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Cover: Photograph of W.W. Newell courtesy of Harvard University Archives.

FROM THE EDITOR. . .

Well, I had hoped to be back on schedule with this issue, but it seems not meant to be. On top of everything else that is going on right now, including the October AFS meeting in Pittsburgh and a 12 day trip to Wales in November, the computer sent "disk error" messages to me as I was editing the articles which appear herein. So it was back to the hard copies, rescan them onto disks, and reedit them. Still, here we are again.

This issue of CFR begins in a folklore-in-literature orientation. Millicent Lenz's "Mythologizing Chief Seattle: Susan Jeffers' *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky* or How to Make a Myth in Ten Easy Steps" takes a hard look at the ways traditional materials can be used and, perhaps, misused in children's literature in general and a specific look at the timely use of the Chief Seattle materials in a specific book. Her evaluations are very like those we hear each year from the Aesop Award Committee. Gwenda Davey's "What's for Dinner?" discusses the differences between the folklore of children and folklore for children, the latter being that folklore which adults use with children for various social purposes. Among her arguments is one which suggests that folklore for children helps educate them into adult cultural worldview. The final article, mine, suggests that there are several perceptual considerations which make the study of children's folklore by adults more problematic than many collectors may have realized or admitted.

Normally, my own articles do not appear in this journal (except, perhaps, when a guest editor is doing the selecting), but I have been prevailed upon to publish the paper I read in Lafayette, "Knowing What Children Believe: Believing What Children Know" in *CFR*. And let me say that had there not been space available in this issue, the article would not be here.

Thanksgiving is almost upon us as I type this. I hope the holidays have found you well and traditionally occupied.

C.W. Sullivan III

Mythologizing Chief Seattle: Susan Jeffers' *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky* or How to Make a Myth in Ten Easy Steps[1]

Millicent Lenz

To make a myth, follow these ten easy steps:

1. When selecting a candidate for mythological status, choose a figure from the past who is emblematic of a constellation of current, much-in-vogue ideas; a Native American chieftain who evokes the "noble savage" image and suggests the indigenous people's respect for nature would be a perfect choice;

2. To make your job easier, give preference to someone whose name is known yet whose actual life is shrouded in mystery: the fewer facts known about the person, the better. This allows room for invention. If the person's name is identical with the name of a well known city, so much the better;

3. Choose someone who never committed anything to writing. Ideally, like Jesus of Nazareth, his sayings should belong to an oral tradition. You can therefore not be challenged by types who inhabit libraries and archives and might confront you with letters, diaries, or other primary sources to contradict your "version" of what he said;

4. If possible, engage the mass media to broadcast a docudrama using your invented text as a script. People in the semi-hypnotic state induced by constant television-viewing will not be likely to watch the credits closely. You may find it advisable to omit the credits altogether, or simply attribute the script to your chosen chieftain;

5. To cover the audience who may have missed the television broadcast, make your narrative widely available in the popular press, attaching the Native American's name without any acknowledgment to sources;

6. If you are fortunate, a picture book author/illustrator will find your invention compelling and produce a lavishly illustrated book for young children, so your story will grip their imaginations at an age when their critical intelligence has yet to come into full play;

7. You will also find help from descendants of the shadowy chieftain who have adopted your mythical fiction as "truer than true"; desire to believe is more powerful than the dry data of mediocre fact;

8. Time your presentation to appear at the crest of a social, political or ecological controversy. Earth Day would be ideal;

9. The widespread myth-deprivation in contemporary society

will work to your advantage; the unappeased hunger for myth will increase demand for your story;

10. Do not worry if some pedantic professor challenges your "facts," for after all this will stir up controversy and consequently help your myth achieve even greater currency.

Susan Jeffers' *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky* has occasioned much praise and blame—praise for the sumptuous artwork and the timely environmental message, blame for a lack of authenticity in its representation of Native Americans and its departure from what is known of Chief Seattle's actual words (Caldwell-Wood, 31). Its great commercial success has made it an easy target; other versions of Chief Seattle's story for young people exist yet have never been much heeded.[2]

Jeffers has endeavored to justify her treatment of Chief Seattle by noting in her afterword that "the origins of Chief Seattle's words are partly obscured by the mists of time" and his message is sometimes called a letter and sometimes a speech. She further explains that Seattle's words were transcribed by Dr. Henry A. Smith, whose transcription "was interpreted and rewritten more than once in this century." Calling her own text an adaptation of Seattle's message, she concludes: "What matters is that Chief Seattle's words inspired—and continue to inspire—a most compelling truth: In our zeal to build and possess, we may lose all that we have." Jeffers admonishes white people, as latecomers to environmental awareness, to listen to the wisdom of the Native American people, to learn from them the sacredness of the earth, and to cultivate the humility to respect the interconnectedness of all life (Afterword).

It would be unreasonable to expect Jeffers, in a brief work for young readers, to give the complete, complex history of Chief Seattle's speech. Attacks on this book have been, I believe, overly harsh and sometimes simplistic in their criticisms. Besides being "obscured by the mists of time," Chief Seattle's speech was deliberately misrepresented by others prior to Jeffers' rendering of it. Jerry L. Clark of the National Archives and Records Administration has spoken of the "propagandistic and polemic purposes" to which Seattle's supposed oration has been subjected (58). It is this misappropriation of Seattle's image and name by others to promote their own "gospel" which is truly deplorable.

