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Folkloristic Approaches in Library and Information Science

Betsy Hearne
Issue Editor
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Folkloristic Approaches in Library and Information Science

Betsy Hearne

Issue Editor
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Introduction

Betsy Hearne

Folklore is often associated with nineteenth-century peasant cultures during western Europe’s transition from oral to print traditions but, in fact, folklore is ongoing and ubiquitous. Every human being belongs simultaneously to varied folk groups—circles of family, religion, work, and play—that sometimes overlap and sometimes do not. A well socialized human learns the lore of each circle and learns not to mix the lore of various circles inappropriately. For the researcher and archivist, folklore breaks down into a challenging array of forms—narrative (stories, songs, jokes, cyberhoaxes, etc.), material (crafts, vernacular buildings, photocopy art), and customary (superstitions, games, dances, herb remedies), among others—that combine to reveal the values and conflicts of a society and its deepest wells of knowledge. This kind of information is no less a part of the landscape for being “underground,” i.e., disseminated informally rather than formally. Gary Nabhan (1985), a southwestern ethnobotanist, discovered that collecting and categorizing seeds was just a first step toward exploring environmental science; he needed the stories of how Native Americans used the seeds to understand their medicinal and nutritional value. Science and stories enrich each other. The information we need is often coded and interpretively embedded in folklore.

Library and information science (LIS) has always played a role in folklore because of its emphasis on collection, preservation, organization, and access of information in varied formats. But vernacular information is often as elusive as it is crucial. An enormous amount of information that is communicated informally through verbal, customary, and material lore

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is lost or loses meaning when taken out of context. How does the field of library and information science deal with this kind of information? Where does folklore fit into theoretical constructs such as Michael Buckland’s (1991) “Information as Thing,” which seems to extend collections to material lore but does not quite include performance of oral lore? Has the area of children’s librarianship pioneered the inclusion of oral lore in action through a century-old commitment to storytelling programs? How do folklore and popular culture qualify as information? How does technology incorporate, affect, mediate, format, and redefine folklore?

In addressing such questions about the nature of knowledge, we see that, not only does LIS play a role in folklore (through traditional areas such as archival preservation of tape and video recordings), but folklore can also play a role in LIS, where so far it has had little impact except in the form of reference tools such as the Tale Type and Motif indexes—the practical use of which, to retrieve information for patrons, does not involve librarians in the exploration and application of folkloristic theory itself. Yet folklorists are experienced in collecting, categorizing, analyzing, and interpreting informal knowledge. While “information systems” might not be a favorite folkloristic term, most folklorists are in fact investigating them.

With this idea in mind, I submitted a proposal in 1996 to the Advanced Studies Committee of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois for a doctoral seminar entitled “Folklore: From Fireplace to Cyberspace.” By 1998, when I began to teach the course, the bibliography had grown to a thicket of single-spaced pages, the packet of readings had increased by inches, and a dozen brave students had signed up for the course. On the first day, when each introduced his or her area of specialization, the range of interests crossed disciplinary boundaries of science, social science, and the humanities. Cutting-edge technologists and children’s librarians (not a mutually exclusive category, by the way) and others with contrasting backgrounds were hoping to share common ground here. Such is the nature of LIS (and folklore, as well), and such is the challenge of educating library and information scientists of the future. How to create an intellectual community among students and faculty of disparate research bases is an issue that has sundered and even sunk schools of library and information science over two decades.

Fortunately this course did not sink, but neither did it become as tightly knit a community during the semester as it did afterward when the students opted to revise their innovative papers over a six-month period for a Library Trends issue on folkloristic approaches to library and information science. While the class itself had been cordial and stimulating, the long-term joint project added a cohesion lacking in the development of individual term projects with broadly varied, if mutually enlightening, foci.
Gathering for food, wine, and stories of trauma or triumph in the course of common work creates traditions. It is not just theories that draw an intellectual community together, but experience as well—as any folklorist could tell us. Folk groups take time to form, but this course did prove that a mutual focus can integrate disciplines effectively enough to create a rich learning environment even within the confines of a classroom semester. Apart from the research value of the contributions, this *Library Trends* issue demonstrates the challenges of pedagogy among doctoral students in a field that is not only interdisciplinary but also changing at a meteoric pace.

The goals of the issue, then, are twofold: first, the application of one body of scholarship to another for the enrichment of both; and second, a better understanding of how to “hold the center” while mentoring students of an LIS discipline that is at the crossroads of tradition and technology. These goals lead to an issue of *Library Trends* that is rather different from the usual. The experimental nature of the course has dictated that this will be an experimental issue, not a systematic exploration of all the important areas of a subject but, rather, a cross-section of LIS researchers looking at an old subject in new ways.

Adding to the fun is the fact that folklore itself is an interdisciplinary field involving anthropology, ethnography, archeology, history, biology, psychology, linguistics, literature, art, architecture, and religion—among others. Even deciding what to study and how to study it becomes a sociopolitical decision. And because humans are by nature chaotic as well as patterned, trying to organize their lore to fit neatly into systems is essentially impossible (someone has compared it to herding cats) though we can learn much by trying.

There is also in the field of folklore a healthy tension between academic theory, practical field work, and creativity. This “spread” sometimes counters academic expectations, which tend to segregate scholarly research and artistic expression. Many folklorists, however, have a streak of storyteller, musician, or artist that allows them not only to appreciate such activities but also to participate in them to the benefit of their research work. Folklore is a river. We can dip into it for samples and analyze them, but chemical content does not tell us the aesthetic sensuous experience of the river. Thus social scientists have to muster their aesthetic/artistic sensibilities to get the whole picture in addition to examining contextual riverbanks, rocks, islands, and the surrounding landscape to understand the flow of water. Naturally, they would be fools not to consult and incorporate those who live on the river and know all its ways. The days of collecting stories in the mode of netting exotic specimens, for instance, are long gone. This kind of collecting not only humiliated the “subjects” but also subjected the collectors to their victims’ frequently humorous methods of escape, including stories that told nothing about
the cultural context that was getting raided or stories that led collectors to run in the opposite direction of any true insight.

The rather atypical nature of the content of this issue of Library Trends also necessitates a somewhat different style of presentation. In the interest of furthering the idea of folklore research as a cultural exchange in which the researcher is just another human being loaded with socio-personal baggage, I have encouraged students to use the academically precarious word “I” rather than relying on awkward passive constructions or hiding behind pseudo-objective anonymous terminology. Every piece of qualitative research (and more quantitative research than we can guess) involves biases that we would do better to acknowledge than to ignore, biases based on background. Many folklorists, in fact, have turned their attention to home contexts for a better understanding of verbal, material, and customary “texts.”

Given a newer emphasis on looking at one’s own lore, it is interesting that each of the students chose home ground for her or his investigation. Elizabeth Gremore Figa, who is a public health and medical informatics specialist, combines oral history with field work observations to collect stories from a pioneering medical librarian circuit rider. Her analysis is deeply enriched by an insider’s perspective on the subject. Linnea Martin gathers stories from one of her own professors, whose informal narratives reveal the life of libraries in a way that differs from his many valuable but formal publications. Bernie Sloan assembles stories about his family, published in newspaper format, and examines their function not only as verbal lore but also as material lore.

Cece Merkel considers the material lore of classrooms with and without walls—a folklore of virtual space—while Laura Neumann reviews research on material and customary lore of workplaces. In the area of technolore, Kevin Powell, director of the Interspace development project in the CANIS lab (Community Architectures of Network Information Systems, Graduate School of Library and Information Science), applies folkloristic concepts of structuralism versus contextualism to the design and use of computer tools. Tonyia Tidline reflects on a common complaint in identifying information overload as a kind of contemporary myth au courant but unexamined even within a group of information specialists.

I extend a career-long interest in the transmission of folk and fairy tales through the multicultural maze of U.S. children’s literature. Sarai Lastra returns to her Puerto Rican roots to explore socio-political implications of the representation of Puerto Rican folklore, especially Juan Bobo stories, in children’s books. Melanie Kimball traces the orphan motif from folklore to juvenile classics. And Janice Del Negro, a veteran storyteller and children’s librarian, looks at changing views of folktales and storytelling in a classic children’s literature textbook. It seems important in this issue, as it surely is in LIS generally, to incorporate children and adults into one
world even if they are segregated into sections. Specialists in adult and youth information cultures need to hear each other.

