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CONTENTS

On the Cover: Reproduction of the cover of W.W. Newell's *Games and Songs of American Children.*

FROM THE EDITOR

Greetings from Hurricane Floyd central. For once it really is not my fault that *Children* s *Folklore Review* is somewhat behind schedule. East Carolina University is in Greenville, North Carolina, which, if you watched much of the post-hurricane coverage on the national news, was hit hard by the flooding. The university was closed for a week and a half, an unprecedented event, and so we are scrambling to change syllabi and make up for lost time. On a more personal level, a tree came down on my roof. Still, we are a lot better off than those people who were flooded out and lost everything.

So after some travail, here is the fall 1999 *Children'*s *Folklore Review.* We have changed the inside front cover to be more in line with other scholarly journals and added an interior title page. In addition, this issue is quite full of very interesting articles. In "Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep. . . ': Symbols and Their Meaning on Children's Gravemarkers," J. Joseph Edgette looks, not so much at the folklore of children, but at folk perceptions about children. Elizabeth Tucker, in "'I Hate You, You Hate Me': Children's Responses to Barney the Dinosaur," proves that, once again, children take what the adult world gives them and then make it their own. Ruth Stotter, a storyteller herself, looks at the use of Coyote, the trickster figure, in children's literature in "Trick or Treat: Coyote in Children's Picture Books." Readers interested in the last article might want to look at Millicent Lenz, "Mythologizing Chief Seattle: Susan Jeffers' *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky* or How to Make a Myth in Ten Easy Steps," *Children's. Folklore Review* 19.1 (1996): 3-11. And Neal A. Lester looks at bell hooks' *Happy to be Nappy* in a substantial review essay.

For the mutability section of this column, I have to announce that Ann Chambo is now teaching two classes and no longer a graduate assistant to *CFR,* but she has been replaced by Melissa Matyjasik, who helped get this issue together while watching the water rise in eastern North Carolina.

Once again, please urge your friends and your libraries to subscribe to *CFR;* it is one of the best deals around (and there is no special higher rate for libraries). Also, send your articles to *CFR.*

C.W Sullivan III

"Now I LAY ME DOWN To SLEEP. . .": SYMBOLS AND THEIR MEANING ON CHILDREN'S GRAVEMARKERS

J. JOSEPH EDGETTE

Now I lay me down to sleep*;* the bedtime prayer so familiar to many children dating back to the New England Primer of 1781 was a plea to the Almighty to protect the soul of the petitioner during the night. If for any reason death would come while the child was in that vulnerable state of sleep, the Lord was asked to take the soul, thus saving it from other alternatives. Even to this day as we approach a new millennium, this child's bedtime prayer is still invoked.

The Victorian Age was a time when euphemism was very much the rule of the day. It would be correct to assume that the child did not consciously comprehend the symbolic significance of the prayer. However, when visiting burial sites and reading the inscriptions upon the markers there, we frequently see such phrases as: *At rest, Asleep in the Lord, Resting, In the company of angels, Asleep,* and so on. Mourners and visitors quickly saw the implied meaning of the reference being made. Therefore, when looking at the words of the prayer, we can fairly claim that it serves as a good example of euphemism. The other form equating to this lessening of that considered too strong was symbol. Everyone who has studied literature is already acquainted with this. Of the two types, open and closed, it is the closed symbol having one meaning readily recognized by those who encounter it. The antecedent of death was more often than not established through the motif found carved or etched upon the marker. These symbols held the quality of universality crossing racial, national, and ethnic boundaries. For example, the cross was always symbolic of death; whereas; a flower, vine, or other depiction of something living was symbolic of life—eternal life. The laurel wreath stood for victory over death. Death was and is still looked upon as a transition from earthly life to eternal life. Recognition of the lily as symbolic of eternal life and the rose for love became closed symbols as well. Symbols, then, convey a specific meaning relative to death and more specifically to human qualities and are universally understood. Probably most important is the fact that the gravemarker reflects society's attitude towards death at the time of the symbol's implementation.

Humans are the only creatures aware that they will eventually die. Because of this knowledge they plan for that eventuality. As a part of the preparation for the inevitable, serious thought is given to ways in which to memorialize the deceased. There is sometimes much planning in the design and execution of the gravemarker. Nowhere is the impact more apparent than that of the marker for a child. The child has always been revered by its parents; however, it was during the Victorian period that a noticeable shift occurred in the overall philosophy of the family unit especially in terms of a change in perception of the child. Its image was changing to that of being innocent, unblemished, and pure. The child was closely associated with the home (Snyder). As a direct result, the death of a child was treated much differently than that of the adult counterpart. This attitude was reflected clearly in the resulting funerary monuments. Another accompanying change was that of the view of death. By the mid-nineteenth century religious ideas began to alter the shape of the notion of death in America. With the arrival of Arminianism, which advocated that salvation was attainable through good works, Protestant Americans realized it would be better to focus on salvation rather than on damnation (Sloane). The gravesite became a permanent memorial to the successes and good deeds of the loved one. Symbols were being created to convey this new focus. For children, these sites became even more important. Thus, we see more serious attention being paid to the design and use of symbols for the children. With the place of the child in the family and the new religious shift, children who had died were actually being adored in the cemeteries (Sloane) through all kinds of memorial structures and new child-specific symbols.

Throughout the early evolution of symbolic representations for use on children's gravemarkers, emphasis was placed on human mortality. Children very often had the same symbols as adults, but the symbols were smaller to represent the child as a small adult. The skull and bones evolved to the winged skull during early New England times (Dickran and Tashjian). The markers for children very often showed cherubs, or the smaller angels. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a gradual move to lambs, small angels, and guardian angels became more prominent for the child's marker. Once the twentieth century arrived, the use of these same symbols

continued. By mid-century another level emerged. The sudden appearance of images of toys, small animals, and effigies of the deceased became more commonplace. The use of photographic images as depicted on porcelain attachments to the markers was profuse for nearly thirty years beginning at the turn of the twentieth century. As we approach the end of this century, we find a resurgence of the photographic images as well as laser images of the child. Today, we have also included by way of engraved etchings and carvings of the kinds of activities engaged in by the departed child. Also, depictions of those things most cherished in life by the deceased are prominently displayed. At this point it should be noted that grave goods, not to be confused with grave decorations (Edgette 1998), are used to supplement and to underscore the vitality and interests of the child that once lived. Often, the impression conveyed is that of peace and tranquility and knowledge that the child is safe in the hands of the Maker. One could suppose that rest and slumber-like peace is the universal trait prevailing. ***I pray the Lord my soul to keep***.

In looking at various examples of children's gravemarkers from around the country it quickly becomes very obvious through emerging patterns that the symbols used are commonly found in all areas of the United States. In Bristol, Rhode Island, for example, there is an ancient slate marker (1700) that shows the six babies who never lived beyond their first year. The marker is approximately seven feet wide and eighteen inches high having six sculpted winged cherubs across its top. Immediately, one is drawn to this marker by its strong visual presence. In 1925 a small child died outside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His parents had a small angel mounted to the right of the family monument. It is made of white marble and shows a small angel with spread wings having his hands folded as if he were praying. The overall height of the angel is approximately three feet. Not far from this small angel is one that stands eight feet in height at a grave for an adult. In a paper I gave at the Association for Gravestone Studies at its regional conference in Portland, Oregon, in August of 1998 (Edgette 1998), I made a case for the soul being represented by a winged creature. In terms of class or level, the angel would be first. It is the only human-like non-human symbol used to represent the deceased. Further, much attention has been given to the idea that guardian

angels do exist. It is my contention that the angel is simply a way to characterize the soul of the human. In many cultures the use of the bird, a symbol for flight, is the means of transporting the soul to its place in eternal life. Another winged creature found on the markers for children is the butterfly. A double symbol is exhibited here in that the butterfly also suggests a metamorphosis from mortal to spirit. Once more the wings imply flight back to the Father. Angels and other winged creatures, if small in size, are indicative of the child. In the Chester Rural Cemetery not far from Philadelphia is a small flat stone of salt and pepper granite having a small fairy seated atop a small green oblong stone about an inch long embedded into the granite. This is the marker of little Melissa Watt who died at the age of eight years. The tiny fairy with spread wings is symbolic of the spirit or the soul of Melissa. Pattern emerges very quickly when discovering these symbols. In LaSalle, Illinois, in 1987, an abandoned baby was found in a waste can in one of the local cemeteries there. The simple flat, granite stone place atop her grave read: *Baby Girl Doe, March 15,1987, March 18,1987*, with an angel carved to the right of the name. This angel was positioned as a side profile facing the name. It is kneeling with hands folded in prayer. The motif depicted is very commonly found across the country. One needs only to visit a cemetery where a section has been dedicated to the burial of children. Among the various designations of these areas would be *Babyland, God's Children, Littlest Angels,* and *Our Children.* Time or age of the marker does not appear to alter the likelihood of its design or presentation. The only appreciable change is that of the technique used to depict the image, i.e., etching versus engraving versus laser.

The angel does abound and is the most common symbol used to represent the child in death; however, it is not the only one. Included in a long list of motifs directly associated with very young children are rattles, alphabet blocks, tricycles, wagons, highchairs, toy trains, dolls, baby shoes, and the like. The motifs found on the memorials for older children have a tendency to show the kinds of things associated with that age group. Examples include: sports equipment (bats, basketballs, baseball gloves, hockey sticks, pucks, boxing gloves, skiis), automobiles, scooters, bicycles, motorbikes, the whole range of musical instruments, school insignias, organizations to which they belonged, class rings, and so on.