The questions raised by *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky* are important ones. What did Chief Seattle say, as far as we can determine from this remote perspective? How much of his original message survives in *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky,* and how much of the text is instead based on myth, folklore, fakelore, or perhaps just plain old-fashioned artistic license? Going beyond

this particular book to a question of critical principles: Does the writer (and more particularly, a writer for young readers) have the obligation to present an authentic rendering of the "original" text? May he or she justifiably take liberties with the text to make it more accessible and heighten its artistic effect?

First, what did Chief Seattle actually say? A number of writers have revealed the "fakelore" element in the version of Chief Seattle's speech as it is usually printed today. The fullest explanation of the history of Seattle's speech in all its permutations may be found in Rudolf Kaiser's *Indians and Europe: An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays* or in his earlier, separately published *"A Whole Religious Concept,"* which prints five versions, the oldest being Henry A. Smith's transcription, published in 1887. The actual date of the original speech, as Kaiser notes, was either November or December, 1853, at a reception for Governor Stevens, upon his appointment as the new commissioner of affairs for the Indian Territory, or December, 1854, on the occasion of Stevens' return from a trip to the East. Kaiser corrects the sources that mistakenly claim the speech was delivered in Duwamish; the name of Chief Seattle's language was not Duwamish (which is the name of his tribe) but Lushotseed, the language of his people. As was customary in those times, his words were probably then translated by an interpreter, perhaps first into the "interlanguage" called Chinook Jargon, then into English. As Kaiser points out, "whether Dr. Smith took his notes of Seattle's native Lushotseed or of the translation on the spot, must remain open. . . . this point is not actually very relevant, because Dr. Smith does not even claim to give a full record of Seattle's speech in the original phrasing." Thus, even the most nearly authentic rendering of Seattle's words, in the selection of the material and the formulation of the text, may belong as much to Dr. Smith as Seattle. Consequently, "There is no way of determining the degree of authenticity of this text" *("A Whole Religious Concept,"* 9-10).

For those who wish to trace the known historical records, Kaiser presents and analyzes five versions with admirable precision. My own purpose is to analyze the content of Chief Seattle's speech as Dr. Smith rendered it, and then to show how this longer text differs from the brief text of Jeffers' book in its content, its rhetoric, and its major images. As I shall show, Jeffers' book retains almost nothing of the original but instead draws upon a later and spurious document.

A linguistic/literary analysis of what Seattle said, as recorded by Smith, yields these points. He began by aligning himself with the ideal of speaking truth. Addressing the great chief in Washington, he states that his words are trustworthy, not changing with the sky, but like the stars that never set. Thus he establishes his image as one who does not speak with a forked tongue, by

implication disassociating himself from the white people who desire title to his people's lands.

Seattle also uses extreme politeness: The white chief is "kind" to send "greetings of friendship and goodwill" to a vulnerable people, for the powerful white man has no need of the native people's friendship in return. The rhetoric reveals Seattle's perception of the disproportion in power between the presumably great and good white chief, who offers Seattle's tribe "reserve enough to live on comfortably." Is it a presumption to read irony in Seattle's assertion that "the red man no longer has rights that [white leaders] need respect" and no longer needs "great country"?

Seattle shows complexity, expressing a mixture of pride and humility. Refusing to "mourn over our untimely decay" or to "reproach my pale-face brothers with hastening it," he tries to soothe the angry young men of his tribe with the balm of aged wisdom. The older and wiser among his people realize that revenge "is not gain" and wish for hostilities to cease.

More evidence of pride is seen in his rejection of the paternalism of the white chiefs offer to "be our father" and "we. . . his children" because "Your God loves your people and hates mine . . . he has forsaken his red children.... They seem to be orphans and can look nowhere for help." The powerful orphan metaphor is elaborated by calling the god of the whites "partial" for giving "no word for His red children."

Seattle insists on separation between the red and white peoples, for basically religious reasons: "We are two distinct races and must ever remain so. There is little in common between us." The white's lack of respect for "sacred" ashes of ancestors, which "hallow" the ground where the native Americans' ancestors rest, further divides the two. Seattle's people base their religion on tradition, respect for elders and the dead, and the visions of their sachems. Their dead continue from beyond the grave to love "the beautiful world that gave them being"; they visit and comfort the "lonely hearted living." In another metaphor of alienation, Seattle identifies his people with the "night" which flees at the approach of "the blazing morning sun," which represents the white people.

His eloquent elegy for his people, the most poetic part of his speech, portrays them as pursued by a "grim Nemesis" and entering "a dark night." He hears the "approaching footsteps of the fell destroyer"; his tribe is like the "wounded doe" pursued by the "hunter." The possible ecological implications of his imagery remain unstated. Again, the pattern is one of strong opposition between his people, who are vulnerable and prize the sacredness of relationships, and the conquering whites, who are ruled by their acquisitive values. In only one respect does he find a bond between his people and the whites: Their "common destiny" of mortality. Where the common fate of

death is concerned, we are after "brothers."