None of these articles is strictly a folkloristic study, nor do any of the authors claim to be focusing on folklore in a strictly defined sense. They are drawing on folkloristic processes and ideas to illuminate their respective fields of interest in library and information science. To overlook the valuable work that has already been done in exploring one kind of information would be a mistake in examining other kinds of information that contain some of the same elements. Folklore, as readers will learn, yields a rich harvest for specialists in library and information science.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks go to the students who came with me on this journey as well as to the GSLIS faculty who encouraged me along the way. My gratitude to Barre Toelken of Utah State University is boundless: for taking the time from his research to revise, once again, his classic text *The Dynamics of Folklore* (1996), which proves how dynamic a teaching tool can be; and for generously making forays across professional lines, as he did in his influential presentation to the preconference on folklore sponsored by the Association for Library Service to Children at the American Library Association Conference in 1989. Without this kind of knowledge exchange, we would all spend time reinventing the wheel—and it might turn out to be square.

REFERENCES


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Oral History

“Mapping Culture: Rural Circuit Medical Librarians’ Information Systems,” Elizabeth Gremore Figa

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Mapping Culture: Rural Circuit Medical Librarians’ Information Systems

ELIZABETH GREMORE FIGA

ABSTRACT

The first rural circuit medical librarians provided medical library services to underserved practitioners in rural areas. The nature of their work required that they use literal maps while also developing complex “mapping” techniques and information systems, both in the library and in the field. The collection of this oral history from Jean Antes Pelley, combined with fieldwork observation, illuminates the development of workways unique to this service culture.

INTRODUCTION

Begin at the beginning... and go on till you come to the end: then stop.

—Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll

In affiliation with the Oral History Project of the Medical Library Association (MLA), I conducted a series of interviews was conducted with Jean Antes, a significant member of the library profession whose work impacted the profession of librarianship and specifically medical librarianship. Antes was one of the first circuit rider medical librarians, the first in a rural setting. She was a pioneer among those who literally traveled to remote and underserved hospitals and clinics to deliver medical library and librarian services that were unavailable to physicians and other health care providers. Antes told me about the beginnings of this rural circuit librarian service launched in 1976.
Dr. Beck asked me how the doctors in rural areas, those in small hospitals and small towns in the area, got their information. He said, "Do you know any way we could get them information?" And because I had gone to Case Western Reserve and had kept in touch with Sylvia Feuer, I was aware that she had established a suburban circuit in which she went to suburban hospitals... and let the hospital personnel know she was available to take requests. So I told Dr. Beck about that and he wondered whether we couldn't start something like that for the rural physicians, and he was willing to fund it. I was perfectly happy to go right along with it because I did know some of the doctors in the hinterlands and... they wanted information—they just didn't know how to get it—because of course... there was no Medline, there was no computer connection, there was nothing except the telephone.

The early circuit medical librarians were creative adventurer types who forged their own paths into a work culture and information system that had not been pre-tested by other librarians. Their work, and their documentation of it, created many new global opportunities for innovative roles within the profession of medical librarianship. The early rural circuit medical librarians found it necessary to develop creative methods for information needs assessment, searching and document delivery services, and systems development to serve clientele at the many and varied sites visited. Through the development of a new role and type of work, and through the expansion of creative and collaborative services, the circuit rider medical librarians established a new information system with its own organizational culture and work methodologies.

Over the course of the interviews, the passion and creativity of Antes and her enormous dedication to her profession became apparent. Her imagination and drive created many opportunities for operationalizing library work in innovative ways. Through the telling of her oral history, we can understand the work culture and the way she and her staff developed "systems" or workways and utilized mapping techniques to navigate the complexities of library work taking place both within the library and in the field.

**Methodology**

Though this be madness, yet there is a method in't.

—*Hamlet*, Shakespeare

In Fall 1997, I coordinated plans with the MLA Oral History Project Director to collect an oral history from Jean Antes via an in-person interview. Antes was asked to record her history because of her well-known contributions to the profession of medical librarianship. The interview expenses were funded by the MLA, and I otherwise volunteered my time for this project. At the end of the project, I delivered to the MLA Oral History Project the original tapes of the interviews, which became the
property of the MLA. The MLA and Antes granted me permission to use her history for this research project.

In collaboration with Antes, I developed travel plans to go to Sayre, Pennsylvania, to interview her. During the pre-planning phase, Antes Pelley was asked to develop a résumé and a brief biography. Simultaneously, I developed a series of interview questions that were sent to her in advance for review and feedback. These questions were based upon her personal information; information provided by the MLA Oral History Project (Zinn 1990; Pifalo & Flemming, 1997); and a literature search I conducted on circuit rider medical librarianship. I also reviewed the questions with Victoria Pifalo, a former circuit medical librarian and one of the more prolific writers on this type of work. The MLA provided all the recording devices necessary to document the interviews and fieldwork experiences. The data from the recorded interviews were professionally transcribed, and the transcript of the interviews and my field notes were utilized in the writing of this article.

Antes and I began the thirty hours of interviews and field observations when she met me at the airport in Elmira, New York, just a short distance from the town in which the circuit rider medical librarian program she founded was located. Shortly after arriving for the interview, I asked her to sign the various human subject research release forms related to the project. Over the course of days, we would talk at the airport, in her car, at a site located on the library circuit, in her office, over meals, in the lobby of the bed-and-breakfast where I stayed, and at her home. There was nearly always some recording device in use, be it a high-end tape recorder or a pen in my hand with a green-covered notebook below it.

Per the request of the MLA, the formal interviewing of Antes began with her reading the self-prepared biography into the tape recorder. This biography was several typed pages in length and included the personal and professional information chosen by Antes. The formal interviewing and informal talk about her work began after this introductory phase. Over the course of days, many handwritten field notes were written, artifacts given to me and/or copied for future reference, and photographs taken. Antes was a meticulous “cultural keeper” and retained many personal papers, letters, newsletter articles, and a wide variety of resources used in the circuit rider program. All of these materials were used in the writing of this discussion.

**Review of the Literature and Contextualization**

*Circuit Librarianship*

A culture, like an individual, is a more or less consistent pattern of thought and action.

—*Patterns of Culture*, Ruth Benedict
Estelle Brodman (1980), in her discussion based on the oral history project of the Medical Library Association, states, "since librarianship is just now arriving at the point of looking back at itself historically, it is not surprising that some library historians are suggesting a new interpretation of past events" (p. 167). Brodman argues that the history of ideas in librarianship is no less worthy of study than the history of ideas in biomedicine, astronomy, or politics. She suggests that librarianship is beginning to reinterpret its history and that an examination of a branch of librarianship providing information services to health care professionals in need over the past twenty years—that of circuit medical librarianship—is deserving of a historical research beginning (and reinterpretation). "The plight of unserved health professionals has commanded the attention of medical librarians for decades. As early as 1941, a detailed plan for cooperative library services to correct the imbalance in the availability of information services in hospitals was suggested" (Pifalo, 1994, p. 19). In both past and current times, the quality of hospital libraries and librarian services has varied greatly and has thus impacted those who need such services.

Feuer (1977) and Cheshier (1975) developed the concept of the circuit rider as related to libraries at the Cleveland Health Sciences Library of Case Western Reserve (CWR) University and the Cleveland Medical Library Association in 1973. The Cleveland circuit was one of an urban/suburban nature, and the circuit rider librarian service was based on the role of the bygone circuit preacher or circuit rider physician, a "colorful American tradition dating to the 1760s" (Pifalo, 1994, p. 21). "The term 'circuit librarian' or 'circuit rider' has become a relatively common concept in the medical library world" (Gordner, 1982, p. 59). The signature features of the role include the mobility of the librarian, the regularity of visits, and the focus on reference services.

The increasing recognition by hospitals of their need for access to a library and the services of a librarian for support of continuing medical education spurred the Cleveland program development (Cheshier, 1976, p. 15). The goal of the contemporary circuit rider librarian was to "provide hospitals without prior library services with a qualified medical librarian and library services through shared costs" (Gordner, 1982, p. 59) and, in the early Cleveland program, to "encourage communication between the hospitals and the health sciences center of CWR" (Smith, 1976, p. 83). The Feuer/Cheshier program in Cleveland grew so that by 1977 there were twenty-four northeast Ohio area institutions participating in six circuits (Shelly, 1997, p. 2). The Cleveland program was actively reviewed and was well evaluated, including comprehensive studies on cost analysis and outcomes (Levine, 1985, p. 42).