BABY GIRL DOE
MARCH 15, 1987
MARCH 18, 1987


W. W. COLT
AGED
8 MONTHS
DIED
JULY

There are times, however, when no motif is found. The wording itself is powerful enough to tug at the heartstrings of the visitor. In upstate New York at a fairly large cemetery there is a flat little stone that reads: *Baby John, born- Jan. 7, 1974, 4 pounds 2 ounces, 18 inches tall, died the same day.* Another, in Yeadon, Pennsylvania, simply reads: *W. W. Colt, aged, 8 months, died, July 1877*. The letters have been stenciled onto a piece of wood cut in the shape of a tablet stone and placed next to his father's military issued marker in the military section of the cemetery. Sometimes there are phrases: *Our gift from heaven, stillborn, our brief joy, our little angel, God's gift, our saint, dearest one,* or simply *baby*. The word when carefully and appropriately chosen can be just as moving as the visual icon.

From the mid-1850s and continuing for the next fifty or sixty years, it was commonplace to see the use of both headstones and footstones at the burial site. The headstone, placed at the head or top of the grave, had a smaller but identically shaped stone at the foot. Usually the only printing on the latter consisted of the departed's initials. Furthermore, it was a time in cemetery design that curbing, coping, and fencing were used to set off the burial plot from those neighboring it. For ease of maintenance and for insurance reasons most of these boundary markers have been removed today. A practice was begun whereby the headstone and footstone were connected by the use of side pieces. The resulting configuration became to be known as a cradle stone because of its visual similarity to the shape of a baby's cradle. However, similar cradles were designed for adults as well. These obviously were larger. It is a very moving sight to see a row of three or four adult cradles with a small one beside the mother's. One of the finest examples of the baby cradle I have discovered was found in Pennsylvania. It consists of a white marble headstone on which is inscribed:

DAUGHTER OF

G. PURTIS & HANNAH M. COX
BORN OCT. 22, 1877.
DIED APRIL l0, 1879.

NO MORE NEED OF SIGNING.
WHEN EVENING SHADOWS CREEP.
THE CRADLE BED IS EMPTY.
OUR DARLING'S GONE TO SLEEP.

Approximately 48 inches below the headstone is a footstone on which is carved a simple A. perhaps the first initial of the child. Connecting the two stones are sides of matching white marble. Taken as a whole a cradle has been created. The opening in the bed part of the cradle was often filled with flowers or ivy to symbolize everlasting life. In the Chester Rural Cemetery, established

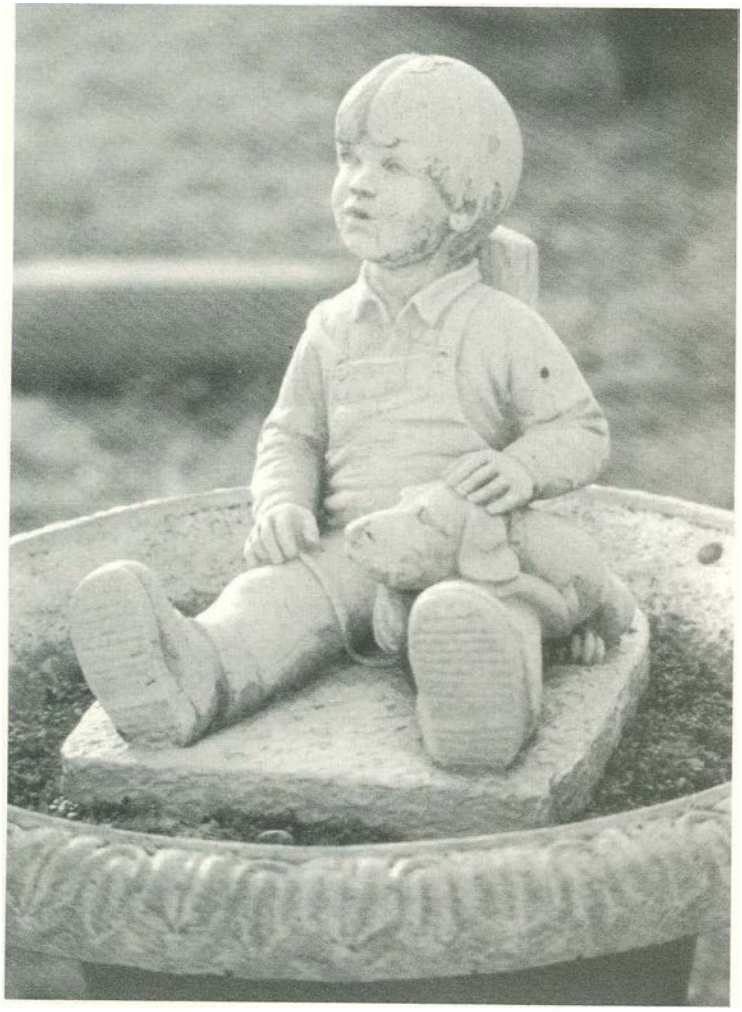
in 1864, is another white marble child's marker. This one has a small baby's cradle bed atop a twenty-inch high pedestal. The cradle is empty with the blanket turned down at an angle to the bottom of the cradle. On the floor next to it can be found two little shoes, one upright and the other on its side. Over the headboard is a cloth-like material draped very carefully going from a left to right direction. This symbolizes the pall or curtain of death that has descended upon the child. The grave contains the mortal remains of a one-year-old who died in 1878.

The use of effigies was popular throughout most of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially for those families who could financially afford such monuments. Typically, they were life-sized statues of the deceased child. It is important to note that the resemblance between the sculpted figure and the child were remarkably close. They were the equivalent of carved photographs. The Zurbuch stone in Fort Wayne, Indiana, shows a little boy seated on the ground with legs outstretched leaning against a tree. His right hand is resting upon his right knee. In that hand we see what appears to be the other end of a leash. On his left is a puppy whose head and upper body are resting upon the boy's left knee. The boy's left hand is resting upon the head of the puppy.

The face of the child is innocent with eyes wide open and a hint of smile. His hair is parted in the middle. He is wearing a long sleeved shirt with collar opened at the neck and overalls whose right strap is slightly sliding off his right shoulder while that on the left is securely in place. The gravestone reminds the passerby of a Norman Rockwell subject

At Fernwood Cemetery in a suburb of Philadelphia can be found another effigy. This one depicts "Bicycle Boy," a name known to the residents of Norman VanKirk's neighborhood. Carved by Thomas Wood, a prominent Philadelphia carver in the early 1900s, it presents a small boy with his tricycle. According to local lore, Norman accompanied his parents to Atlantic City, New Jersey, the shore resort, in the summer of 1898. Little Norman having become overheated while riding his tricycle decided to cool off by climbing into a nearby horse trough. Within a few days he had contracted pneumonia and was dead within ten days. Because of severe weathering and the adverse effects of acid rain, the marker today is undergoing restoration at the H. C. Wood Monu-

"NOW I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP. . ."



ment Company, owned by the great-great nephew of Thomas, the creator of the effigy.

Function was not always looked upon as simply an aesthetic one, but rather a way of personifying the memory of the deceased. Often, it has been discovered that the cemetery effigy becomes the photographic record, a photograph in stone, of notable members who once lived within the community. However, the use of the effigy to immortalize the child by families who were not classified as community notables are found frequently. A charming grave marker in the form of the effigy is found in the Presbyterian Cemetery in Ellettsville, Indiana, of a little boy who has fallen asleep with his hands under is chin. He has very short hair and a

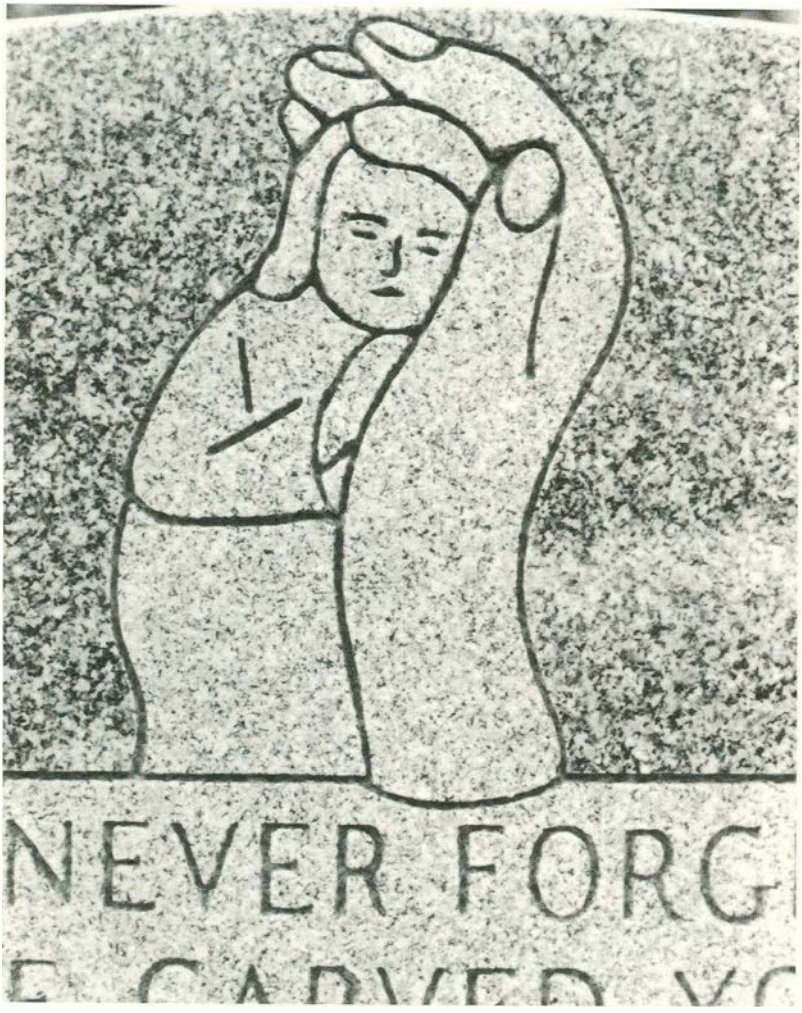
peaceful smile. He is in a kneeling position with his rump up in the air as he sleeps. ***If I should die before I wake.***