In closing, Seattle makes his acceptance of the great white chief's proposal a conditional one. The "just" proposition put forward by the white chief will be accepted and his people will "retire to the reservation" to "dwell apart and in peace" only if the native Americans will not be denied "visiting at will the graves of our ancestors and friends"; the land is hallowed by "fond memory" and "sad experience," for the dust of ancestors "responds more lovingly to our footsteps than to yours," being "rich with the life of our kindred." And prophetically he ends on an admonition: "Let him [the white man] be just and deal kindly with my people, for the dead are not altogether powerless"—the "invisible dead of my tribe" will be surrounding white people in their cities and villages, which they mistakenly think are empty. Unknown to the white people, the spirits of the dead Indians will haunt them.

How different a book *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky* would have been had it followed Seattle's words as faithfully as possible. As it is, virtually none of his actual concepts and metaphors survive in the text of Jeffers' book. Ironically, even Chief Seattle's own direct descendant, Jewell Praying Wolf James (a lineal nephew), seems to have been taken in.[3] In an unsolicited letter to Dial Press, he writes:

> *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky* is another version of our famous chief s 1854 speech. We recognize there is controversy associated with different versions, but in the way of our people the importance is that the speech comes from the heart and people should hear it from the heart . . . . Susan Jeffers and Dial books have taken Chief Seattle's words and transformed them into an experience children of all ages and localities can use to stimulate an awareness of a natural world that is rapidly losing its beauty. (Quoted in Frederick)

It is possible that Jeffers was not aware that the version she followed reflects not Dr. Smith's rendering but a much later document authored by English professor Ted Perry. In 1969 or 1970, while a professor at the University of Texas, Perry wrote a script for the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Convention to be used as the narration for the film "Home," aired on television in 1972.

Drawing upon Professor Perry's own testimony, the history of his text then becomes bizarre. Perry told his story in a letter to Carl Ross, a Swedish correspondent of William Arrowsmith, the philosopher and poet, who was at the time a colleague of Perry at the University. Arrowsmith had written an adaptation of Seattle's speech in which he excised the flowery Victorian prose of Dr. Smith. Arrowsmith's adaptation was then used, with his permis-

sion, as a starting point for Perry's admittedly fictional creation. Perry's letter, dated May 19, 1978, gives his version of events. Kaiser's explication of Perry's perspective is as follows:

> This so-called speech by Seattle [Perry's, which is Kaiser's version 4]—which has by now conquered the imagination of millions of people in many countries all over the world-this text was in its main parts written in the winter of 1970/71 as a filmscript for the Southern Baptist Convention by Ted Perry, at that time teaching at the University of Texas. He used as his opening lines brief portions from Seattle's speech—versions No. 1,2 and 3—but then composed his own ecological text. In the film the Southern Baptists—who probably also enlarged on Ted Perry's filmscript—neglected to give credit to Ted Perry for his part in the filmscript, but gave credit to Seattle for what he in fact had never said nor written. (Kaiser, *"A Whole Religious Concept"* 19)

Perry's story is corroborated by William Arrowsmith. They agree that Perry originated the "ecological" emphasis, but as Arrowsmith says, Perry never intended the script to be attributed to Seattle. He in fact "broke with his producer and the Baptists over their highhanded procedures" in not only insisting on using Seattle's name (which Perry admits he mistakenly used in the body of the text), but adding still more "material" which Arrowsmith terms "the (Baptist) religiosity of *their* Seattle" (Arrowsmith, quoted in Kaiser, *"A Whole Religious Concept"* 18). The text of Jeffers' book, which follows this ecological version, anachronistically presents a Chief Seattle who seems to be an ideological twin to Vice President Al Gore.

The tantalizing question remains: How could the falsified version, almost completely counter to what Dr. Smith reported Seattle said and variously called "spurious," "bogus," "fraudulent," "a pollution of the past," so capture the imaginations of hundreds of thousands of people all over the world? Kaiser ventures these possible explanations: The text expresses thoughts and feelings that preoccupy many minds today-the complex of ideas which circle round the terms such as "ecology," "exploitation of nature," "pollution," "conservation of natural resources," "alternative ways of life." As one person observed, "If it wasn't written it should have been" (Lindholm). Further, the remarkable rhetorical effectiveness of "the imagery, the symbolism, the phrasing and the wording of the text" enables it to succeed as "a mythical or religious statement [rather] than as a historical document." Moreover, the words express "a holistic cosmic relationship, i.e. of a world-family, where everything—man, animal, plant, mineral—is related to every

thing else," and they depict the "concept of world-piety, in which man adopts a revering attitude towards all nature. These ideas and concepts, which are certainly not foreign to Indian thinking, may well prove to be the salient point of this text for a society which has always neatly separated the temporal and the spiritual and in this way has tried to justify man's claim that all the non-sacred world is at his disposal" (Kaiser, *"A Whole Religious Concept"* 2021).