Victoria Pifalo (1994) states: "In theory, circuit librarianship is the model of simplicity" (p. 24) and she continues to depict the scope of the role: a routine that includes travel to the participating health care facili-
ties to provide reference service where requests for information are taken and materials delivered based upon librarian-conducted searches of the medical literature. She argues quite convincingly that the model is anything but simple and, in fact, that the circuit librarianship role is dynamic and didactic. The scope and nature of the work changes with each librarian, every trip into the field, every health care facility entered, each different space mediated within those facilities, and every different individual with whom the librarian interacts in the scope of her role. Even at “home base,” where both the library and human resources “live,” the librarians have an evolving role with the challenges to keep abreast of current trends and changes in medical and health literature resources. Paralleling real-life medicine, information “emergencies” may even occur when a health care provider on a circuit route might be in urgent need of information. The folklore of circuit librarianship includes stories of librarians reading literature critical to a patient care decision over long-distance telephone connections to the satisfaction of both the librarian and the doctor. In contemporary times, this scenario has evolved to include toll-free phone numbers, fax services, electronic mail, and electronic document delivery, but in the early days of the medical circuit riders, these “fast” communication methods did not exist. Circuit rider programs and services often include other features beyond reference services, such as collection development activities for the sites on the circuits, acquisitions and cataloging of materials, and a plethora of administrative tasks including fiscal details, policy and procedures development, and committee meetings.

As with any type of new service or program, there are caveats. Funding sources for programs can run dry, cost recovery requires careful consideration, staff turnover occurs, the need for keeping the program “alive” in the eyes of administrators is challenging, and ongoing communication between both the resource library and the circuit locations is essential. On the human resource level, there are concerns regarding burnout, the physical demand of travel, salary issues and, in some cases, wear and tear on personal vehicles. Despite these aspects, many librarians find it to be exciting and satisfying work. Circuit library programs continue to function and expand across the United States and Canada and continue to provide valuable services to health care providers who would otherwise do without (Pifalo, 1994).

After Feuer and Cheshier established the urban-suburban circuit in Cleveland, the second circuit librarian program was developed by Jean Antes when the Robert Packer Hospital received funding from the Donald Guthrie Foundation for Medical Research in 1976 (Antes & Henry, 1977, p. 188) and, in 1979, a National Library of Medicine grant. This circuit program operated over farflung territory that expanded to the near-breadth of the northern half of the state of Pennsylvania and downstate New York from New Jersey to the western mountain ranges. It was the first
rural circuit medical librarian program, with librarians often traveling 600 to 1,000 miles a week, initially in their own personal vehicles and, later, in a “company” car. Antes took circuit librarianship to new levels with creative staffing, the development of new services and, most critically, a commitment to the expansion of knowledge of the role through writing journal articles (Antes & Henry, 1979), presenting training programs at regional and national conferences, making two videos about circuit librarianship, and hosting the first national symposium on circuit librarianship. Antes’s work caught the attention of publishers in the United States and England and program developers as far away as Australia and Africa (Antes, 1982, 1983).

**Oral History**

I did not think I could get so much profit from the content of books as from the utterances of a living and abiding voice.

—The Ecclesiastical History, Eusebius Pamphilus

Historian Jan Vansina (1985) states that “oral traditions have a part to play in the reconstruction of the past” (p. 199). Folklorist Henry Glassie (1971) believes oral history contributes to “the development of an understanding of what people really did in the past” (p. 54). Historian Michael Frische discusses what oral history “does” in terms of functioning as a source of historical information and insights. And Anthropologist Ruth Finnegan (1992) speaks about the rise of oral history as an “approach or even a discipline, in its own right,” a method for exploring certain sets of sources to aid in the understanding of societies and people who “had no history”: no history, that is, in the sense of ‘normal’ documentary records” (p. 47). The (American) Oral History Association suggested: “Oral history . . . was established in 1948 as a modern technique for historical documentation when Columbia University Historian Allan Nevins began recording the life memoirs of persons significant in American life” (Thompson, 1988, p. 59), and oral history has been extensively described in the literature of librarianship (Palmer, 1984).

In relation to this research, the purpose of the Oral History Project of the MLA is to record, in the members’ own voices, the histories of librarians in the United States and Canada who had an impact on the practice of health science librarianship and on the MLA. The resulting works will ideally give new insight into past practices through the actual words of the “actors” as they explore their involvement in the profession and situate the work in their libraries, their professional organizations, their collegial relationships, and their lives. Through oral history, their actions and thoughts come alive and the memories of the participants inform us. We learn “what the predecessors did; how they were influenced and by what; what they hoped to accomplish and how they went about doing it; as well
as what impact this has had on present day libraries and librarians” (Brodman, 1981, p. 35).

It may be helpful to recall that, for the latter half of this century, librarianship has been a profession dominated by women. Naastrom (1992) suggests: “By preserving women’s narratives, oral history can serve as an antidote to much of the written record on women in which descriptions of actual women come laden with prescriptive notions of ideal womanhood and prevailing gender relations” (p. vii). Oral history “is a tool which helps to reconstruct those snippets of everyday lives and careers that exist between the cracks of written record” (Everman & Zang, 1988, p. 3). Nasstrom (1992) states:

Oral history begins with the spoken word, generated in a conversation between an interviewer and an interviewee. In the process of telling their stories, informants define their own identities and suggest the meaning of their lives. Oral histories constitute a rich source of primary historical materials . . . allowing us to create some of the very sources we lack . . . to fill some of the gaps that exist in our knowledge of women . . . through oral history, researchers can seek out informants who have been excluded from other historical accounts, design questions to plumb neglected topics, and seek clarification of complex and often elusive issues involving emotion, ideology, and consciousness. (p. vii)

The promise of oral history as a research method is not without its pitfalls and caveats. Within this methodology, it is important for researchers to note the rationale for choice of informants as well as the lines of historical inquiry pursued because these methods preserve some, but not all, of the “voices.” In other words, acknowledging who or what may be lacking in selection and representation is important. The structure of interviews is also dependent upon their purpose, their relationship to the project as a whole, the skills of the interviewer, and the ability of the interviewee to reflect and give voice to memory. In Grele’s (1975) paper, he discusses the relationships in an oral history interview. Power and authority impact history-giving, and the dynamics of language, human interaction, and memory are important to consider.

Some interviews become lengthy biographical memoirs while others may focus on only the specific aspects of the respondent’s experience that bear on the issues raised by the interviewer. Oral historical-type interviews may take on differing personalities and models: a collaborative effort, an informed exchange, a dialogue of conversation, discussion, analysis, gossip, personal narrative, and/or argument. Finnegan (1992) speaks about personal narrative, often a “central source for oral historians—[that] can have a role of validating and expressing someone’s life, making sense of various experiences lived through” (p. 48). Stahl (1986) argues that the personal experience story is a vital part of social life and a mechanism for the recreation of experience—from childhood, from work, from other
frameworks. Whatever form the narrative takes, the shaping influences should be acknowledged.

Briggs (1994) believes that social scientists who use interview techniques in field settings often ignore the nature of communication in the various cultures in which they conduct these interviews. In his discussion about oral history, Briggs points out the "dialogic, contextualized nature of all discourse including interviews (p. 13), and reminds us that the resultant products are dialogic texts that are largely structured by the interviewer" (p. 13). The nature and significance of context in oral history interviews needs to be sufficiently appreciated.

Donald MacDonald (1972) states that "it ought to be part of every fieldworker's training and practice to have basic systematic, yet variable, question patterns" (p. 410) and further offers that "systematic fieldwork usually begins at the desk, in the library and the archive..." (p. 407). Grele (1975) extends the discussion of what is constructed in the field by arguing that: "Oral history, almost alone among the various practices of historiography has heavily depended upon fieldwork, which means that not only can we come back again and again to our sources and ask them to tell us more, but we can also explore the varieties of historical visions in far greater detail amid radically changing historical conditions" (p. 141). Such analysis allows us to focus interviews, and their interpretation, upon the crucial elements of thinking and expression among members of the culture with whom we are particularly concerned.

Grant McCracken (1988) asserts that: "Qualitative research methods are most useful and powerful when they are used to discover how the respondent sees the world" (p. 21). In a sense, all of us are doing qualitative research "when we observe behaviors or performances with sufficient self-consciousness to recount happenings later and make judgments of the goings on" (Abrahams, 1983, p. 346). Grele (1975) argues that if we "fail to see our interviewees as bearers of culture and thus people with their own view of the past... we will, because the information must be structured, infuse our own vision of the past into the interview" (p. 142). He believes the aim of the oral historian is to bring articulation to the "ideological problematic of the interviewee, to reveal the cultural context in which information is being conveyed, and to thus transform an individual story into a cultural narrative, and, thereby, to more fully understand what happened in the past" (p. 142).