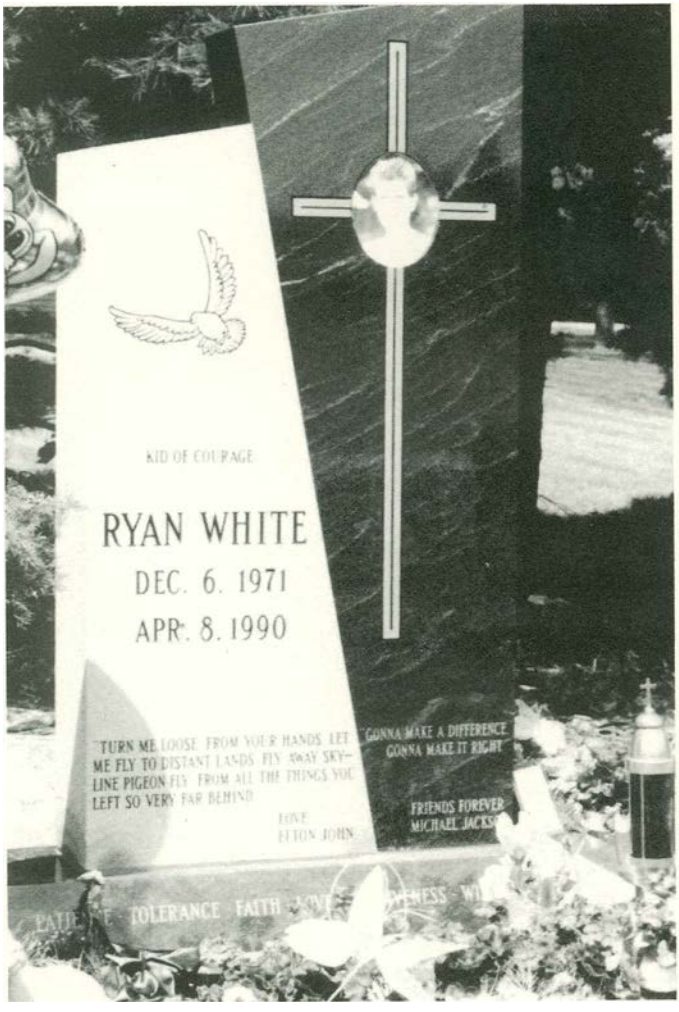
Because of the change in attitude and perspective on death, it became very common for families to photograph their loved ones in death. Photography has been an important piece in the coming to grips with the traumatic impact of dealing with life's disruption caused by the premature passing of loved ones, especially children (Norfleet). The death images are sometimes shocking, some-

times melancholy, but at the same time they can be sobering and comforting; the grief never totally goes away. The loss of a child results in permanent and unbinding sorrow. No other death can compare to it. Shakespeare's *King John* states, "Grief fills the room up of my absent child" (Norfleet). The transferal of a photographic image to porcelain through a special process made it possible to show and to preserve the actual image of the child as they looked in life or at the time of their death This addition would make its way into the cemeteries throughout the entire nation. In the case of children it was most common to include the picture as an actual attachment to the gravemarker. These photos typically showed the child in eternal sleep in their coffin or casket. It was literally the last view of the child Cemeteries established from the early 1900s through late 1930s will certainly contain many examples of these photos. After the peak, approximately 1941, these photographs fell into disuse. Many families who would sometimes show the photographs to others began to hide them from public view. The practice was labeled "morbid." A shift again toward death was becoming evident. Since the early to mid-1970s, the resurgence in the interest of using porcelain portraits has arisen. Today, we continue to use these porcelainized photos; however, the images are often "favorite" photos of the child. These poses are from life not death. Also, greater use is being made today of laser etching which enables the designer to transfer the photographic image to granite without any appreciable loss of detail.

Since we now have evidence of more modern designs and presentation, we are seeing the retention of the standard symbols, but they are being configured and arranged in a more modern context. For example there is a marker for a child whereon is a frontal view of the child asleep in the palm of a hand. The hand is presumably that of God. The fingers are strong and at the same time gentle. The fingernails are well manicured and imply those of male. The motif here is obviously a reference to the hymn, *On Eagles' Wings* specifically to the line, *". . . and he will hold you, hold you in the palm of His hand.*" The size of the child shown would correspond to a very young one. This is substantiated by the inscribed data. Linda Trosley was born on the 15th day of June in 1997 and "became an angel" on April 24, 1998, but will never be forgotten. The motif in this instance is both relative and appro-

"NOW I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP. . ."




KID OF COURAGE
RYAN WHITE
DEC. 6. 1971
APR. 8. 1990
TURN ME LOOSE FROM YOUR HANDS LET ME FLY TO DISTANT LANDS FLY AWAY SKY-LINE PIGEON FLY FROM ALL THE THINGS YOU LEFT SO VERY FAR BEHIND
LOVE
ELTON JOHN
GONNA MAKE A DIFFERENCE
GONNA MAKE IT RIGHT
FRIENDS FOREVER
MICHAEL JACKSON
TOLERANCE FAITH

priate. Thus, in examining the gravemarkers of children attention is always drawn first to the motif and then to the inscription. The inscription tends to confirm any implications suggested by the motific symbols.

Death is a part of the life cycle, and it is important that it be treated with dignity and solemnity. Any death is a tragic one, for the loss of any individual is always tragic; however, the power of prayer or faith, support, and the healing qualities of time soften the harshness of death itself. The loss of a child is enormous in its levels of grief and sorrow It is said that parents are not supposed to survive their children; but this is not always the case. For, everyday somewhere, someplace, somebody is losing a child to that predator, death. Because of the strong belief in the innocence and purity of the child, we have a more difficult time coming to terms with the death. It is through the gravemarker and its employing iconography that the memory of the child is immortalized far better than that of the adult. The innocence guarantees a select seat in the afterlife.

Ryan White, the young man who achieved national attention in the 1980s because his Aids-related illness, is buried in Cicero, Indiana. His gravemaker is made of two-tone granite, unpolished white and polished black. It has his name and dates and three very conspicuous symbols. As one approaches, the porcelain close-up of a young man sporting a happy smile is placed precisely at the center of a cross where the arms come together. It is very attractively designed and the contrast is very stark, gray against deep black. Adjacent to and on the left segment of the marker the reverse is in evidence. Deep black lines meticulously are carved into an unpolished background of white granite.

Centered above, near the top, is a soaring pigeon. This bird is a symbol for the soul, and its being shown in flight indicates return to that place from whence it came. Beneath the eagle are the words *KID OF COURAGE,* obviously an allusion to the pain and suffering he had to endure through his physical battle coupled with the social non-acceptance of the situation. A quotation from Elton John graces the front bottom of this side of the marker:

TURN ME LOSE FROM YOUR HANDS.
LET ME FLY TO DISTANT LANDS.

FLY AWAY SKY-LINE PIGEON,
FLY FROM ALL THE THINGS
YOU LEFT SO VERY FAR BEHIND.
LOVE
ELTON JOHN

Next to this quotation is a second from Michael Jackson:

"GONNA MAKE A DIFFERENCE,
GONNA MAKE IT RIGHT."
FRIENDS FOREVER
MICHAEL JACKSON

Finally, along the base of Ryan's memorial stone are the words:

PATIENCE-TOLERANCE-FAITH-LOVE-FORGIVENESS-WILL

Taken as a whole this grave marker embodies all that symbolism is supposed to do. It conveys in iconographic terms our wishes and hopes for the deceased relative on their place in eternity.

Over time we as a culture have always honored our dead. We insist on a dignified and fitting funeral, and we erect suitable and most often tastefully designed gravemarkers. The marker for a child tends to be more poignant than those of adults. The poignancy is manifested in the symbols used thereon. For, regardless of those used, the ultimate request is: ***I pray the Lord my soul to take.***

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"I HATE YOU, YOU HATE ME": CHILDREN'S RESPONSES TO BARNEY THE DINOSAUR

ELIZABETH TUCKER

Since the spring of 1992, public television has given American viewers regular glimpses of a large purple dinosaur named Barney who teaches preschoolers how to brush their teeth, recognize colors, and make new friends. Although Barney seems at first glance to be thoroughly bland and harmless, he has become the focal point of a raging controversy between lovers and haters of his TV persona. Schoolchildren have given Barney a violent death in song parodies and mock-beatings; adolescents and adults have created their own song parodies, written humorous articles, and spread rumors about Barney's evil intentions on the Internet. While there is a strong thematic unity between children's and adults' attacks on Barney, I will not try to cover the whole range of expressive behavior here. Children's Barney songs and mock-beatings constitute an important body of folklore in themselves, reflecting a larger cultural phenomenon in which fear of coercion, rebellion against authority, and anger toward blandness are dominant issues.

