis, J. Houpt, J. Conrad) reviewed a short list of nominations. The AESOP PRIZE winners were:

Fiesta Femenina: Celebrating Women in Mexican Folktales

Retold by Mary-Joan Gerson, Illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez,
Barefoot Books, 2001.

Marela the Clever

Retold by Margaret Read MacDonald, Illustrated by Tim Coffey, Albert
Whitman and Company, 2001.

The AESOP ACCOLADE went to: *Daisy the Doll* by Michael Mendearis and Angela Shelf Mendearis, Painting by Larry Johnson, Family Heritage Books, Vermont Folklife Center, 2000.

Chip Sullivan reported on the Journal:

- A. Multiple copies of the JOURNAL known as the "Heritage Collection" have been sent to libraries.
- B. North Carolina has been giving us \$2500 per year, but this amount will be cut back to \$2,000 per annum due to increasing budget constraints.
- C. Perhaps it may be advantageous to go from 2 issues per year to one larger volume. We should also plan putting together a special anniversary issue to commemorate our 25th year.
- D. An Index for our 25 years would also be appropriate for consideration.

Joe Edgette reported the balance in our general fund is \$3,522.40. The Newell Prize balance is \$7,789.86; the OPIE Prize at \$2,846.93.

The cost of the Breakfast this year came to \$100 which the membership voted be paid from the Section's general fund. We should also consider using the Breakfast Meeting as a recruiting tool.

NEW BUSINESS

Potential topics for a Children's panel for next year were suggested:

A. Games and Analysis

B. Imagery of Children

- "Rock, Scissors, Paper"

Next year Jacqueline Thursby will be the Section's President.

Joe Edgette announced that he will be stepping down as Secretary/Treasurer effective with next year's Meeting.

Margaret MacDonald was elected unanimously as a member to the AESOP AWARD Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Joseph Edgette
Secretary

NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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.

The XV International Sociological Association's World Congress of Sociology will be held in Brisbane, Australia, 7-13 July 2002. The ISA Research Committee on Sociology of Childhood has organized 11 sessions on various aspects of the sociology and culture of childhood. For further information, contact RC53 Programme Coordinator Leena Alanen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland. E-mail: lalanen@edu.jyu.fi

Information about the conference, "Designing Modern Childhoods: Landscapes, Buildings, and Material Culture," is now available at the following website: <http://www.hum.sdu.dk/projekter/ipfu/designing-childhoods/>. The conference will be held at the University of California at Berkeley, 2-3 May 2002.

Sheffield University Press announces the publication of *Scared of the Kids? Curfews, crime and the regulation of young people* (ISBN 0 86339 929 0), an examination of the lives of and relationships between young people and adults within communities today. A key question the author addresses is, "How should those of us working in the community deal with the levels of fear and insecurity that exists between the generations?" Telephone: 0114-225-4702. fax: 0114-225-4478. E-mail: shupress@shu.ac.uk

Blackwell Publishers announces the publication of *A History of Childhood: Children and Childhood in the West from Medieval to Modern Times* by Colin Heywood. The aim of this book is to place the history of children and childhood firmly in its social and cultural context. The author explores the changing experiences and perceptions of childhood from the early Middle Ages to the beginning of the twentieth century.

The CHILDE website, which is the culmination of the European Commission funded CHILDE project has now been launched. The site contains, among other things, a searchable library of over 1,000 digitised images from the project partners collections of historic children's books. The site can be viewed at www.bookchilde.org.

London Play's website is now available at <http://www.Londonplay.org.uk>. Though London focused, the website extends across geographical boundaries.

The Australian Children's Folklore Collection, now a part of the Museum Victoria, is available at <http://www.museum.vic.gov.au/> and when the site is open, type in Australian Children's Folklore in the search box on the left-hand side. Three sites are listed; the third gives an information sheet about the ACFC.

Barbara Boock announces that Deutsches Volksliedarchiv-Arbeitsstelle für internationale Volksliedforschung plans to publish materials from the Collection of Children's Songs in the German Folksong Archives. There is a page at the website showing part of the titles in the planned bibliography; the address is: www.ruf.uni-freiburg.de/liedarchiv. If you click on "Archiv" you find on the page in blue, "Kinderlied," if you click there, you will get the Children's Songs page.

There is an actualized bibliography on children's play, games, and toys in North Africa and the Sahara available in English and French on the following website: <http://www.hh.se/ide/ncfl/Publications.html>.

Laurie Bauer, Professor of Linguistics at Victoria University of Wellington announces that the "three-year project undertaken by Laurie and Winifred Bauer from the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Study at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, has just come to an end. The purpose of the project was to find out whether there were different dialects discernible in primary school playgrounds in different parts of New Zealand. In brief, the research showed that there are three main dialect areas, and a great deal of social variation was also demonstrated. As a byproduct of the research, quite a lot of material was gathered about children's games and chants. A website has been established with almost 1200 pages of working documents. . . and . . . a list of paper publications which have resulted from the projects. The address is: <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/lip>."

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

ALAN BERRES is a PhD student in English at Ohio State University. He specializes in contemporary legend and belief studies, particularly those legends and rumors dealing with Satanism, role-playing games, or gothic culture. He has also conducted fieldwork in the Columbus BDSM community. His dissertation, dealing with the Columbine shooting from the perspective of social drama, should be finished by Fall 2003.

SIMON BRONNER is Interim Director of the School of Humanities and Distinguished University Professor of American Studies and Folklore at Penn State Harrisburg. He is the author of many books on American folklore and cultural history, including titles on youth culture such as *American Children's Folklore* and *Piled Higher and Deeper: The Folklore of Student Life*. He is past president of the Children's Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society and current president of the Mid-Atlantic American Studies Association. He was elected to the Folklore Fellows of the American Folklore Society and now serves on the Executive Board of the Society. He is the editor of the Material Worlds Series for the University Press of Kentucky and the Pennsylvania German History and Culture Series for Penn State Press.

JoANN CONRAD is a folklorist and self-styled cultural critic who teaches in the bay area and is on leave for the spring of 2002. She has published on the intersection of the category of childhood and folklore in several articles and is currently researching racist representations in ordinary objects and racist ideologies in American culture. She is also the current president of the Children's Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society.

BILL ELLIS is Associate Professor of English and American Studies at Penn State Hazleton. He is the author of *Raising the Devil: Satanism, New Religions, and the Media* and *Aliens, Ghosts, and Cults: Legends We Live*. He has served as president of the Children's Folklore Section and the Folk Narrative Section of the American Folklore Society.

JESSE GELWICKS graduated with honors from the University of California, Davis, with a bachelor's degree in American Studies. He currently teaches at a minimum-security correctional institution for young men. He will attend George Washington University in the fall in pursuit of a master's degree in American Studies.

CHARLIE MCCORMICK is Assistant Professor of English and Communication at Cabrini College in Radnor, Pennsylvania. He studies unofficial and informal youth culture (with a particular interest in leisure and recreation) as well as rites of passage in the contemporary world. He is currently completing a book-length manuscript on adolescent cruising on the commercial strip.