Vansina (1985), in his formative chapter "The Message Expresses Culture" states that "all messages are part of a culture. They are expressed in the language of a culture and conceived as well as understood, in the substantive cognitive terms of a culture. Hence, culture shapes all messages and we must take them into account when we interpret them" (p. 124). He defines culture as "what is common in the minds of a given group of people; it refers to a community of society where the people in a
community share many ideas, values, and images—representations—which are collective to them and differ from others" (p. 124).

In preparation for this oral history project, theoretical readings in oral history were critical to the development of questions about the circuit rider medical librarian role. The goal was to elicit a full history of the rural circuit medical librarian program that Antes developed—i.e., the earliest conceptualization of the project, the implementation of the program, the evaluation stage, the hiring and training of staff, the development of new sites on the circuit, the status of the program when she retired, and a current update. The entire scope of the information generated in this collaboration with Antes warrants several papers. This article will analyze a subset of the work practices of this group of rural circuit medical librarians.

My experiences collecting oral histories from medical librarians have taught me this—Between thought and expression lives a lifetime. Oral history work has formed my opinion that all of our lives are informed by the past. When we talk in an ordinary fashion or tell stories to each other, we consciously, unconsciously, and necessarily bring our pasts into the conversation. The ability to communicate comes out of the past growth and development of language in the brain. Most seeing people have a visual orientation—we experience much of life as visual images. Blind persons interpret their experiences using aural senses. All of us process information with temporal patterning that assists us in making sense of our experiences and putting things in order. Embodied in life is the grand map—DNA—and the form and function of our thoughts are born out of the maps of our lives.

Through her oral history, Antes expresses thoughts and reflections on her work. I asked her many questions and she supplied many answers and related stories to exemplify her experiences as the director of a circuit medical library program. There were time and spatial constraints in this process because it would be impossible to be everywhere, show everything, and tell every detail. To bring her story into a more realistic dimension, she gave selective examples—map forms—and memories in which she described the details, images, colors, shadings, borders, focal points, and landscapes which formed a picture for me. Her story comes alive and is easier to trace because the language that is natural to maps is natural to her story. Like an archaeologist, I tried to examine what remains—the tapes of Antes's oral history, the transcripts, field notes, artifacts of her work, and my own memories. My interpretive journey led to the discovery that the oral history dimension and the mapping dimension intersect.

This discussion emerges from an oral history process to become an interpretive study of culture. I hope to exemplify contextually and historically the ways the circuit medical librarians operationalized activities and created a work culture that necessarily used mapping techniques
to support library activities in the field during the time before electronic information services were readily available.

**Cultural Landscaping and Mapping**

It's hard to know what to expect from a place when you can't find it on the map.

—Mama Day, *Gloria Naylor*

Antes functioned at a very high level within the medical library culture. As the director, she had the authority and support to develop new services, and she related the beginning structures of the first rural circuit medical library program:

We started it by my visiting (and it was a pilot project for 6 months) the hospitals and speaking to the administrators to see whether they would be willing to let us come into the hospital. I had hired a new librarian and together we explained to the administrator how we would operate, and that for these six months [our service] would be free. We started with six (outlying) hospitals in Pennsylvania and one newly graduated librarian. She traveled, searched, copied and delivered all by herself. And she was busy. Eventually, New York State asked if I would start a similar program for them, since Sayre is on the border of Pennsylvania and New York. We received a grant from the National Library of Medicine and were able to begin that program.

In this progressive atmosphere, there was expansion of services as well as an increase in the number of professional librarian positions to serve the clientele in both the local clinic/hospital and the circuit program. A very strong service culture was nurtured, along with a level of professionalism and autonomy that attracted young library professionals who were motivated to carve new niches of work practice. For example, Antes reported that, once her staff was trained, they were able to modify and customize procedures to make communication and delivery of services within different sites easy for the hospital professionals:

Eventually, we had 19 hospitals on our circuit, and we traveled 150 miles one way to our farthest hospital. I was blessed with three excellent librarians who felt that service was the most important product and worked very hard to give their best. We visited all departments of hospitals from physicians’ offices to maintenance and housekeeping. The librarians were greeted as friends in each department and were given freedom to visit almost anywhere in the hospitals.

Within the scope of this budding library services system, Antes depicted a culture of commitment. Her medical librarian staff, also members of a group often referred to as *special librarians*, were truly special in that their commitment to providing critical patient care information, which could mean the difference between life and death on some occasions, was so strong. There was also a culture of appreciation, with and among the
librarians and those health care providers to whom they gave service, regarding the timely delivery of current medical information. This yielded great satisfaction for both groups. Antes reported that one of her librarians did not miss a single day of work for nine years.

Through the voice of Antes and her stories about the circuit librarian culture, we come to understand another central work theme: how circuit rider medical librarians developed and utilized mapping and mapping techniques. Their work was incredibly varied and required the mediation of multiple environs—i.e., from the home, to the library, to the car, to the field, to the site, to multiple spaces within the site, to sharing their expertise with the library world:

In 1985, we were really going very, very well. We were giving good service both in the hospital here and in all these others. And I think it became just a great experience for the librarians to go out every day. They worked 3 days on the road and 2 days in the library, and after we got the New York grant there was some support staff. [The librarians] didn’t have to do quite as much work as they did originally when they had to do all the searching and the reading of the information, and the doing of statistics and [photo] copying. We copied many, many pages of material, because they were going [out] each week at that time and so that meant that they had to have this [information] all ready by the time they started out the next week so they could deliver the finished product to the people. They met with everybody [at the various hospitals] ... and asked them if they thought it was what they wanted after they had read it—probably two or three weeks later they’d ask them—and it turned out that they all seemed to be quite satisfied.

One of the first things Antes did was provide maps to exemplify the journeys of these librarians. The first one she showed me was the American Map Corporation’s Pennsylvania Road Map. It appeared to be a typical map—made of paper with multiple folded sections that included an index, mileage chart, enlargements of cities, points of interest—and the actual map of the state including roadways, cities, towns, and counties. The map included parts of lower New York state and upper Maryland state, as well. However, it had been altered with circling in blue pen around the names of many towns. These were the places to which the circuit librarians traveled to give service. Circles extended from the top of the map to more than half way down and from one side to the other. I noted locations from the edge of the Allegheny National Forest to farmland of the central part of the state to its eastern borders with New York and New Jersey. I also noticed circles around cities in New York. In all, twenty cities were circled with the additional noting of the Sayre location as “home base.” All of this depicted a landscape that is, in actuality, two landscapes: one constructed by the American Map Corporation cartographer and another layered on top of that as reconstructed by Antes Pelley. This initial unprepossessing “tour” of the sites was in fact significant: it was the
beginning of a researcher’s understanding of the importance of maps and the construction and reconstruction of maps in the scope of the work of Antes and the circuit rider medical librarians.

In looking at the map, I saw the cartographer’s indications of the hilly terrain of north-central Pennsylvania that represented what I first viewed on my arrival by plane. Maps such as this one provided a methodology for these librarians because, without the landscape of the state represented in some structure, they would not find the sites to which they traveled. Over the course of days, Antes would provide many “maps” and talk about many more.

Shortly after Antes and a current circuit medical librarian greeted me at the airport, we spent the afternoon traveling to one of the sites on the first rural circuit Antes developed. It was a revelation to travel by car to a site, to learn how the librarians “set up shop,” to understand how they navigated through the hospital to meet with staff, and to see how they operationalized their work. It was obvious that the circuit rider librarian services were valued and known by the staff, as so many people greeted our companion and even submitted requests to him during this tour. These fieldwork opportunities with the librarians proved invaluable in understanding the scope and dynamics of the work and the ways that literal and cognitive maps function.

In his book, *The Power of Maps*, Dennis Wood (1992) speaks about the power of maps and elucidates how maps are instruments of communication, persuasion, and power. In examining how maps and mapping techniques proliferated among these librarians in their work, some of Wood’s themes were drawn upon and will comprise five sections of analysis as follows:

1. the maps that we make in our minds embody experience exactly as paper maps do;
2. maps are encoded;
3. maps serve the interests of the map makers;
4. out of the need to keep records, maps become (cultural) artifacts; and
5. the knowledge of the map is the knowledge of the world from which it emerges.