A background check on Barney reveals that he first came to television in 1988 as star of the small-scale "Backyard Show" in Texas. Cheryl Leach, a former teacher and the mother of an active two-year-old, wanted to create a character who would capture young children's attention. With help from a friend and capital from her father-in-law, who owned a video studio, Leach began a campaign to boost awareness of Barney in nursery schools and daycare centers. The breakthrough came when four-year-old Leora Rifkin found a Barney tape in a Connecticut video store and watched it, as her father said, "over and over and over" (Lawson; Fitzpatrick). Since Leora's father was Executive Vice-President for Connecticut Public Television, he was able to launch Barney on PBS in April of 1992. The show got off to a slow start and PBS threatened to cancel it, but a write-in campaign from parents and children kept the show on the air. Within a year, Barney had become a household word. News anchorman Peter Jennings called him "a rage," and others started to use the words "cult" and "mania" (Fitzpatrick). *Barney and Friends* surpassed *Sesame Street* as the highest rated PBS series for children, and the na-

tional PBS preschool audience rose by 30%. Barney-lovers made up 45% of the pledges in Connecticut Public Television's first fundraiser since the beginning of the craze. And Barney merchandise, including dolls, slippers, bedsheets, and clothes, rose into the hundreds of millions in sales (Forest).

Statements of support by psychologists, parents, and children have shown that the rapid escalation of Barney's popularity hasn't just come from artificial publicity; many people truly do love and appreciate Barney. Dorothy Singer, co-director of Yale's Family Television Research and Consultation Center, says, "Barney represents the type of person a lot of people wish they had in their lives-someone who is always loving and approving and really nice whenever he or she is around you" ("Secret"). Singer's explanation gains credibility from tributes like this one from three-year-old Laura Carroll: "I like Barney, he's so nice. I want to give him a great big hug" (Fitzpatrick).

Some of the most dramatic statements about Barney come from parents of preschoolers and children in the first and second grades. One young mother told me that her eighteen-month-old daughter, while ill with chickenpox, wanted to do nothing but watch Barney tapes. With wide eyes fixated on the antics of her purple friend, the little girl had just one word to say: "More!" Another mother said that her seven-year-old son, after seeing a TV commercial for a local Barney performance, turned to her with disturbingly vacant eyes and asked in a singsong voice, "Can we go? Can we get front-row seats?" This apparent mesmerization of young children has troubled their parents. Terms related to drug use and abuse have arisen in critiques of the Barney show. "My daughter's addicted to him!" was the claim of one reporter (Ferguson). Another writer referred to Barney as the "drug of choice" for a legion of preschoolers (Forest). Despite these disturbing, semi-humorous references to drug-induced conformity, many parents have been happy to see their children becoming happy and quiet—one writer used the term "immobilized"—when Barney's show is on ("Pacifier").

The age at which young Barney-lovers become Barney-haters seems to vary. In most cases, the shift seems to occur around the second grade. After getting through the first year of elementary school, children start looking for ways to establish their status in the school's hierarchy. No longer the youngest, they look for ways

to assert their superiority to new recruits. Making fun of Barney, beloved icon of the preschool set, serves the purpose of establishing superiority very effectively.

Parodies of Barney songs began to emerge when the show achieved national recognition. These parodies peaked in the fall of 1993; at that time, children on playgrounds across the United States delighted in sharing Barney songs they had heard, and some children also enjoyed inventing new versions. My data sample of Barney songs comes from children in New York, Pennsylvania, and California; all of these songs were collected in 1993 and 1994. The songs spread with lightning speed and also faded relatively quickly, as is common with topical song parodies (Opie; Knapp). My collection of children's Barney songs falls into three subtypes: simple parodies of the main theme song, parodies of the same song that accentuate HIV, and two-line parodies of another Barney song. While other experiments with poking fun at Barney in song have occurred, these three subtypes appear to be the most common.

The first kind of Barney song involves a simple inversion of the Barney show's theme song, which goes like this:

I love you, you love me,
We're a happy family.
With a great big hug
And a kiss from me to you,
Won't you say you love me too?

Sung to the tune of the song "This Old Man" (well established in schoolrooms and on playgrounds since the 1950s), this theme song introduces each "Barney" broadcast. In 1993, an eight-year-old boy gave me this version:

I love you, you love me,
Let's hang Barney from a tree.
With a shotgun, boom,
Barney's on the floor.
No more purple dinosaur.

Variations of this song spread rapidly through the United States, with Barney experiencing various deaths—all through violence and aggression. The variety of invitations to kill Barney showed plenty

of creativity: "Let's throw Barney in the sea!" "Let's go out and shoot Bar-nee!" Usually the songs ended in gunshots, with Barney dead, bleeding, and gone forever.

One version of this subtype (taught to a three-year-old by her older sister) found its way to print in *The New York Times* in April of 1993 ("Regarding Barney"). The text is as follows:

I hate you, you hate me,
Let's go out and kill Barney
And a shot rang out and
Barney hit the floor
No more purple dinosaur.

The author of the opinion piece in which this Barney song appears expresses concern about the focus on violence: "The goal—getting rid of Barney—was admirable. The solution seemed, even in jest, excessive. Almost as though, schooled by the usual TV fare, the kids had to supply the missing element: a gun" ("Regarding Barney"). Both the publication of this text and the commentary on its meaning had a significant impact on readers of *The New York Times.* Reciting the song and worrying about what it signified, parents and other concerned adults found it to be evidence of decaying social values and lack of impulse control. While some adults enjoyed the song, sharing the exuberant rebelliousness of its composers, others decried it as a sign of increasingly violent behavior.

Children, however, tend to have quite different explanations of their own parodies. When I asked several kids why they liked to sing Barney songs, they gave me short answers: "Because they're fun!" "Because I hate Barney!" "Because I like to make songs like this up!" The last of those three responses reminds us how joyful the process of parody composition can be for a child. Inversion of an annoying song written *for* children puts the creative power right back where the children want it: under their own control. Writing about parody, Iona and Peter Opie made an observation that fits the Barney backlash beautifully "It is as if children know instinctively that anything wholly solemn, without a smile behind it, is only half alive" (87). The bland, carefully affectionate didacticism of the large purple dinosaur becomes a target

for obliteration in the Barney song parodies, with children wielding the weapons of mass disapproval.

Whether the destruction of Barney within a song text shows a disturbing trend toward violent solutions deserves careful consideration. Instances of aggression in schoolyards have become more common in this decade, with the result that recess has sometimes been removed from school schedules (Beresin). Parents have questioned whether violence on television begets violence in real life, and the likelihood of some children imitating aggressive role models seems high. On the other hand, rhymes about shooting and killing have been prevalent in children's folklore for many years. The Opies include a "Mary Had a Little Lamb" parody in their collection that features a gun-toting father: "Mary had a little lamb, / Her father shot it dead,/ And now it goes to school with her/ Between two chunks of bread" (90). Closer to the Barney song pattern are the numerous songs about murder and mayhem in schools, including the version of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" that I learned in the 1950s: "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the burning of the school. / We have tortured every teacher, we have broken every rule." A version of "Oh, Little Enemy" (a parody of "Oh, Jolly Playmate") that I collected in 1976 ends with the words "I'll poke your eyes out, I'll make you bleed to death. / And we'll be enemies forevermore, more, more-more-more-more!" Perhaps limited familiarity with children's folklore makes adults worry more about the Barney songs. When violent behavior seems to be increasing, song texts can be viewed as bad influences and harbingers of worse things to come.

Less violent than the first kind of Barney song is the "HIV" subtype, sung to the tune of the same theme song:

I hate you, you hate me,
Barney died from HIV
We called the doctor
And this is what he said:
"Sorry, kids, Barney's dead."

In this song text, nobody kills Barney; the children seem to be sad witnesses to his demise from "HIV" (or AIDS). The last lines of the song remind the listener of jump rope rhymes in which a doc-

tor is summoned (Abrahams). Since AIDS is such a pervasive and frightening plague, it is no wonder that it has found its way into Barney song parodies. In the above text, Barney seems to be the victim of a sudden, mysteriously fatal disease. The song reflects both children's and adults' perplexity in the face of such a swift-moving, incomprehensible killer.

It is also possible that the "HIV" songs about Barney make him a target for homophobic feelings. Just as TV viewers have speculated about whether Bert and Ernie of "Sesame Street" are gay, they have wondered whether Barney's bright purple color signifies homosexuality. The most recent subject for such debate has been Tinky-Winky of the popular children's show *Teletubbies.* Participants in an Internet chat group have recently asked whether the purple color of both Barney and Tinky-Winky confirms that they are homosexuals (alt.tv.teletubbies). People who view Barney as homosexual may regard his death from "HIV" as a reasonable consequence. While contemporary awareness of AIDS has moved beyond the stereotype of "the gay man's disease," there is still a linkage between HIV/AIDS and homosexuality in popular humor. Jokes about AIDS were classified as "homosexual" humor in Blanche Knott's *Truly Tasteless Jokes IV* (1984). However, this seems to be a preoccupation that primarily arises from the folklore of adults rather than the folklore of children. The children whom I interviewed did not seem especially worried about "HIV" or interested in Barney's sexuality. To them, the obliteration of Barney was the main point; "HIV" was just one more opponent to bring Barney down.

In contrast to the "HIV" texts, the third kind of Barney song is a simple couplet. Its tune is that of "Yankee Doodle," and its focus is not on death but on mental incapacity. The words are as follows:

Barney is a dino ' saur with lots of imagination.
Just one thing he has a problem with, it's retardation.

This brief, succinct parody of the first two lines of a popular Barney song fits the pattern of children's taunts and jeers that has been well documented since the publication of Iona and Peter Opie's *Lore and Language of Schoolchildren.* Anyone who has spent time

on the playground of an American public school knows how frequently many children use the term "retard." This politically incorrect epithet does not always criticize a person's intelligence; sometimes it derides social ineptitude, slowness, or dullness. Children have found Barney to epitomize all of these undesirable characteristics. When asked why they hate Barney, children have told me: "Because he's stupid." "Because I can't stand him." "Because he's such a lovable JERK." Adults have drawn similar conclusions in witty statements such as this one from a *New Yorker* columnist: "Barney is a six-foot-tall magenta dinosaur. . . who when he rocks back and forth giggling compulsively in a tone of unequalled feeblemindedness—'ohh-ohh-oh'—jiggles his lumpish body like an overripe eggplant" ("Pacifier"). Both adults and children have made it clear that Barney is not very smart and deserves all the taunts he gets. As the butt of jeers in the schoolyard and on the pages of high-profile magazines, he has received an impressive amount of well publicized hostility.