The Perry/Southern Baptist text satisfies the thirst of contemporary society for a "sacramental" view of nature, a perspective subverted in the dominant Western white people's world view, though it exists in an underground Western tradition (e.g. Saint Francis of Assisi in the 13th century; Meister Eckhart, the mystic who so strongly influenced Julian of Norwich; Hildegard of Bingen; the Carmelite tradition, and, to move to contemporary writers, Thomas Berry, Matthew Fox, Susan Griffin, and Theodore Roszak, to name Just a few examples.[4]

What then does *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky* present in place of Seattle's elegiac and foreboding message? The central metaphors and ideas of *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky* are (a) the metaphor of Earth as a Mother and the related idea that all creatures including human beings belong to the Earth; (b) the related metaphor of the brotherhood or family of all beings; (c) the "web" metaphor dramatizing the interrelatedness of all things; (d) the idea of preserving nature for the future and posterity. All of these elements serve, as Naomi Caldwell-Wood has noted, the book's intent to "illuminate the strong relationship Indian people have with the environment and how this relationship must be respected and maintained" (31). What disheartens her, she continues, is "a lack of sensitivity for the accurate portrayal of the Suquamish people" whose "ghostlike" images are "dressed in Sioux (Dakota, Lakota) regalia. This flaw perpetuates the misconception that all Native people dress alike." She finds even more disturbing the portrayal of a "lone white family" replanting a forest without assistance from people of other ethnicities. Moreover, the illustrations of clear cutting and replanting are misleading. As she says,

> Native people believe in using only what is needed in order to maintain a balance. A balance cannot be maintained by cutting all of the trees down and replanting with seedlings. (31)

These are cogent points and suggest in what respect Jeffers' book may fairly be said to fall short.

There is still the question, however, of authorial responsibility for authenticity in the use of traditional, folk materials. I would like to propose these guidelines. First, respect the concept of "ownership" of traditional

stories by supplying a bibliography of sources, indicating insofar as possible the most nearly authentic text. Second, have illustrations critiqued by those who have expertise in the subject matter depicted; presumably editors and publishers might be involved in this process, but authors and illustrators cannot abdicate responsibility altogether. Third, when depicting an actual historical figure, refrain from putting words into his or her mouth which cannot be documented. If your creative impulses feel too constrained by this requirement, invent a fictional character and give your imagination free rein. Benefit from the mistake of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Convention, which might better have created a fictional chief. And lastly, as Chief Seattle appears to have said, remember that the spirits of the dead are watching, and they are going to haunt you if you are guilty of misrepresentation.

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NOTES

1. This paper in an abbreviated version was read by the author at the Children's Literature Association Conference in Durham, NH, June, 1995.

2. Other books on Chief Seattle for children include Mel Boring's *Sealth* (Minneapolis: Dillon Press, 1978), Elizabeth Rider Montgomery, *Chief Seattle: Great Statesman* (Champaign, IL: Garrard, 1966), and several others.

3. Jewell Praying Wolf James is the author of a book forthcoming from Dial Press in 1996, *Seattle and the Indian in the Moon.*

4. For a discussion of some of these perspectives on the natural world, see Millicent Lenz's *Nuclear Age Literature for Youth: The Quest for a Life-Affirming Ethic* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1990), Chapter 9, "A Life-Affirming Ethic."

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"What's for Dinner'!" "Duck Under the Table": Traditional Verbal Sayings Addressed to Children by Adults

Gwenda Heed Davey

Children's folklore is one of the most authentic, widespread and ancient of folkloric traditions. It is a tradition which has received considerable research attention in Australia, and in 1979 June Factor and I established the Australian Children's Folklore Collection, now housed at the University of Melbourne. The Collection includes more than 10,000 card files listing children's games, rhymes, riddles, jokes, superstitions and other kinds of childhood folklore, together with photographs, audio and video tapes, play artefacts, and a number of specialist collections of children's lore.

Children's folklore can be discussed along a number of dimensions, of which the major categories are folklore *of* children and folklore *for* children, depending on whether the main transmitters of the lore are children or adults. Only the first dimension of children' s folklore, their own playground lore (or the folklore *of* children), has been well documented in Australia, most recently and notably in June Factor's study *Captain Cook Chased a Chook: Children's Folklore in Australia* (1988). This book received the 1989 Opie Prize from the American Folklore Society for the best publication in children's folklore in the preceding year. The first major book describing Australian children's traditional play lore was however *Cinderella Dressed in Yella* (1969) produced by the late Ian Turner, Associate Professor of Australian History at Monash University in Melbourne.

The second major dimension of children's folklore is folklore which adults address to children, namely folklore *for* children. Apart from nursery rhymes and folk tales, this category of children's folklore has been little studied. Children's folklore can also be categorised as folklore *about* children, which includes folk beliefs about children. One example of this type is what are sometimes called "old wives' tales," for example the belief that "if you tickle a baby's feet you'll make it stutter." A final, less clear-cut dimension of children's folklore considers the notion of *children as apprentices* in the learning of adult folkways. These folkways may range from table manners to participation in religious or secular rituals and ceremonies. Folklore *for* children includes numerous types, some of which overlap, and I am certain that the following list is not exhaustive:

Lullabies (e.g. Rockabye Baby on the Tree Top)
Nursery Rhymes (e.g. Humpty Dumpty)
Rhymes and Chants (e.g. Pat a Cake)
Tickling games (e.g. Round and Round the Garden)
Finger plays and other body games (e.g. Here's the Church and Here's the Steeple)
Bouncing (dandling) rhymes (e.g. Ride a Cock Horse)
Pencil and paper games (e.g. Boxes or Dots)
Proverbs (e.g. Too many Cooks)
Reprimands or evasions (e.g. A Wig-Warn for a Goose's Bridle)
Warnings (e.g. If the wind changes...)
Toys (e.g. peg dolls)
Tales or "modern legends" (told to older children e.g. concerning public toilets or cinemas and white slavery)
Superstitions (e.g. don't walk on the cracks in the footpath)
Fairy tales (e.g. Goldilocks and the Three Bears)
Home-made stories or reminiscences (e.g. When I was a boy...)
Rituals (e.g. Father Christmas or the Tooth Fairy)
Jokes (e.g. riddles or knock-knocks)
Teases (e.g. Which hand will you have?)
Songs (e.g. What shall we do with the drunken sailor?)
Parodies (e.g. Oh X has got a bunion, a face like a pickled onion)
Prayers (e.g. Now I lay me down to sleep)
Games (e.g. How many buttons etc. in my hand?)
Misinformation (e.g. Where babies come from)
Drawings (e.g. stick figures)
Paper dolls (made with scissors)

All of these forms of folklore for children are practised by adults for children's amusement or edification. Like children's own playground games, much of this type of folklore is of great antiquity and is one of the most interesting examples of the continuity of folk traditions within modem society.

A common type of folklore for children involves idioms used in everyday speech, such as threats, retorts, reprimands and other formulaic statements. With the notable exception of Widdowson's 1977 study from Newfoundland, *If You Don't be Good: Verbal Social Control in Newfoundland,* there has been little scholarly attention to this interesting type of children's folklore which might be described as "family sayings." Some of my own collection of family sayings have been published in *Snug as a Bug* (1990) and *Duck Under the Table* (1991). My collecting has all been in Australia, from informants representing three generations, and it includes some items similar to those quoted by Widdowson from Newfoundland, for example:

If the wind changes [while you're pulling that face, etc.] you 'Il stay that way.

If you don't be good, Santa won't come.
Do you want the back of my hand?

Such similarities are interesting indications of the international spread of verbal folklore in Anglophone communities. As well as threats such as the above, verbal folklore used by adults with children includes homilies such as:

Don't care was made to care,
Don't care was hung;
Don't care was put in a pot,
And made to hold his tongue.

It also includes warnings such as *"If you cry on your birthday, You'll cry all the year,* " reprimands such as *"Little pigs have big ears"* or *"Your eyes are too big for your belly,* " exhortations to *"Eat your crusts or your hair won't curl,* " pacifiers such as *"Don't get off your bike"* or *"Don't get your knickers in a knot"* and tricks and jokes such as:

I'll tell you a story
About Jack a Nory.
Shall I begin it?
That's all that's in it.

My collecting has not only been within Anglophone communities. Australia is today one of the world's great immigrant and multicultural societies, with more than one hundred languages regularly spoken, and I have collected family sayings in a number of different languages. There is a surprising similarity between different language groups, in the jocular and sometimes sharp parental retorts to children's persistent questions such as *"What's for dinner, Mum?"*. A Greek mother might say *"My liver and kidneys!"* and a Croatian mother *"Cakes with honey,"* whereas some English-language answers to *"What's for dinner?* " are *"Duck under the table"* or *"Bread and scrape.* " I have also collected in Australia traditional replies to children's requests to know how old an adult is; *"as old as my tongue and as young as my teeth"* is Anglo-Australian and *"twenty-five years per leg"* is Italo-Australian.

How might these family sayings be understood? Widdowson's study has only concerned itself with verbal social control, usually expressed in the form of threats. He describes some of the characteristics of the threats thus:

> The threats warn of three principal retributive consequences, either singly or in combination.

1. The intervention of some real or imaginary external figures, to which responsibility for punishment is delegated and which will take the child or harm him in some way.
2. Alienation of parental affection and revocation of familial security.
3. Physical punishment by the parent or other adult. (27)

I think however that the whole genre of traditional family sayings for children has much wider ramifications than simple social control, and much may indeed be considered as verbal art. While preparing the manuscript of *Duck Under the Table*, I roughly classified its two hundred items under headings which are listed below, with one example for each:

Advice, Exhortations etc. (e.g. *Good better best, never let it rest* etc.) Arguments (e.g. *I've got a bone to pick with you)*
Bed Time (e.g. *Come on, hit the sack!)*
Body Noises and Functions (e.g. Child: *My hand's itchy! That means you're coming into money)*
Busy (e.g. *I'm flat out like a lizard drinking)*
Compliments (e.g. *Your blood's worth bottling)*
Descriptions (e.g. *You look like something the cat dragged in)*
Don 't (e.g. *Don't bust your boiler)*
Exasperation (e.g. *What did your last slave die of?)*
Exclamations (e.g. *Bob's your uncle!)*
Fatalism, Philosophising (e.g. *What won't fatten will fill)*
Food, Meals (e.g. *You must have hollow legs)*
Feelings, Health etc. (e.g. *You've got the collywobbles)*
How (e.g. Child: *How far is it? Twice as jar as from here to there)*
Insults (e.g. *You can stew in your own juice)*
Just for Fun (e.g. *I forgive you, thousands wouldn't)*
Manners (e.g. *All joints on the table will be carved)*
Proverbs, Moral sayings etc. (e.g. *Rooster today, feather duster tomorrow)*
Sarcasm, Sharp retorts etc. (e.g. *I wasn't born yesterday)*
Secrets (e.g. *Don't let the cat out of the bag)*
Teases (e.g. *I can see your poppy show)*
Threats (e.g. *I'll come down on you like a ton of bricks)*
What (e.g. Child: *What's that? A silver new nothing)*
What's for Dinner (e.g. *Bread and pullet)*
What's the Time (e.g. *Time you got a watch)*
Where (e.g. Child: *Where's Mum? Up the river shooting oysters)*
Why (e.g. *Because Y's a crooked letter and Z's no better)*