THE MAPS CREATED IN OUR MINDS EMBODY EXPERIENCE EXACTLY AS PAPER MAPS DO

Wood (1992) quotes Robert Rundstrom as stating: “Mapping is fundamental to the process of lending order to the world” and goes on to explain that “what Rundstrom is speaking of here is the way we humans make and deploy mental maps” (p. 32). This is a way of combining all the accumulated information we have to form a structure within the mind, what I will refer to as the cognitive map.
Antes had an encompassing and personal view in her mind of what a medical librarian is, and this cognitive map shaped the way she and the other librarians viewed the importance of their work:

I think of medical librarians as being a special breed. I think they—medical librarians—get information for [health care professionals] who really need it to take care of someone. And so [the librarians] recognize that they have a special responsibility to be helpful, to get the absolute latest and best information. Getting something for a term paper for a student in a public library or finding out something historical for someone who wants to read is not quite as [much] pressure. The need for it isn't quite as much pressure as what medical librarians [experience]. And so I think that they are just a little more ardent in their desire to do it right. And it's the service end of it, which makes that. These people were very dedicated and their whole idea was to get the material to the doctor as fast as they could. If a request came in by phone, I've even been known to, and they have too, to read a short article over the phone so that the person might have it immediately. If the doctor needed it right away, we would speak to him of course, or her, and read at least the main points so that they knew the answer to whatever it was they wanted.

These workways and cognitive maps formed and informed an integrated standard among the librarians that demonstrated a strong inner desire toward exemplary service. Ensuring quality and delivering critical information germane to patient care decisions, at a time long before evidence-based medicine was coined a term, was prized. This view of self as a contributor to the broadly based information system taking place in the field ultimately affected end performance. A cognitively-mapped identity as a medical librarian who could make a critical impact on the health care of others motivated high-quality work.

The circuit medical librarians worked in dynamic environments. Small and rural hospitals were the focal point of their service structure. Many activities would occur in the time before and after their journeys to these places, but it was necessary to develop methodologies for doing the work on site, and they began to form mind maps. These cognitive maps accumulated with each visit to a hospital, with each new point of entry, with each new "information system" developed in a reference interview or any dissemination of information.

At one point, a trip to the intensive care unit with two librarians was observed. We entered the unit, which was labeled with many signs indicating that only authorized staff were allowed admission. At the touch of an electronic door opener, there appeared a world full of beeping noises, silver-toned metal, and soft conversations. In a small office near the door where we entered, I saw the librarian begin to speak with the staff in a friendly manner and simultaneously to go to a file drawer and open it. I got closer to observe and noted a series of files, one of them labeled "Requests." The librarian dug into the file and removed several pieces of
white paper (forms—all from staff in the intensive care unit). These were requests for literature searches on specific topics. The librarian checked for anything else left for him: personal notes, journals, and envelopes. This drawer and this file folder became a point of service, a part of the information system that facilitates interaction between the staff in the intensive care unit and the medical librarian. The accumulation of experience and understanding of this system and the way it functioned allowed the librarian and the staff to form the mapping pattern that constructed the document delivery system. Maps get constructed; maps construct.

Other models of cognitive mapping proliferated consistently in every site and within every information system in which the circuit medical librarians worked. As we left a particular site through the emergency area, inside a glassed-in space a hospital worker speaking on the telephone wildly waved to the librarian indicating she wanted him to come into the unit. A dialogue with Antes explains this as a common situation:

R: So then the librarians would develop some type of a routine when they got to the hospital?
A: That’s right, they made rounds.
R: It sounded like there was structure but it was flexible.
A: Oh, very flexible, yes. If doctors were there and they could see them right then, then they’d go there immediately, because the doctors usually had offices outside the hospital. But nevertheless, they were flexible. They may find that the pharmacist wasn’t there, so they would go to the maintenance department. Or if the nurses who may have wanted something were taking care of a patient, they went somewhere else and then came back. And it’s very heartwarming to remember that these people [at the hospital] looked for the librarians. And as you saw yesterday when we went to Corning . . . those people were delighted to see the librarian and, in fact, even flagged him down, though it wasn’t his day to be there, because they knew that they could give him requests if they wanted to.

Nothing is necessarily routine and yet somehow, routines get mapped. It is important to understand that, for these librarians, the “routine” is always dynamic. Out of the process of dynamic routine comes method, workways that enhance the information system’s functional capability. Consistently, a solid rationale for the purpose of being on site emerges with movement through the site, interaction with people, and exchange of items. However, the hows, whens, wheres, and whats change and evolve. And at home base, the library from which the librarians worked, there was also the development of mapping systems to enable the work to take place at the sites:

R: Can you go back over, just very briefly, when a librarian went out to the field and got the requests, when they came back here, what happened?
A: Well, if it were late in the afternoon, they just brought all of their things in and left them in the office and went home. Many times they were pretty tired because they had traveled through maybe two or three hospitals, and as you know from today and yesterday, walking around the hospital can get to be quite good exercise. Usually the next morning, if they weren’t going out on the road, they would come in and start to search. And we all did that.

R: Did the librarians work together?

A: Well, I guess we were so closely connected. Everybody was working in the same place, they were sharing the Index Medicus, they were getting things from the shelf at the same time . . . it wasn’t competition because they didn’t [compete].

R: So the actual physical proximity was really conducive for the team work to happen?

A: Yes. Because even now, even though the library is larger, you can see that it isn’t very hard to talk to somebody in the library.

From the field to the library, the librarians developed maps that enabled them to work. All people need maps. Young children learn the mapping of the school lunch room, a teenage pizzamaker has “rules” for making a quality product, the mother has “how to’s” for giving care to her sick child, the banker has protocols to manage money flow. Mapping such as this is a circuitous, almost symbiotic, process where the cognitive and other maps construct and reconstruct each other.

**Maps are Encoded**

Human language is a code, but other coding schemes exist in our lives and work. When one looks at a state road map, there is a common understanding that the broad lines are roads and that some colors on the map will represent water, mountains, or state/national parks. This is a form of encoding that explains something that may be important to us. The medical librarians worked with in this research used encoded maps on a regular basis. Antes developed workways to ensure the system would function to the satisfaction of everyone involved. This culture fostered, if not proliferated, the development of such schemes to represent information of a critical nature, a method of operation that extended, for example, to “legal” agreements:

A: We did not have a contract [with the hospitals]. This bothered some of the people who are legal minded. They said: “Well, don’t you have a contract we can sign?” We had been advised that perhaps a letter of agreement [would work]. In those days there was no problem with taking people’s word for things. Among the stipulations [in the letter] was that I would provide a qualified medical librarian for this particular position. And actually, until a few years after I retired, anyone who was on the circuit was a degreed, if that’s a word, medical librarian.

R: So did you do a letter of agreement?
A: Yes. But anyway, it was just a "gentleman’s agreement" between a lady and a gentleman. And they were always willing to sign it and we, of course, were perfectly willing to sign it, and it just said that they would pay so much per bed.

The letter of service agreement, like the legend of a map, was encoded with pertinent information about the skills of the personnel to be involved and what the fee structure would be. Antes moved from the cognitive process to the documenting process which resulted in tangible mapping forms. Because the circuit rider medical librarian program was new and evolving, Antes created the necessary coding schemes as she went along. It was part and parcel of her role as the library director to do this.

As all librarians will do, the circuit rider medical librarians used tools, many of them developed expressly for their own use. For example, during the time of the inception of this circuit rider program, the Index Medicus was one of the key reference tools used to search for information within the published medical literature. There were other tools used as well, both those they purchased and those they constructed. Some of these self-created tools became maps: they were encoded with trenchant keys to find information, and they contributed to a highly functional system of work. Antes recalled the way she pioneered new workways using their self-developed search request form:

R: Within your library, when they would come back to do their research—to get the information—did they do things as a team or was there any type of buddy program going on?

A: There wasn’t any buddy program as such, but they were extremely cooperative, and if one were looking for something, and this is again the serendipity of the printed Index Medicus, if one were looking for something in the Index Medicus and accidentally came across something that he or she knew the other person wanted, they said, “Hey, look here, this may be what you’re looking for.” So there was great cooperation between them. And as I explained yesterday, we kept a record of all of our searches and the citations which were good and the ones which weren’t any good and noted them on the back of the search request so that, again, when there were repeated questions of the same thing, each one could go and use the other one’s information, because there was great cooperation. Seems like an ideal setup and I have to say it was.