Another part of the Barney phenomenon has taken the form of ritualized physical attacks on Barney merchandise. I have watched children grabbing Barney dolls, pommelling them, and jumping up and down upon them. One of my students watched a seven-year-old girl in Toys R Us beat up a four-foot-tall stuffed Barney, then revive it with CPR. A nine-year-old boy, at his first sight of a Barney tub toy, asked eagerly, "Oh boy, can I take it in the tub and drown it? Can I rip its head off with a knife?" Newspaper reports and urban legends have told of Barney being mobbed in a shopping mall, poked and prodded by hostile youngsters. And on college campuses, fraternities have beaten up effigies of Barney in fund-raisers and party games.

Why have both children and adults so enthusiastically beaten up Barney? Their attacks are only mock-violent, as Barney dolls feel no pain. However, playful violence can indicate problematic hostility. Barney provides not just a target for specific scorn, but also an outlet for strongly aggressive feelings. While children are not generally allowed to hit their parents or teachers, sometimes they have permission to beat a grinning purple doll representing a bland, sanctimonious authority figure. Beating up Barney has given some children the chance to let off steam, but it has also lent legitimacy to the idea of attacking those that one does not like or

respect: an approach frequently found in cartoons and on TV shows watched by the young. It appears that children are acting out quick and violent solutions within a framework of humorous response, often receiving applause from both adults and other children.

Since I started writing this article, the massacre of schoolchildren in Littleton, Colorado, on April 20, 1999, has caused many people to look closely at evidence of violent and aggressive behavior among American schoolchildren. Both Barney song parodies and ritualized attacks on Barney dolls certainly involve aggression, with an emphasis on mock-beating and killing. Do these verbal and physical attacks on Barney signify healthy rebellion against authority figures, as so many other song parodies have done in the past? Or do they represent a dangerous preoccupation with violence that will yield destructive consequences? The answer to both questions may be "yes." In any case, children's folklore provides an excellent index of what young people are really thinking and feeling. Barney songs and mock-beatings have delighted many people; they may prove to have educational value as well.

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TRICK OR TREAT:
COYOTE IN CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOKS

RUTH STOTTER

Coyote, legendary mediator between the sacred and profane in Native American mythology, has increasingly become a mediator between ethnic populations in children's picture books. Seemingly simple but culturally complex, Trickster figures such as Coyote appear in publications written by both American Indians and non-Native Americans. But just as folktales change when they cross geographical and cultural boundaries, so does Trickster transform. Do non-Native authors alter the character rashly, failing to understand and appreciate the complex role of Trickster? Or do these books provide a valuable bridge between cultures?

Beverly Slapin, author of *Through Indian Eyes,* recently sent me this IRONIC memo:

Eight Steps to Turn a Native Legend into a
Children's Book (for fun and profit)

1. Go to the library and find a people's legend told to and written down by an anthropologist. Don't worry about asking any people's permission to use or change the legend—they may consider it sacred, but it is public domain, and according to white people law, it is yours for the taking.
2. Take the legend out of its language, out of its context, out of the values it teaches, and out of its group. Be sure to remain oblivious to the language and life ways of the people whose legend you hold in your hands. That way, you can be more objective
3. Choose the details you think are important—never mind what is important to the people whose legend you are working on. Cut out all references to violence, sex, or anything you don't particularly like or understand.
4. Belabor every detail to make it sound more authentic than the original telling. For instance, if the legend reads, "There was no fire here, only

far upriver at the world's end," change it to, "Long ago, the people had no fire. Day and night they huddled in their houses in the dark and ate their food uncooked. Oh, they were miserable."

5. Improve on the dialogue. Let your imagination run wild.
6. Find an artist who knows nothing of the legend or its people but knows how to copy details from a museum.
7. If you can, have the manuscript and illustrations checked by non-Native anthropologists. Make sure to thank them in the introduction. Call up a Native person too—any Native person. Even if she hangs up on you, you can thank her in the introduction. After all, she picked up the phone when you called.
8. Think of an imaginative title that will make a publisher see income potential. Calling the legend a coyote story is good. Non-Natives like things called coyote stories, even if they're not. If the publisher bites, you can always change the legend and make it a coyote story.

Are non-Native authors, publishers, and illustrators really this ignorant? Do parents, schools, and librarians who purchase books care about cultural context or authenticity?

Many Native Americans object to outsiders writing their stories, raising issues of ownership of the tales and their adaptation and pointing out that appropriation exploits and commercializes Native cultures. Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, a Canadian Ojibway writer, says that taking these stories for adaptation is not sharing, it is "poaching" (118-19). On the other hand, authors, publishers, and illustrators may feel that they are acting as historians, recording and even contributing to Native culture.

When Native Americans tell Coyote myths they frequently include tribal sacred truths. Reprinted for young children, a story can become a caricature of the culture. Coyote is a psychological, folkloristic, and literary archetypal figure. Especially in a children's book it is tempting to transform an archetype to a stereotype, an over simplified image that conjures a fixed response and taps ex-

isting attitudes and feelings, usually with derogatory implications. For example, Coyote is foolish, and some readers may conclude that this reflects the foolishness of American Indians. The Trickster archetype, for example, is illustrated by the variety of terms and descriptions folklorists have used to describe Coyote. In articles and books Coyote has been described as an alienated figure; audacious; beneficent being bringing culture and light to his people and a creature of greed, lust and stupidity; betwixt and between; a braggart; one who breaks taboos; childish; a coward and the essence of courage; creator and destroyer; culture hero; a Demigod bringing culture and light to his people; one who dupes others and is duped himself, egotistical; an enemy of the boundaries; one whose function is to add disorder and so make it whole; a figure of the margins, yet somehow at the center; the First creator; one with gamy holiness; Gemini; a giver and negator; gross; an inspired handyman; humble braggadocio; an imitator; innocent; one who knows neither good nor evil; a likable rascal; lustful; a marginal figure; a mediating figure; one who merges the secular and the sacred; a negative hero; Old Man; one who rules by passion and appetite; the spirit of disorder; a tolerated margin of mess; a transformer; an unrestricted ego; vexing; a wandering hero; and my favorite, one who evades academic capture and definition.[1]

As a result of indifference or lack of knowledge, readers who stereotype lump together all "Indians," when in truth American Indian nations have different political, kinship, and philosophical systems. Native Americans also have different Trickster figures, and even those who share Coyote may assign different functions to his role. In the Southwest Hopi pueblos in New Mexico and Arizona, Coyote is usually a mischief-maker; for neighboring Navajos, he is often a menacing figure playing a role in sacred ritual (Stott 92). After one Northwest Indian told a Coyote story to a Southwest American Indian, the listener commented "He doesn't know Coyote. Coyote wouldn't eat fish" (Toelken 192).

Reading a story with illustrations is different than listening to a tale being told and creating mental pictures to accompany it. A picture book imposes the illustrator's interpretation. A kindergarten student asked storyteller Susan Strauss after hearing several Coyote stories, "Just who is Coyote? Is he a man or an animal or a spirit?"[2] Would a child respond in this way after seeing the illustrations in a picture book?

Story source notes provide an opportunity to give cultural information or information about a story, its characters, source(s) for the rendering of the text, and changes/adaptations made by the writer. Source notes in children's picture books, however, are often incomplete or misleading. Here are a few examples:

In *Coyote and the Laughing Butterflies,* edited by Harriet Peck Taylor, the acknowledgment states: "I gratefully acknowledge the American Folklore Society for permission to use this adaptation" (NP). The title of the article, author, and publication in which the story originally it appeared are not cited, however.

In *Coyote and the Firestick: A Pacific Northwest Indian Tale,* retold by Barbara Diamond Goldin and illustrated by Will Hillenbrand, the author notes at the end of the book that Coyote is the chief character in the legends of the Pacific Northwest, as well as in many stories told over the whole western half of North America. In reality, Raven is the Trickster figure for many Native American nations in the Pacific Northwest, and other Trickster figures are common in the Southwest, Plains, and Northeast. Interestingly, the illustrator's comments are more informed: "The Pacific NW Indians who told Coyote stories lived primarily in plateau areas of Washington, Oregon, and in northern California" (Goldin NP). The illustrator adds cultural information as well.

In *Coyote and Native American Folk Tales,* retold by Joe Hayes and illustrated by Lucy Jelnick, storyteller-author Hayes writes in the introduction: "Many American Indian stories are sacred. They are part of the religion of the people who tell them, and so belong to just one tribe or sometimes just part of a tribe. Sometimes Coyote plays a part in these religious stories. But, the Coyote stories in this collection are different. They are told for entertainment. They are especially loved by children, who delight in Coyote's foolish antics. These stories do not belong to any single tribe. Most of them can be found among Native peoples throughout the west" (6)[3]

Coyote: A Trickster Tale from the American Southwest, by Gerald McDermott, has extensive notes about Coyote but does not indicate the source of this particular story. *Coyote Goes Walking,* retold with pictures by Tom Pohrt, is another children's picture book with information about Coyote but no source note for the story text.

In *Coyote Places the Stars,* retold and illustrated by Harriet Peck Taylor, the author acknowledges using a traditional text and lists several sources, which add authenticity. Taylor proceeds to make structural and motivational changes to this traditional text, however, eliminating Coyote's first trip to the stars, and changing the motivation for his second trip without noting that she has adapted the story.