A few of these sayings should probably be eliminated from a discussion of folklore for children, since they can also be used between adults. Thus an appreciative adult might tell another adult that "your blood's worth bottling."

Nevertheless, most of them, and particularly the responses to persistent questioning such as "What's for dinner?" are only used in adult-to-child interaction. It is true that some of these sayings are used for purposes of social control, as Widdowson has asserted. However, I can identify eight functional categories, and believe this type of traditional family verbal lore can involve the following characteristics:

Direct control
Evasion or obscurantism
Comment or reflection
Bonding or affection
Enjoyment of verbal display, performance
Adult mystique
Tension reduction
Education, training

Examples of each are as follows:

Direct control *(If you don't be good I'll drop ya - like a mozzie on Mt. Kozziel)*[1]
Evasion *(A wigwam for a goose's bridle)*
Comment *(Money doesn't grow on trees)*
Bonding *(You're a sight for sore eyes)*
Performance *(Two heads are better than one, even if they are only sheep's)*
Adult mystique *(Little pigs have big ears)*
Tension reduction *(What do you think this is, bush week?)*
Education *(Put your best foot forward)*

I acknowledge that there is overlap between the categories. I have no belief in infallible systems of classification, but have devised the above as an indication of the possibilities for going beyond Widdowson's emphasis on "social control," and for extending discussion of the meaning of this traditional verbal folklore which adults use with children. It is of course possible that the functional analysis should not be taken too seriously, and that all types of traditional family sayings should rather be regarded—and admired—as yet another form of adult verbal art.[2]

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NOTES

1. "Mozzie" = mosquito. "Kozzie" is a common abbreviation for Australia's highest mountain, Mt. Kosciusko.
2. This paper was originally presented to the 1995 American Folklore Society Annual Meeting at Lafayette, Louisiana.

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Knowing What Children Believe: Believing What Children Know

*C.W. Sullivan **III***

Children's Folklore is an age-bounded folklore which circulates among children up to about age twelve. The official study of American children's folklore is generally considered to have begun with W.W. Newell, a president of the American Folklore Society and an editor of the *Journal of American Folklore.* Early studies by Newell *(Games and Songs of American Children,* 1883) or Alice B. Gomme *(The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland,* 1894-1898) and those who immediately followed focused first on games and game rhymes, and the study of children's folklore expanded slowly from that beginning. In the second half of the twentieth century, however, the study of children's folklore has expanded more rapidly and now includes examinations of all of the genres or sub-genres identified as folklore and has also expanded to include the folklore of adolescents. But the collecting of children's folklore presents some problems unique to that subject matter and the informants from whom it is collected, problems which stem from the fact that, for the most part, it is adults who are doing the collecting.

In "Children's Folklore," chapter 5 of Elliott Oring's *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: An Introduction,* children's folklorist Jay Mechling comments:

> The white, male folklorist recognizes that he will never really know what it means to be a black woman, but we all think that we know what it means to be a child. (91)

The implication, here, is quite significant. Mechling suggests that folklorists who collect from children—or, perhaps worse, those who collect from other adults their memories of what they did when they were children-fail to recognize that they are collecting materials from members of a significantly different culture and must proceed accordingly. And while many children's folklorists have, like Mechling, commented on this situation, no one has, thus far, attempted to delineate the ways in which or the reasons why the adult culture has become and is now separate from that of the child. I want to examine this situation and the assumptions upon which this and other comments Mechling makes in his article are based.

Cultural worldview is something into which members of a

culture are educated, not something that comes with birth; and it takes only a few examples to illustrate the assertion that children see the world differently from adults. Children's literature critic and reading theorist Peter Hunt recounted to me [although he wrote it up differently] an evening's reading to his daughter, Felicity, of Shirley Hughes' *Up and Up*. One page was divided into three separate vertical panels: the first showed a little girl holding a bunch of helium balloons, the second showed her being lifted off the ground, and the third showed the balloons being burst by an over-hanging tree branch. Felicity studied the page for a moment, pointed to the second panel, and said: "That girl still has her balloons!" Where the adult reader saw a continuum of events happening to the same character as the text moved from left to right across the page, the child seems to have seen three discrete pictures about three different individuals. As I have commented elsewhere, "most adults in Hunt's position would have misinterpreted Felicity's reading as a mistake rather than what it actually was—an alternate interpretation of an available text" (18). In western culture, we are *taught* to read from left to right, and that is true for a series of pictures as well as a series of words; Felicity had not yet *learned* that reading skill.