This story details the way that the encoding of documents became a mapping technique. The librarians applied evaluative methodology to qualify particular search findings as “good” or “no good” and developed a system to use them again on repeat requests via their own mapping tool. The coding worked for the librarians. These routes could potentially lead the librarians to better information, faster and more efficiently, thus reducing searching time and improving upon the system. Pioneering ideas proliferated in this environment.
MAPS SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THE MAP MAKERS

Wood (1992) presents us with Jacques Bertin's idea that maps are "constructed and reconstructed until [they] reveal all the relationships constituted by the interplay of the data" (p. 185). The construction and reconstruction process is a part of mapping, and the concept of interplay is important to consider. Maps are about relationships, about how one landscape is positioned in relation to another. In some instances, the map making becomes a collaboration, and this act of paired-construction can serve the interests of all involved. Antes relates some instances of collaborative mapping:

**R:** When the librarians went to the site, would they spend a whole day there? Or what was the typical amount of time that they were on site?

**A:** Well, of course most of them had to visit maybe two [sites] in a day, at least, because they were only on the road three days.

**R:** Did they bring lunches or eat in the hospitals? Or what was that like?

**A:** Well, they ate in the hospitals as often as they could when they were there over lunch, in the cafeteria, so they had a chance, again, to ask people if they wanted any information. They always had a pad and pencil with them so they could take any requests down. And they enjoyed that because they had a good chance to meet the people and the people knew them. It didn't take long that when I would go with them and walk around the hospital with them, they were greeted as old friends.

**R:** Other examples?

**A:** I would meet the doctors and then they would say, "Oh, I wanted to ask you something but I forgot it as I walked out of the patient's room. Now that I see you, would you get such and such?" So I always had a pad and pencil and collected requests and then went to the library, and tried to get them back that afternoon, but if I couldn't, I'd get them the next morning. This was very satisfying, and I really had a good time with it.

The reference interview, complete with notations on who and what, leads to the delivery of information services. Whether in the hospital cafeteria or hallway, the interplay of data between a health care provider and a librarian leads to a process of decision-making. This iteration map directs the search, and the professional medical librarian makes decisions based on findings that lead to either satisfaction about what is found or a determination to keep searching for something more. Once delivered, the items land in the domain of the health care provider, who can determine if his/her question is answered or if more information is needed. Thus, a pair-construction of a mapping process serves the interests of both makers.
Maps, by and large, show the way, or a way. They are a socially constructed entity. Wood (1992) states that “every map facilitates some living by virtue of its ability to grapple with what is known instead of what is merely seen, what is understood rather than what is no more than sensed” (p. 7). Because maps are wrought from the social milieu, they come with flaws, prejudices, biases, and problems of imperfection. Still, they help to organize understanding and act to reflect the map-making systems of various social structures or entities.

Another form of collaborative mapping within the circuit rider medical library program took place at the level of evaluation. Evaluation tools are often shaped and written by the “players” involved and are brought into being by the very culture that is being evaluated. Evaluation of services has long been a practice in librarianship, and Antes ensured that evaluative data were collected from the recipients of service. Through the process of crafting a survey tool and collecting data, Antes was able to construct an evidentiary map by processing individual responses and building a larger picture through connecting the data and making sense of it:

R: Did you at any time get any formal feedback from the hospitals, either in writing or through interviews?
A: Well, we had luncheon for the liaisons a couple of years. In fact several. And they came. We provided transportation for them as well as lunch. And they had a lot of feedback. And then in 1984 we did a survey with the [doctors and staff who received our services at the sites]. It was a blind survey. . . .

R: How many surveys were distributed? Or how many were received?
A: About 400, and we had a tremendous response, 99% as I remember, which is almost unheard of for a survey.

R: May I have a copy of the survey?
A: Yes. We asked, how often do you use the circuit? When you request information, is what you receive relevant to your needs? Do you receive enough information? What do you use it for? If it's used for patient care, did it ever influence their treatment? If the circuit librarian did not visit your hospital, would you phone as many requests to a resource library, and the answer was: 15% said yes, 82% said no, which I think is very telling. It indicates that the personal contact made a difference. Had any of them ever felt they had to go to another library, they didn’t get what they wanted from ours? And [the answer] almost always was no, occasionally was 17%, seldom 38%, and they never went to another one was 43%.

R: Did you process the evaluations yourself?
A: Yes, with the librarians.

R: And what was your general impression from the feedback, and did you make any changes based on the feedback?
A: The feedback was all positive. It was just incredible.
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R: So it basically spurred you to keep going?
A: Oh my, yes.

This evaluation sought to establish credibility of the program by getting information about the scope of service, patterns of usage, and levels of satisfaction, for example. What was extracted from the survey were answers to questions about what had been taking place in the past. This snapshot revealed details that allowed Antes to make well-informed decisions about improvements. Just as maps can record and demonstrate physical and historical transformation in landscapes, so too does this map reveal the landscape of the circuit rider medical library program and further serve the interests of the map makers.

OUT OF THE NEED TO KEEP RECORDS, MAPS BECOME (CULTURAL) ARTIFACTS

As developed out of our work activity, maps not only show us “the way” but also create records. In my work with Antes, it was surprising how many materials she kept in what appeared to be a very valuable collection of thirteen small leather-bound books. These were in the corner of her office in a cardboard box, and I examined them, not knowing what they were but sensing they were important. They measured four inches by six inches and were spiral bound. Examining one of them, I found a title on the page “Idiopathic Hypertrophic Subaortic Stenosis.” Underneath the title were handwritten entries listed vertically on the page, with journal names in abbreviated form such as “Vasc. Surg” and “Am. J. Cardiol” which were followed by months, dates, and page numbers. These appeared to be a history of searches for many subjects. I asked her to tell me about them:

Going from A to Z, I developed each of these little notebooks when I first started. [A]t first I started by putting in the doctor’s name, and I thought “That’s ridiculous, if somebody else asks you for it, you’re not going to know the doctor’s name.” So then I began to go through and I re-recorded everything I found for them. I think A’s full. I have them down through Z. Of course some books don’t take as much space as others. But that’s what gave me the idea that I needed to get some things on computer [in the future], because it would save us an awful lot of time, particularly when the circuit program started because, as I told you, the repeat [requests] for information were fantastic. And so that’s why I had to give up on this, of course, because it didn’t work, and that’s when we went to the notebooks with the pages of the request on the front and the citations on the back.

Antes said she had considered throwing the notebooks away, the thought of which almost caused an idiopathic hypertrophic subaortic stenosis in her interviewer. I took the liberty of defining these for her—a database. The notebooks served as a paper database record of searches
performed by the librarians in a time when electronic databases were not in common existence for librarians. She agreed with my "naming." So obviously a map, her series of notebooks directed librarians to past searches in an attempt at efficiency. And even though later abandoned for another mapping technique, they help us understand part of the culture formed.

"To write about the past, one needs information from the past" (Glassie, 1983, p. 376). Antes's database provides a material item from the past that is artifactual. It depicts a form of thinking at that time. Just as a piece of Pueblo pottery tells us something about Native American material culture, so does this collection of books provide a balanced look at the history of the circuit rider medical library information system and the ways the culture was expressed. As Glassie (1983) states: "Because they survive from past times, artifacts can transport us backward to deepen our understanding" (p. 382).

Antes kept many of her statistical reports as well, exhibiting pages and pages of actual grid maps of data with the types of services rendered on the vertical axis and the site to which the services were given on the horizontal axis:

R: How did you keep records?
A: Well, of course someone tabulated all of these requests, if not every day, as often as was feasible, and kept it up to date. So originally they did it on their own with these numbers. And then the support people did it. And then we kept records. I have them here from about . . . well, I have a whole stack here that I may be able to give you.

R: This is a grid, it's a sheet—who developed this grid?
A: Together. . . we all did.

R: Could you read off some of the categories on the grid?
A: Literature searches—is that it? Item requests, audiovisual requests, total requests. And then we would tabulate how many were patient related, how many books were loaned, how many audiovisuals were delivered. We did a tremendous interlibrary loan business because we often did not have some things that they really needed and so we would send for them. We kept track of in-house searches and did bibliographies that were tabulated—that is, in-house with each hospital, because we had the names of the hospitals across the top, the number of articles photocopied, and the number of materials delivered. And the pages that were photocopied. And then we got to the total number for one month.

R: And so they would do daily tallies or weekly tallies?
A: Weekly. One of the people did that.

R: And then you would synthesize it all to a whole group. . . a monthly report kind of thing?
A: Yes.
These data maps shed light on the use of noncomputerized data recording and the librarians' strong drive toward knowledge, understanding, and assessment of their service. Like an aerial view of a landscape, maps of statistics can provide a broader view of the scope of the information system at work. And just as Pasteur's microscope revealed the microbes in milk, so can statistical maps provide enlightenment on the minutia that may impact decision-making on some level.