Paul Goble is a non-Native American author of children's Native American picture books acclaimed by both Native and non-Native reviewers. Goble's books have won Aesop Prize awards from the Children's Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society. In his introduction to *Iktomi and the Buzzard: A Plains Indian Story,* he has fun with the issue of non-Indians writing Indian folk tales:

> Hi kids! I'M IKTOMI! And proud of it! Don't read this book. That white guy, Paul Goble, is stealing my stories and making money off of them. This book is ethnically insensitive material about me; its racial epithets just bring me into contempt, ridicule and disrepute. Hey! You're G-R-E-A-T kids! I've got my rights; I don't have to put up with this derogatory, disreputable, disparaging, and denigrating slurs and offensive designations. I'm being victimized. I have always been here on this Turtle continent. And I'll be the last here, long after all white people have been forgotten. I'm no racist, but I'm excited just thinking about it! I'm nobody's football or baseball mascot! I was the first member of the Great Lakota Sioux Nation, born in Nihil, SD and etc., etc., etc. . .(NP)[4]

In *Ma 'ii and Cousin Horned Toad: A Traditional Navajo Story* told and illustrated by Shonto Begay, this Native American author's notes add to the text, including the following: "These stories show us proper ways to conduct ourselves. They also explain natural phenomena. But they are also pure entertainment. Whenever we come upon a horned toad we gently place it over our heart and greet it, 'Ya ateeh shi che' (Hello, my grandfather). We believe it

gives strength of heart and mind. We never harm our grandfather. Ma'ii is coyote" (NP).

A picture book is a compilation of pictures and story text. Both contribute to the authenticity of the publication and have the potential to be offensive. Beverly Slapin and Doris Seale, in their publication, *Through Indian Eyes: The Native Experience in Books for Children,* cite many books that lack consistency with the story's source and the illustrations. For example, in *Knots on a Counting Rope,* by Dine, the story is identified as taking place in the Navajo nation, but Slapin points out that the hair styles of the women are similar to those of Mandan, Piegan, Blackfeet, or Atsima, and the faces of the men are more northern Plains than anything else. While the authors state, "The costumes are a mix of Hopi and Navajo celebration garbs, because their reservations are so close to each other, the tribes usually participate together in ceremonies." Slapin comments, "Is it necessary to say that Hopi people would not be showing up at a Navajo horse race in sacred ceremonial gear?" (183).

In the publication, *Baby Rattlesnake,* a story attributed to Te Ata, a Chickasaw storyteller living in the Oklahoma territory, a Chickasaw tale is illustrated with Navajo clothing and Pueblo dwellings. In addition, the non-Native storyteller who is listed as co-author, Lynn Moroney, changes the traditional ending (which involves death as a punishment) without informing readers of the alteration.

Slapin disapproves of the illustrations in *Doctor Coyote,* by John Bierhorst, in which animal characters are dressed as Indians. Coyote wears blue jeans, a squash blossom necklace and drives a pickup He lives in a shack with a yard full of junk and an outhouse in the back. "Given the historical tendency of white people to think of the native population as being somewhere between animals and real human beings," Slapin has said, "these pictures, are to say the least, unfortunate" (127). As Jon C. Stott notes, "A picture book is a marriage of text and illustration and either one can serve to trivialize Coyote, using him as a messenger for heavy-handed moralizing or behavior modification" (26).

American Indian stories are often "owned" by families or nations, much as an author owns a copyright. Alexander Wolfe, a Salteaux storyteller, states, "Every family handed down its own

stories. Other stories, belonging to other families, could not be told, because to do so would be to steal."[5]

Telling a story to an anthropologist or non-Native friend does not mean granting permission for the story to be published, changed and prettified. In an article in *The Bloomsbury Review,* Margo Thunderbird is quoted as saying "They came for our land, for what grew or could be grown on it, for the resources in it, and for our clean air and pure water. They stole those things from us. And now, after all that, they've come for the very last of our possessions; now they want our pride, our history, and our spiritual traditions. They want to rewrite and re-make these things, to claim them for themselves"(Churchill 23). No wonder American Indians raise emotional and ethical issues about the publication of "their" stories!

Toelken writes in his textbook, *The Dynamics of Folklore,* "Should we stop publishing Navajo Coyote stories? . . . This is a good example of an irresolvable dilemma, one that has grown more acute through the years because folklore and anthropological field researchers have assumed the right of access to traditional materials and have assumed the right to publish or disseminate these materials however they saw fit without regard to the hesitancies, codes, taboos, and ritual concerns of the real owners of those stories. . . That they [Indians] feel dislocated and hurt while we feel only embarrassment is a clear indication of the differences in worldview. It is also testimony to the abuse of power" (284).

Publishing children's picture books is a business. The floodgates have long been opened, and Native American tales will continue to be published as long as parents and libraries buy these books. But these stories were created and meant for oral delivery, and the very process of adapting them for picture book presentation entails remodeling. Only with a balance of artistry and authenticity can these stories be maintained through informed rewritings so that they enhance multicultural comprehension. Revisions, adaptations, and translation of oral text into literary language can be done with sensitivity and respect-both to the story and to the people from whom the story was obtained. Source notes can provide information about where the text was obtained and how it was revised. Effort can be made to contact Native American storytellers to attempt to find out more about the story.

In the last decades, environmental consulting firms have met a need in our society. Perhaps a different kind of consulting firma folklore consulting firm-could offer services to publishers, not to hand out a seal of approval, but to guard against inaccuracies. Reviewers could ask such questions as: Did the authors attempt to talk to anyone from the Native American Nation about the story? Is the story still told? A Hopi tale illustrated with Navajo hairstyle and Coos lodges would be flagged. Currently, the implicit presumption seems to be that these stories are fossils, archaic remains bygone cultures. This organization could offer seminars for the publishing industry, discussing the responsibility involved in adapting Native American text. Since money, power, and ownership are issues, perhaps the publishers could designate a percentage of their profits to the American Indian Nation or to a Native American Indian organization. It is seductive to assume that a revised text is an improved text. This is frequently an inappropriate assumption, however. All of us can accept responsibility by writing book reviews and letting bookstores know when we feel a book is objectionable.

Former American Indian Movement (AIM) leader, Russell Means, states, "What's at issue here is the question that Europeans have always posed with regard to American Indians, whether what's ours isn't somehow theirs" (Churchill 24).

Sometimes a joke can make a point better than factual information:

Do you know what the Indians called this country before the Europeans arrived?

"Ours!"

NOTES

1. Munro S. Edmondson lists Trickster figures around the world in *An Introduction to the Science of Folklore and Literature.* New York: Holt, 1971. 142.

2. Quote here is taken from Susan Straus' *Coyote Stories for Children.*

3. The italics here were not in Joe Hayes' original text.

4. Goble is directly quoted here. The "etc., etc., etc. ." was not added.

5. M. Annette Jaimes, author of *Earth Elder Stories,* quoted by Lenore Keeshig- Tobias in "Poaching", page 118.

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NAPPY HAPPY:
A REVIEW OF BELL HOOKS' *HAPPY TO BE NAPPY*

NEAL A. LESTER

Don't remove the kinks from your hair.
Remove them from your brain.
-Marcus Garvey (1887-1940), founder,
United Negro Improvement Association

African American cultural critic and feminist theorist bell hooks' first children's book, *Happy to be Nappy,* is the political calm after the two-year storm of controversy that accompanied African American author, scholar, and educator Carolivia Herron's *Nappy Hair.*[1] Clearly not the socially and politically controversial text that Herron intentionally or unintentionally creates and defends as a positive message about the personal and communal acceptance of black folks' hair—particularly little girls' hair—*Happy to be Nappy* comes from a veteran participant in this discourse about the gender and racial politics of hair. Dedicated to her nieces Katrese and Sarah whom hooks identifies as "the sweetest of the sweet," the book achieves its racial and gender positive message by unilaterally challenging and replacing negative images and attitudes about black people's hair—its textures, its lengths, its grades, its shapes—with unquestioningly celebratory ones that define, self-empower, and unite

Happy to be Nappy follows a trail of children's books about African Americans and their hair. For instance, one of the earliest celebratory treatments of black children's hair comes in Camille Yarbrough's *Cornrows,* a book that uses the ritual and occasion of African American hairbraiding as a lesson in African history and storytelling. The inside cover describes the book's focus: "Mama's and Great-Grammaw's gentle fingers weave the design and their lulling voices weave the tale as they braid their children's hair into the striking cornrow patterns of Africa" (NP). In Alexis De Veaux's *An Enchanted Hair Tale,* young Sudan initially dislikes his dreadlocks because his friends and neighbors mock him, saying that it's "ugly, unsightly, and uncombed," and insisting that because of his dreadlocks, "He's strange. He's queer He's different" (14). When Sudan discovers a group of traveling circus performers with dreadlocks like his, he is convinced that his hair is wonderfully magical and enchanting. Tololwa M. Mollel's *The*