Not only do children have to be enculturated into the process of reading literature, they also have to learn how to interpret the literature they read. Once, when our older son was small, my wife read him a story about a little duck with a misshapen leg. The duck was, of course, an outcast for much of the book but won his acceptance in the end—a traditional story pattern. My wife, thinking this a good opportunity to discuss tolerance and physical handicaps, asked Jason what he thought of the little lame duck in the story. Jason, after thinking a moment, commented that having a leg like that must have caused the duck to swim around in circles. The point that the author had intended and that my wife had seen was lost on this child who is now working on a masters degree in engineering.

The third example comes from children's traditional play. A number of years ago, when our younger son was a second or third grader, a neighbor called with what she thought was "a funny story." It seems that Aaron and her daughter had been playing house, and after "breakfast," her daughter "went off to work" while Aaron "stayed home and took care of the house." As a folklorist, I found the story interesting—and understandable. My neighbor had seen the children's playas a violation, perhaps, of the norm as she understood it; I, however, knew the source—at least from my son's point of view. At that time, my wife was teaching in a county school and carpooling with three other women. As a result, she left the house as the boys were getting ready for school. I made sure they were ready for school and got them onto the bus. Then I went to teach my classes at the university. I had also

arranged my schedule to allow me to return home before the public schools let out for the day, and so I was there when the boys came home. My wife came home later. My son was, thus, playing what he saw at home: his mother going off to work and his father staying home (even though he *knew* I worked at the university). What sense it made to Angela, his playmate, I do not know.

The enculturation process not only educates children into the ways in which their culture views the world as they grow older, it also seems to encourage them to forget however they saw the world when they were children. There is a great deal of evidence that a lot of adults do not remember what it was like to be a child (or, perhaps, had much more protected childhoods than most). When the Opies were collecting material for their landmark *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren* (1959), they were in a school lunchroom and heard one child respond to the question, "What's for lunch?", with the answer, "S.O.S!". Recognizing folk speech, they asked what "S.O.S." stood for and were told, "Same Old Slush" (162). Even though that is the proper interpretation for a child to give to an adult (authority figure), most contemporary children's folklorists would not have been satisfied with that answer, as the Opies appear to have been, knowing that alternative meanings include "Same Old Slop," "Same Old Stuff," "Same Old Shit" and "Shit On A Shingle" and that those meanings are available to and circulate among grade school students.

There are other and more sinister situations of adult forgetfulness, ignorance, and, perhaps, idealism. The *Australian Children's Folklore Newsletter* recently recounted two. *ACFN,* in reporting the situation to be discussed next, reminded its readers that Ian Turner's *Cinderella Dressed in Yella* (1969) was initially declared obscene by an Australian postal official, and for a time, the publishers were not allowed to use the normal book preferential postage rate (2). More frightening still is *ACFN's* account of Phil Burrows, whose photographs of girls playing "F1intstones, Flintstones," in which three of the five girls flip their dresses up to show their underpants when the rhyme says, "Pebbles shows her knickers," caused him to be charged with "three counts of indecent dealing, suspended from teaching, and smeared [in the press] as an actual or potential child molester." After six months, the case was brought to court and immediately thrown out. Borrows was paid back salary, but at last report was still on "sick leave" (1-2). Closer to home, when the *Children's Folklore Newsletter* published Gary Alan Fine's collection of Little League Baseballers' folk speech in the 1980s, a public school superintendent wrote administrators at the editor's university criticizing the university for supporting a publication which distributed such obscene materials to children *(CFN,* 11.1 through IV.3). In each of these cases, the adults doing the accusing failed to realize two things: first, that this material was being

distributed to other adult scholars for whom it would have intellectual interest and value; and second, that this material was the property of the children themselves, collected from them and not being distributed to them.

This separation of childhood from adulthood is a relatively recent phenomenon. To some extent, the Romantic movement was an initiator of this attitude, and the locus for it may well be Wordsworth's "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality" in which he depicts the child entering life nom heaven and "trailing clouds of glory" (line 64) and in which the child loses that connection with heaven but gains knowledge of the world, Wordsworth's "philosophic mind" (line 186). The overriding perception of human development as a movement from innocence to experience, as Blake first articulated it for the Romantics, was one of the central tenets of the Romantic movement and could certainly be interpreted as a part of the move from childhood to adulthood. Later in the same century, folklorists and anthropologists studying children followed the Romantics' lead and added to it the influence of the Darwinian evolutionary model; they saw children as a separate culture, a culture representative of the early stages of human and societal evolution. As Mechling argues, "Consequently, the study of children had the same rationale as the study of American Indian cultures-namely the collection and preservation of the representatives of the savage stage in human evolution" (92). This combination of Romantic and the Darwinian elements, however, has led to a view of childhood as a time of innocence and to a view of children as the innocent; as Romantic innocents, children have no knowledge of good and evil, while as Darwinian innocents, they have no knowledge of what are considered the more advanced stages of civilized development. From there it is but a brief step to seeing children, as most people do today, as innocents who must be protected nom the "real world." How often do we tell children that this or that activity or topic is "for adults" or that they will "learn about that when they are older"?