Along with the data maps that leave a form of legacy, the card catalog has also become an artifact of library culture. Antes herself faced a huge transformation in reorganizing the access points to information in the library. Among the first things she did when she arrived as director was change the classification system:

The collection was all in the Dewey Decimal system but having learned about the NLM [National Library of Medicine] (I guess it was in the Library of Congress) . . . special classification system, I thought that they would like to have it up to date, and so I started recataloging. As it turned out, I thought that was going to be done very quickly, but it was a big job. So that took me longer than I expected.

All of these forms (evaluations, statistics, catalog records) provide artifactual glimpses of the thinking at the time and the mapping methods used. It is important to note that these models both resulted in the proliferation of information and had an impact on the information system. As well, out of the necessity for records, the varying map forms reflected the evolving cultural landscape of the medical librarian's workways.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MAP IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD FROM WHICH IT EMERGES

Maps are windows on the world. They can situate the locus of activity or force us to see something that we do not want to see. They show us borders and boundaries and connections and inform us about what others discovered. Mapmakers bring their skills and weaknesses to the act of mapping and, through the cognitive or tangible, they construct maps of what they know or believe, see or discover. Antes was indeed a pioneer as the developer of the first rural circuit rider medical librarian program. And like the pioneers of the past, she left a legacy of what she came to know. She conducted training programs, held a national symposium, wrote journal articles, and developed two videos on the circuit rider medical library program:

R: Other librarians or hospitals invited you to come to talk about how to start a circuit program. Was it more of an open question and answer, or was it an actual training?

A: It wasn't a training because they weren't set up yet. It was a case of—and in some cases they had applied for a grant but they didn't know if they were going to get it—but they wanted to know what
they could do, how could you get money [to fund it], and so on. It was pretty much nuts and bolts. I had been to Texas, New Mexico, New York, Canada, Delaware, [other places] where all these people were interested in the circuit program and, as a result, now there are many circuit libraries. Also, at the Medical Library Association annual meeting, I gave presentations to those interested in circuits to meet and talk about it.

Among the records from Antes are copies of a thick stack of letters addressed to her. "Your Symposium . . . was so well executed and I certainly found the time there to be stimulating and rewarding." "I believe your symposium must be counted as a success." "Thank you for your delightful conference." These are just some of the comments given after the National Symposium on Circuit Librarians and Shared Services. On the cover of the symposium program was a map. In the center of the map was a book with the word "Sayre" on it, which represented the site of the circuit home base, and extending outward from the book are lines toward all of the eighteen cities and towns on the circuit. Inside appeared a list of 2.5 days of sessions and activities and a photograph of the circuit librarians with their canvas bags. Antes continued to extend her mapping methods to share knowledge and serve the interests of others:

**R:** You decided to plan the first National Symposium on Circuit Rider Librarianship. Could you tell me what went into planning this national symposium? How did you come up with the idea?

**A:** I guess somebody said you ought to—maybe it was at MLA—somebody said "You know, you ought to have a meeting and tell people how you do this." And so I suppose that planted the seed, and we began to investigate whether we could get the financing and these people are the ones who did it. We contacted some book publishers and pharmaceutical companies and asked if they would help fund it and present this, and they agreed.

**R:** How many people came to the first one?

**A:** About 30. I know we had representatives from 16 states, including California, Oregon, and Colorado. We had some of the leaders of the Medical Library Association and people from the National Library of Medicine as speakers, as well as circuit rider librarians.

Antes also published several articles about circuit rider librarianship in both domestic and international publications and developed two videos about the program. She gave me copies of purchase letters from the Tokyo Metropolitan Institute of Gerontology; the Public Health Department of Perth, Australia; the African Medical and Research Foundation; and others. I watched the video with her while on fieldwork and was shipped a copy later.

We did [a videotape] which I think sold the [National Library of Medicine] on our program. And then we did an update. We wanted
to take [the video] to the national convention. [The titles are] "The Circuit Librarian" and "The Circuit Librarian Update." I guess one of the things that happened was that somebody connected with the Nursing Times in England asked if I would do an article for them and I did. As a result of the article in the Nursing Times, people in Australia heard of the video, people in Japan heard of it, and people in Africa. So we're very happy to say that our videotape is in England and Africa and Japan and Australia and the United States . . . we have sent the videotape to many places.

CONCLUSION

But the truth changes color depending on the light and tomorrow can be clearer than yesterday. Memory is the selection of images; some elusive, others printed indelibly on the brain. Each image is like a thread, each thread woven together to make a tapestry of intricate texture and the tapestry tells a story. And the story is our past.

—Eve's Bayou, Trimark Pictures, Kasi Lemmons

Antes reflects upon her work and professionalism:

I guess I try to make what I have done speak for itself and be pretty obvious. And I guess I could only repeat that I felt that if people remember anything about [the first rural circuit medical library program] they don't have to remember that I started it, but remember that it was a great service to rural and small hospitals that didn't have libraries and librarians. [I recall that in the Guthrie Journal] Dr. Beck7 wrote a commentary [entitled] Fire Extinguishers, Libraries and Librarians, and I have a copy of it, in which he said that he had several fire extinguishers in his house, but he really didn't know how to use them. And he said it's a little like a [medical] library that doesn't have a librarian, because the librarian is the one who knows how to use the library. And so it's like the fire extinguishers, if you know how to use it, if you know where to find information, it's going to be successful, and if you don't, the fire's going to burn you right down to a crisp.

In many ways, this discussion has been a mutually traveled story-journey between Antes and me as a researcher. The process was very much a partnership. There was, of course, the observational fieldwork along with many hours of formal interviewing. There were also informal conversations, time spent together digging through files and boxes to prepare and gather materials for me to bring home, viewing the circuit rider video, and having meals together. Near the end of the last day, we shared a quiet walk through the Corning Museum of Glass, which served to bridge the three days of intense work that ended with an emotional departure at the airport. Out of our many conversations over the last year grew a relationship rooted in mutual respect. I recall near the end of our time together (as recorded in my field notes) when Antes said to me "I never met a person so full of questions as you." I also looked at the end of our transcript at the time when we were summing up, and read what I said. "I
really didn't know when I was coming here who exactly I was going to meet. And I realize I have met one of the most remarkable people I've ever [known]."

Through the dialogue that emerged, a different type of history about circuit rider medical librarianship has begun to be written. This was a pair-construction that resulted in the melding of the historic, the folkloric, and the anthropologic. Through the telling of Antes's oral history, her memories of the past emerged to constitute new primary source material. Through the time I spent with her in the field, the collection and study of artifacts from her work, and many hours listening to our tapes, I have attempted to allow her voice to sound a new understanding of the work culture of her program. This collaboration, and the interpretations it inspires, could not have occurred via a survey, an essay, by telephone interviews, or by long-term letter exchanges. For Antes, I hope it was an enjoyable (if not overwhelming) opportunity to reflect upon, and tell, her own history, moving toward an interpretation of her life and work as a pioneer in the field of medical librarianship. For me, it was a journey through the history of another's work life and an opportunity to reflect upon that history to develop a new theory about the anthropology of work and to further understanding of how work processes evolve through the use of mapping techniques.

Maps are many things: a common object, a representation, a container, a directional, a path; something simple or sensational or explicit or intricate or evolutionary. Maps tell stories as much as people do. Whether the maps are literal tangible pieces of matter or cognitive processes, they exist prolifically in our lives and work because they assist in making sense of the world. Maps serve as "bridges" to create the important links between networks of people and systems. At the micro level, we use maps to help us "navigate" the necessary aspects of our lives and operationalize activity. At the macro level, maps shed light on the evolution of processes and reflect upon the adaptability of humans and the need for the ongoing construction and reconstruction of workways.

It is important to look at the ways circuit rider medical librarians utilize mapping techniques as a way of contributing to the body of knowledge of medical librarianship and an understanding of its history. But, more importantly, from this work comes a better understanding of the methodologies of mapping in creating new opportunities for all librarians in collaborative work partnerships. The librarians in this research project exemplified the necessity of a creative and flexible work environment to ensure their ultimate goal of high-quality library services to a unique clientele in varied and dynamic work settings. Analyzing their achievements can help improve the quality of workways for future librarians by assisting in understanding the use of both literal mapping tools and cognitive mapping, and the ways these intersect and influence each other.
NOTES
1 The Medical Library Association (MLA) is a professional organization of more than 1,200 institutions and 4,000 professionals in the health information field. The MLA fosters excellence in the professional achievement and leadership of health sciences librarians and information professionals to enhance the quality of health care, education, and research. The MLA Oral History Committee is charged to manage the association’s oral history program, which is devoted to the history of North American health sciences librarianship, especially the history of the Medical Library Association. The MLA currently funds the Oral History Project, and it was under the domain of this project that I first met and interviewed Jean Antes.