Princess Who Lost Her Hair, an Akamba Legend is a parable that attacks vanity and selfishness associated with a girl's long hair, hair that is initially taken away and restored. Nikki Grimes' *Wild, Wild Hair*, an early reader, shows the Monday morning ritual of a young girl's hair braiding. Because "Tisa Walker's hair was long and thick and wild" (NP), the morning combing ritual between Tisa and her mother becomes for the family a game of hide-and-seek as they each try to find Tisa to avoid being late for school. In the end, Tisa's hair is braided royally and adult-like. Carolivia Herron's *Nappy Hair* details in a call-and-response format of black southern churches a family's playfulness with a little brown girl's "nappy, frizzy, screwed up, squeezed up, knotted up, tangled up, twisted up hair"$(Np)^2$ hair that cannot and need not be tamed by harsh chemicals, a hot comb or public perception. Although there were parental objections to Herron's use of the loaded term "nappy" and to the fact that the white, allegedly culturally uninformed third-grade teacher "performed" the text in the black vernacular with her African American and Hispanic students, the book is one of celebration and cultural affirmation. Addressing her intentions in the book on the *Today* show, just a week or so after the controversy made national news, Herron clarifies: "I was just celebrating my hair and my little character's hair, my Brenda's hair. I was not trying to write a political book at all, although, I do, of course, know that the, word 'nappy' is loaded for many people. I'm a '60s person [and] . . . thought we went through the '60s and. . . dealt with this hair problem and that we loved our hair, guess I was living in another world" (Transcript 34). Finally, Natasha A. Tarpley's *I Love My Hair!* is a kind of fictionalized autobiography celebrating family and storytelling. In her "Author's Note," Tarpley explains:

> This is how I fell in love with my hair. When I was a little girl, my mother would often comb my hair in the evening before I went to bed. I would make myself comfortable between her knees as she rubbed sweet-smelling oil along the line of my scalp where she parted my hair. Then she would start to comb.
>
> Sometimes she would tell me stories to distract me from the pain of stubborn tangles. But what I enjoyed most

> about those evenings was being so close to my mother—the texture and sound of my hair sliding through her fingers, the different hairstyles she would create, the smell of the hair oil mixing with the lingering scent of her perfume. I loved the way we laughed and talked about the day's events, just the two of us.
>
> . . . [W]hen I sat between Mom's knees, I was at peace with my hair, at home again with myself.

On the controversy surrounding Herron's *Nappy Hair*, bell hooks weighed in at a February 1999 conference, "New World (Dis)Orders: Globalization, Culture and Identity" (Rutgers University), calling it a "dangerous cultural narrative," in which the players were the "shadow figure" of the "educated Harvard black woman" given legitimacy by her Harvard ties, and the "Playboy bunny white woman teacher," photographed seductively in hotel bedrooms by the press, who was "bringing truth to the natives." "And who are the natives?" hooks asked, "the parents demonized by the press?" Having read no press giving the parents a voice, hooks contended that the real problem at the heart of this issue was that "poor, black, working class parents actually felt that they could make an intervention, and they were stomped on. . . The tension started with the parents jumping out of their class to make a critique." "How," she asked, "do we divest ourselves of our white supremacy enough to hear the critique?" hooks' contribution to this dialogue on racial and gender politics of hair is an affirmation and self-acceptance of little black girls and by extension black women and their hair. Without the political binaries that can disrupt and confuse communal and individual identities in terms of artificial and polarized Eurocentric ideals and Afrocentric ideals related to hair, *Happy to be Nappy* is total affirmation-of cultural uniqueness, cultural ritual, and cultural identity.

The book's affirming and even defiant tone is imaged on the cover with its vibrant and warm pastel colors-oranges, light blues, browns, greens, and yellows, colors often associated with cheerfulness and playfulness, precisely the energy derived from experiencing and reading hooks' book. The drawings are playful, the language is simple and whimsical, and the incidental rhyming punc-

tuating certain ideas and drawings-sweetest/nieces, crown/ round, play/ away—reinforces the plethora of positive adjectives sprinkled throughout to describe both the hair types, textures, styles, shapes and sizes, adjectives that can also characterize the attitude of self-acceptance, presented throughout the text: happy, nappy, sweet, clean, soft, smooth, patted down [as in grounded and sure], tight [as in uptight and out of sight], close [as in unified mid unifying], hopeful, joy[ful], short and strong, girl happy. The words themselves create a mood poem, and the drawings dance as does the strand of hair that, as my ten-year-old daughter and seven-year-old son pointed out to me, is imaged in the words cursively written on the pages. The unfanciful almost rudimentary penmanship underscores the book's message of little black girls' fundamental self-acceptance, devoid of adult confusion about beauty politics and female identity.

The forthrightly political implications come in the book's deliberate denial of racist stereotypes associated with black people's hair: that it is dirty and stinky because of the hygiene grooming techniques exactly opposite hair grooming for whites. For instance, few black females and males are able to wash and dry their hair and head straight to the outside world—the white way—without oiling the scalp to avoid scalp dryness, Indeed, one sign of dirty hair for whites is that it is oily. In contrast, oiliness for blacks helps alleviate scalp flaking and itchiness. hooks recognizes here the racist myths of whites that know so little about black people's hair and respond to it simultaneously with curiosity[3] and repulsion. African American sociologist, comedian, and former talk show host Bertyce Berry offers a personal testimonial:

> One day in a grocery store, a young [white] girl looked at my dreadlocked hair and loudly exclaimed, "Mommy, that black lady has funny hair." The Mother, clearly embarrassed, and for some reason frightened, quickly hugged the child and said, "Yes, it is fancy." Not wanting to deny the child the opportunity to learn, I walked over and said, "No, she said 'funny.'" I offered the child the opportunity to touch my hair and she [the child] burst out into tears. I quickly grabbed her mother's hand and placed it on my hair, The mother now slightly less frightened, was amazed by the feel. "It's beautiful. How

> different," she said. The child now asked if she could touch it also. She did and a transformation occurred. She no longer found my hair strange, but asked her mother if she could make her hair like mine. (R8)

Berry's account is all too familiar to African Americans with new white college and grad school roommates or acquaintances. In this regard, *Happy to be Nappy* is also directed toward white audiences who are almost always amazed that there is such complexity associated with black people's hair. For those blacks subjected to white scrutiny of their hair—having it fondled and patted to see if it is as *coarse* as steel wool or sandpaper or sniffed to see if its scent is unpleasant, hooks merely asserts without adornment: "Girlpie hair smells clean and sweet/ is soft like cotton, flower petal billowy soft,/ full of frizz and fuzz" (NP).

Importantly, the book's whimsical feel and sound are balanced by the inclusion of important cultural rituals associated with hair. For instance, at least five of the thirty-two pages present ritual hair combing, brushing, and styling in process. Mothers and daughters and sisters and aunts and neighbors have used this time of hair preparation as familial and communal bonding. Although hooks has talked on other occasions about hair straightening as a time for female bonding with other women-a time full of rituals from gossip to storytelling-she recreates in this children's text these same rituals of safety, security, and intimacy.[4]

> On Saturday mornings we would gather in the kitchen to get our hair fixed, that is[,] straightened. Smells of burning grease and hair, mingled with the scent of our freshly washed bodies, with collard greens cooking on the stove, with fried fish. . . . In those days, this process of straightening black women's hair with a hot comb. . . was not connected in my mind with the effort to look white, to live out the standards of beauty set by white supremacy. It was connected solely with rites of initiation into womanhood. To arrive at that point where one's hair could be straightened was to move from being perceived as a child (whose hair could be neatly combed and braided) to being almost a

> woman. It was this moment of transition my [five] sisters and I longed for. ("Straightening Our Hair" 291)

While hooks makes no mention of hair straightening or relaxing in this book, she, at the same time, places no value on whether a child's hair is straightened chemically or unstraightened. Rather, hooks' emphasis is steadfastly on how the child feels about her hair no matter what has been done to it stylistically. Although hooks deals with straightening above, the same female bonding occurs in the everyday rituals of hair preparation presumably between a mother and daughter, she adds:

> Hair pressing was a ritual of black women's culture—of intimacy. It was an exclusive moment when black women (even those who did not know one another well) might meet at a home or in the beauty parlor to talk with one another, to listen to talk. . . . It was a world where the images constructed as barriers between one's self and the world were briefly let go, before they were made again. It was a moment of creativity, a moment of change. ("Straightening Our Hair" 291)[5]

Not coincidentally, the two-page spread of the four little girls having their hair combed by four women creates the image of a "beauty saloon"—even if it's the family kitchen—similar to what hooks' childhood revelry describes.

hooks' fanciful text neutralizes potentially loaded political words associated with blacks' hair—naps and kinks—of its negative associations by not polarizing the somewhat arbitrarily defined Eurocentric and Afrocentric ideals suggested in Carolivia Herron's *Nappy Hair:* "Ain't going to be nothing they come up with going to straighten this child's hair. . . . I'm talking about straightening combs. . . . I'm talking about relaxers and processes. . . . Ain't nothing going to straighten up the naps on this chile's head" (NP). hooks demonstrates in her book that public discussions of hair among black folks need not be politically divisive. Hence, her contribution to these hair tales is full of hope, celebration and joy personally and communally.

Aside from Chris Raschka's effective rudimentary crayon draw-

ings with watercolor strokes, the text reiterates community, especially among black women, by presenting about fourteen variously brown shaded "girlpie"[6] heads sprinkled thought the text, While one of the "girlpies" stands defiantly smiling on the cover of the book with both hands on her hips and a wide smile on her face—the young child clearly is not angry, confused or being womanish—she is joined at the story's end by the other thirteen girlpies in an eternal circle of personal and communal defiance. Their symbolic bond recalls the traditional figures of Little Sally Walker and her sister friends who "put their hands on their hips and let their backbones slip, as they shake it to the east and shake it to the west steadily shaking it to the ones that they love the best." The young girls' creative hair styles, textures, lengths, shapes, and sizes-along with their individual facial expressions but different skin colorings-render *Happy to be Nappy* a performance of black "girlpie happiness" in their celebrated nappiness. hooks' intent is *Heart and Soul* Editor-in-Chief Stephanie Stokes Oliver's dream regarding African American female identity:

> Surely we are coming into more positive thinking about our hair as we embrace the many varieties of natural hairstyles-and we find less damaging ways to "relax" it. But we should never relax our effort to keep it healthy and to *instill in our children positive feelings about their hair, whether it's straight, naturally curly, or tightly coiled*[7]
>
> Celebrate [black hair's] versatility and resilience. . . . Give thanks for the beautiful, unique, and wondrous textures of hair that we African American have been blessed with. (55)[7]

To the traditional childhood tune of "If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands," hooks' *Happy to be Nappy* might well add the following verse as African American mothers and daughters, sisters and aunts, female cousins and female neighbors join hands Singing:

> If you happy to be nappy, clap your hands
> If you happy to be nappy, clap your hands.
> If you happy to be nappy, my hairstyle's really snappy, If
> you happy to be nappy, clap your hands.