The division of material into what is acceptable for children and what is not, a division perpetrated by adults, of course, explains why there was such official shock at the materials in *Cinderella Dressed in Yella,* Phil Burrows' photographs, and the *Children's Folklore Review.* There is, however, a great deal of traditional material passed on by and among children which adults might fiind offensive and which has only recently been available in such collections as Herbert and Mary Knapp's *One Potato, Two Potato* (1976), Sandra McCosh's *Children's Humour* (1976), and Simon Bronner's *American Children's Folklore* (1988), among others. These three collections alone illustrate the wealth of what adults would call offensive, if not outright obscene, material circulating among the children. And the children know how adults feel about this material, and so they do not often allow adults—who

seem to have forgotten it-to know of its existence. This ignorance, then, reinforces the adult belief that children are innocent or, at least, that *their own* children are innocent of such material.

This view of children as innocents, especially, has also led to what Mechling calls the "trivialization of childhood. . . trivial, in this view, to the extent that it is merely an indication of the past or a potential for the future, not something whole and meaningful in its own right. This 'triviality barrier' continues to plague the inquiry into the nature of children's folklife" (92). Mechling might have gone on to say that this triviality barrier pertains to virtually every aspect of the intersection of professional adult activities and the lives and culture of children. Certainly children's literature is as trivialized as children's folklore and childhood itself. As Ursula K. Le Guin comments, "There is seldom big quick money in kiddylit. . . . But the economic discrimination is only an element, as usual, of the real problem; a reflection of a prejudice. The real problem isn't the money, it's the adult chauvinist piggery" (44). The same is true of elementary school teachers; how else can you explain the fact that elementary school teachers are among the most overworked and under-paid professionals who deal with children? The situation for day care and preschool workers is even worse. And it is almost pointless to discuss the way that the social and economic evaluation of someone who "merely" stays home and takes care of children has changed in the last four decades. It is only in medicine, a sacred cow of another kind, where those who deal with children have a status in the general society equal to the status of their peers who deal only with adults. They are "doctors," after all.

Not only does our culture see childhood as a trivial time and time of innocence, it also sees it a stage which must be out grown and left behind. The attitude is evident in our folk speech and in the way we speak to children. We tell our children: "Don't talk baby talk," "Act your age," "Grow up," "Stop acting like a baby," "You're not a baby anymore," "You're older now, and you've got to start taking more responsibility," "That's kids' stuff," and "You're too old for that." Sometimes, we give them mixed signals, telling them that they're old enough to be responsible for cleaning their rooms but too young to go to the beach for the weekend with their friends. Moreover, our society has made a number of privileges age-related rather than awarded by ability or responsibility; and many of those privileges-especially those having to do with cars, alcohol, and relationships with members of the opposite sex-are much anticipated. Children, themselves, recognize this necessity to age and castigate an unfortunate peer who acts, in their estimation, younger than his or her years, using "baby" or "cry baby, cry" as derisive terms. It is unfortunate, as C.S. Lewis says, that we imagine growing up as a train which leaves one station for the next (26).

How well does the adult remember the child that he or she was? The recent t-shirt which proclaims "The older I get, the better I was!" suggests that we do not remember all that well, and Jay Mechling argues that folklorists must "approach children's folk cultures as [they] would any unfamiliar culture" (93). My comments in this paper suggest that the problems adult collectors have with both the collecting and publishing of children's folklore stem not only from misperceptions of a folkloric nature, but from misperceptions within the culture as a whole. In fact, I believe that it is safe to say that the adult cultural worldview, into which children are educated, also educates them out of their own cultural worldview-and out of their own culture. Thus, it is not just the study of children's folklore which is made difficult by this naive adult view of children as innocents, it is virtually every aspect of adult-child relations and some aspects of adult-adult relations as well. It can be quite difficult, then, to really know what children believe and believe what children know.

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NOTES

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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 undergraduate or graduate 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 March 1st.

Submit papers or write for additional information:
Margaret MacDonald, 11507 NE 104th Street, Kirkland, WA 98033.

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For additional information, contact Dr. Bill Ellis, ISCLR President, Pennsylvania State University-Hazelton Campus, Hazelton, PA 18201-1291.

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For a copy of the catalog, contact Steve Zeitlin, Director, City Lore: The New York Center for Urban Folk Culture, 72 East First Street, New York, NY 10003.

The H.W. Wilson Company announces the following publications:

HIV/AIDS Information for Children: A Guide to Issues and Resources, Virginia Walter and Melissa Gross. The first section consists of four chapters providing up-to-date, accurate information that helps adults feel comfortable with this topic and sensitive, age-appropriate ways to share this knowledge with young children. The second section supplies extensive, selective lists of resources.

Readers' Guide for Young People, a CD-ROM in Wilson's Readers' Guide series, is an easy-to-maintain research database for students reading at levels up to eighth grade. It is available for IBM-compatible or Macintosh systems, in a choice of update frequencies.

For additional information on either publication, contact Barbara Ottervik, Advertising and Promotion, 1-800-367-6770.

The second biennial conference of the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE) will take place 17-19 July 1997 at the University of Montana in Missoula. Gary Snyder, Pattiann Rogers, and David Abram are among the featured writers and scholars. Deadline for submissions: 15 January 1997.

For additional information, contact John Tallmadge, President-Elect, ASLE, 6538 Teakwood Court, Cincinnati, OH 45224-2112.

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