NOTES

1. Recall the November 1998 controversy over Herron's *Nappy Hair* when a white third grade teacher in Brooklyn, New York, read the book to students as part of multicultural celebration. While the students allegedly loved hearing the book read in its folkloric call-and-response, improvisational format and even dramatized movements with the responses to the teachers calls, some parents were outraged when they found student-requested xeroxed copies of pages from the book in their children's book bags. The poor quality of the xeroxed African Americans rendered the photographs caricaturishly dark. These parents were equally offended by the black vernacular languages used in the text as well as the very use of the word "nappy," assumed to have a racist and negative connotation, especially read aloud by a white teacher to black and Hispanic students. Concerns of racism reached national news, and the teacher and the author were threatened with violence by angry parents. Such controversy has led Herron and Professor Neal Lester (Arizona State University) to project a study guide to help contextualize the book for African American parents and for teachers unaware of the folkloric, social, and political history of blacks' attitudes toward hair.

2. Perhaps hooks offers direct response to Herron's text as hooks uses variations on Herron's words: frizz and fuzz, tight and close, combing, brushing, twisting, plaiting and lying flat, kinks gone, tight naps.

3. I was attending a multicultural children's book fair a few months ago and was seated on a bench examining my purchases when a little white boy, perhaps three or four years old, who was climbing on the bench already, came over unexpectedly and started playing with my six-inch dreadlocks. He flipped them up and down without saying a word as his mother looked on mortified. She apologized for the son, and I explained that there was no reason for apology. Meanwhile, I have a white female colleague, in my predominantly white English department, who always questions me about dreadlocks—why I decided to grow them, how they grow, how they are cleaned, what "dreadlocking" means etymologically. I see parallels in white curiosity between the adult and the child, curiosity that I had not witnessed in twenty years, when my first college roommate, a white male, wanted to pat my hair as "cultural exploration."

4. Alice Walker shows in her story, "Olive Oil," the sensuality and sexuality also associated with this ritual of hair care and grooming, a ritual foreign to many whites on many levels Walker explains first how Orelia discovers the arousing and soothing feel of olive oil she uses to rid her skin of its dryness:

> She remembered being a little black girl with skinny, knock-kneed ashy legs, and how every morning her

> mother had reminded her to rub them with Vaseline. Vaseline was cheap and very effective. Unfortunately Orelia almost always put on too much or forgot to wipe off the excess so everything she wore and everything on which she sat retained a slight film of grease. This greasiness about herself and her playmates (almost as ashy as she) eventually sickened her, especially when television and movies made clear that oiliness of any sort automatically put one beyond the social pale. The best white people were never oily, for instance, and she knew they put down readily poor whites and black people who were. (364)

The ritual of oiling her husband's scalp becomes a lesson in eroticism for readers as John sits between her legs as his wife massages and fondles his scalp:

> Orelia carefully covered John's shoulders with a towel and soon she was scratching huge flakes (embarrassingly many and large, to John) off his scalp and explaining how dandruff, especially among black people, was caused not only by a lack of moisture but by a lack of oil. "We're drier than most people, she said, "at least in America we are. . .
>
> As careful as a surgeon she divided his hair into dozens of segments and poured small amounts of oil between them. Then, using her fingers and especially her thumbs, she massaged his scalp vigorously, humming a little tune as she did.
>
> After she'd thoroughly oiled and massaged his scalp, she amused herself by making tiny corkscrew curls, "baby dreads," she called them, all over his head. She explained that tomorrow he could wash out any excess (though surprisingly the oil seemed to have soaked in instantly and there didn't seem to be any), leaving his scalp comfortable and his hair shiny. . .
>
> It was wonderful to John, sitting between Orelia's knees, feeling her hands on his head, listening to her hum softly and talk to him, an intimacy he'd longed for all his life. But one he had assumed would never be for him. His sisters, with their unruly locks, had enjoyed the haven between his *mother's* knees and between each other's knees, and between his aunts' cushiony knees, as they fiddled with each other's hair, but he, as a boy,

> had been excluded. He imagined himself as a small child and how much he must have wanted to get between somebody's knees; he imagined the first few times being cajoled and then being pushed away. He knew that if he went far enough back in his memories he would come upon his childhood self weeping and uncomprehending over this.
>
> But now. Look.
>
> John knew there was a *full* moon, he could feel it in the extra sensitivity of his body, and the fire made a gentle droning sound in the stove; the leaping of the flames threw heat shadows across his face. He felt warm and cozy and accepted into an ancient women's ritual that seemed to work just fine *for* him. It turned him on and gave him an idea.

5. Hair grooming has also been a time for teaching lessons when the younger child combs or scratches the head of an elder woman. Such a moment occurs in Spike Lee's movie, *Do the Right Thing* (1989), when Jade "parts, greases, and combs" Mother Sister's hair on the apartment stoop and listens to Mother Sister's comments on the ways of the world.

6. hooks uses "girlpie" as a term of endearment to describe little black girls, a word similar to perhaps more common words like "sweetie pie" and "cutie pie."

7. Italics added for emphasis.

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E-CONTRIBUTIONS

Andy Arleo forwarded the following news of recent childlore research in France:

1. Les croquemitaines Faire peur et éduquer, in Le Monde Alpin et Rhodanies 2-4/1998, Centre Alpin et Rhodanien dEthnologie, Grenoble (Musée Dauphinois, 30 rue Maurice-Gignoux, 38031 Grenoble cedex 1). 221 pp. volume on "croquemitaine" ("boogieman") traditions in cultures around the world, including Dauphine, Savoie, Vallee d' Aost, Occitaine, Peru, Asia, ancient Greece, Guinee Bissau, Scandinavia, etc.

2. Carole Chauvin-Payan, Comptines, formulettes et jeux enfantins dans les Alpes occidentales (région Rhône-Alpes, Suisse romande et Val d'Aoste). Etude gestuelle, rythmique et verbale. Doctoral dissertation, Universite Stendhal, Grenoble (Centre de Dialectologie), BP 25, 38040 Grenoble cedex 9. Excellent dissertation based on extensive field work and documentation. Develops an original code for transcribing gentures. Also presents musical and phonetic transcriptions of items, provides discussion of terminology, classification systems, etc.

3. A. Arleo, On the phonology of nonsense syllables, Proceedings of Ilemes Journées d'Etudes Linguistiques, Universite de Nantes, mars 1999, pp. 52-59. Analyzes syllable structure and types of phonemes found in different nonsense traditions including childlore, French and Anglo-American folksongs, and scat. I would be happy to send an offprint to anyone interested in the topic. (aarleo@club-internet.fr)

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-spaced, 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 Editors of *FOLKLORE* have issued the following Call for Papers: We hope to be able to feature a "seminar" on children's folklore in a future issue. If you have a research article on this subject, an item to contribute to out "Topic Notes and Queries" section, or a bibliography or bibliographic essay, please send three copies to: Dr. Gillian Bennett, Centre for Human Communication, Manchester Metropolitan University, Didsbury Campus, Manchester M20 2RR, Manchester/UK.

Children s *Folklore: A Source Book,* edited by Brian Sutton-Smith, Jay Mechling, Thomas W Johnson, and Felicia R. McMahon, originally published by Garland in 1995, is scheduled to be republished in the fall of 1999 by Utah State University Press. The collection of essays originated with members of the Children's Folklore Section, and all of the contributors were then (and many still are) members of CFS. Royalties from the book continue to fund the maintenance and expansion of the Children's Folklore section of the Utah State University Archives.

The Children's Folklore Section now has its own web site at the AFS website at: www.afsnet.org/sections/children/

CONTRIBUTORS

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

Neal A. Lester is a Professor of English at Arizona State University, where he teaches African American literature. In addition to publishing the first comprehensive study of the dramas of poet-playwright Ntozake Shange, *Ntozake Shange. A Critical Study of the Plays* (1995), he has published on slave narratives, womanism and dance, rap, African American children's games, brown angels in American culture, African American homocentrism, and black female sexuality. His *Understanding Zora Neale Hurston's* Their Eyes Were Watching God: *A Student Casebook to Issues, Sources and Historical Documents* is forthcoming.

Ruth Stotter is the former director of the Storytelling Certificate Program at Dominican College, San Rafael, CA. She is currently president of the Folk Narrative Section of the American Folklore Society and has served on the Aesop Award Committee of the Children's Folklore Section. She is a professional storyteller and is included in *Storytellers: A Biographical Dictionary of 120 English Speaking Performers Worldwide,* Corki Miller and Mary Ellen Snodgrass (MacFarland 1998).

Elizabeth Tucker teaches folklore in the English Department at Binghamton University. She is a past president of the Children's Folklore Section and has published a number of articles and book chapters on various aspects of children's folklore. She is the owner of a small but colorful collection of Barney memorabilia, which she has brought along while giving occasional presentations about Barney at other universities. At present, she is assembling Teletubby information that may find its way into another article.