2 Jean Antes married William Pelley in 1997 and retired to Ridgewood, New Jersey.

3 With her permission, I will refer to Jean Antes by name. Kathleen Casey (1995) provides inspiration to pursue this reconstruction of the relationship between the researcher and the participants of research. In this analysis of Antes’s oral history, I will write about my observations and interpretations of them and, at times, will use first person to reflect my thoughts. In dialogic excerpts, Antes will be represented as “A” and I will be represented as “R,” for researcher.

4 William C. Beck, author of Memory bytes: An autobiography of a surgeon, was a mentor to Jean Antes and credits her in the introduction to his book as “almost a co-author” (Beck, 1995).

5 Victoria Pifalo is the Health Sciences Librarian (Library of the Health Sciences—University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) and Associate Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago and a former circuit medical librarian at Robert Packer Hospital.

6 I made photocopies of selected pages from the books at the time of the field work and refer to them for description. After studying them, I asked Antes Pelley to consider donating this collection of artifacts to the National Library of Medicine.

7 William Beck’s (1987) essay was written in response to the elimination of a hospital library requirement from federal regulations.

REFERENCES


Pin the Tales on the Donkay: The Life of Libraries by Don Krummel As Told to Linnea Martin

LINNEA S. MARTIN

ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the professional life and experiences of D. W. Krummel, professor emeritus of Library and Information Science and Music at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In twelve interviews conducted in the spring, summer, and early fall of 1998, Krummel discussed the persons, places, experiences, and ideas most influential to him as a veteran and historian of librarianship; as a professor and bibliographer; and as he progressed from undergraduate and graduate study in librarianship and music at the University of Michigan (1951-1956), to the Library of Congress (1956-1961), to the Newberry Library as head of reference and associate librarian (1962-1969). His remarks and stories address the essence of libraries and librarianship.

BACKGROUND

Libraries, where one takes on the smell of books, stale and attractive. Service with no motive, simple as U.S. Mail. Fountains and palms, armchairs for smokers. Incredible library where ideas run for safety, place of rebirth of forgotten anthems, modern cathedral for lovers. Library, hotel lobby for the unemployed, the failure, the boy afraid to go home, penniless. Switchboards for questioners: What do you know about unicorns? How do you address a duchess? Palladian architecture of gleaming glass and redwood. Window displays of this week's twelve bestsellers. Magnificent quarters of the director, who dines with names of unknown fame. Lavatories, rendezvous of desperate homosexuals. In the periodical room the newspapers bound with a stick, carried like banners of
surrender to pale oak tables. Library, asylum, platform for uninhibited leaps. In the genealogy room the delicate perspiration of effete brains. Room also of the secret catalogue, room of the unlisted books, those sought by police, manuscript room with the door of black steel, manuscripts stolen in delicate professional theft from abroad, sealed for seventy-five years. Sutras on spools of film. And all this courtesy and all this trust, tons of trash and tons of greatness, burning in time with the slow cool burning, burning in the fires of poems that gut libraries, only to rebuild them, more grand and Palladian, freer, more courteous, with cornerstones that say: Decide for yourself.* (Shapiro, 1964, pp. 20-21)

I first met Don Krummel at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in August 1992 when I was on a tour of library schools in the Midwest. Curt McKay, assistant to the dean, encouraged me to sit in on classes to get a feel for education at Illinois. Krummel’s course on American research libraries fit my interests and my schedule. I remember taking a seat near the door. No matter how short classes generally are on the first day, I thought it provident to provide myself with a quick exit. Every librarian I had spoken with in the process of researching my career choice told me library school ranked at the top of tedious times in their professional life: “It’s what you have to go through to become a librarian,” they said, “don’t expect to like it and don’t be turned off from the profession when you don’t.”

The class was large. Professor Krummel discussed the syllabus and the format of the course and what students could expect to get out of it. It was clear that his standards were high and one could anticipate doing quite a bit of work for his course throughout the semester. It was also clear that he viewed the territory of academic research libraries to be a fertile one that included texts, people, institutions, and the dynamic ways in which they come together. Toward the end of class, he gave students a handout of a list of gifts of various kinds that had been offered to academic libraries: “Don’t spend more than ten minutes on this,” he said, “just decide whether or not you’d take the items offered and why or why not. Expect that whatever your decision, I’ll take the opposing point of view, not because there is necessarily anything wrong with your argument, there aren’t right or wrong answers to many of these questions, but because there are many things one needs to take into consideration” (Krummel, lecture, August, 1995). One of the items on the list was an x-ray of Ernest Hemingway’s ulcer.1

Now, six years and four classes later (I didn’t start library school the following fall), as a candidate for a Certificate of Advanced Study at the University of Illinois, I am engaged in an oral history project focusing

on Don Krummel’s professional life. Who is Don Krummel, why is this project important, and what relevance does it have to the profession at large?

Krummel’s e-mail moniker has, according to his latest count, fifty-eight possible interpretations (Krummel, personal communication, September 18, 1998). All of them, or at least all those I’ve thought of, are keys to his professional identity and outlook, including the fact that fifty-eight may be a very short list. “Donkay” resonates with associations. Do I hope that if I pull the tail on the donkay he will kick up a storm of gold dust and it will settle on me? Am I trying to pin the tail on the donkay so that finally, once and for all, I can close the textbook and set out on my own professional journey? Or, do I sincerely believe, after my exposure to Krummel and his teaching, that he is a person of unusual insight into his profession with interesting stories to tell that should be shared with a larger audience? Probably all three.

A veteran and historian of the profession, Krummel was educated at the University of Michigan. He served as reference librarian in the Music Division of the Library of Congress (1956-1959), and as head of reference at the Newberry Library (1962-1964) and associate librarian there (1964-1969). Since 1970 he has been a professor (now professor emeritus) of library science and music at the University of Illinois. He was named a University Scholar (1991) and was the first Centennial Scholar of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science (1993). His principal music interests include printing, publishing, and early American music (Sadie, 1980, p. 283). He is the author or editor of between eight and fifteen books (depending on what one calls a book), nearly a hundred articles, and several hundred reviews, and is now at work on a new book on the history of bibliographic records. In addition to bibliography, he is also interested in library history, research library collections, and rare books. His concerns and audience are not as esoteric as one might assume. In an article for the Champaign-Urbana News-Gazette he wrote: “We judge people, sometimes by the books they own, more often by the ones they quote for us, and always by the ideas they select from the books they have read” (Krummel, 1978, p. A2). This statement could apply equally to a person’s choice of friends or television programs.

What is a library, what are books, and why should we care anyway if, according to popular opinion, everything will soon be online?

I’m inclined to see [the library] as people, politics, reading, as a zoo, not necessarily a happy place because the animals in the zoo I’m sure are often miserable, but still a place where there’s lots of activity going on and beyond anyone’s comprehension. Libraries, library science, most research universities today, are Aristotelian in construction. Plato sees it more holistically, indeed the Platonic notion is a lot what you find in Borges’ “Library of Babel,” namely, that the library
is something, which is constantly being redefined and is indestructible. This is the distinction that I am really working on more and more—Plato’s conception of the library as a center of ideas, all ideas in the world—what Borges says, the library is limitless and universal. The books in the library are part of the library that happened to be in one place at one time. In other words, the library is ideas, these ideas are expressed in books, recorded or latent. You can extract whatever content you want from reading the books. The library consists of all the wonderful things it signals. It’s rubbish... there’s a lot of junk in every library. What is junk? Infinitely subject to redefinition. (October 28, 1998)

The library Krummel describes, while virtual in conception, is physical in reality. It is a Bruegelian universe, populated by readers who also serve as resources, sometimes more profitably than books. It is grounded in time and localized in space but it still introduces readers to the “real world,” the open system, according to its ability to provide and their ability to interpret. Its contents, whatever they are and however vulnerable they are to theft, abuse, deterioration, and neglect, are open to examination, comparison, and verification. They are acquired and destroyed by various means, both legal and illegal, according to plan or by accident. As a guest lecturer in Information, Organization, and Access, one of the core courses for master’s students at GSLIS, Krummel was asked what impact he thought the electronic revolution would have on the organization of knowledge. Characteristically, he did not provide an answer but instead asked a question: “Will information displace knowledge and knowledge displace wisdom?” (Krummel, personal communication, 1994). “Everybody loves to write,” he commented during an interview, “nobody loves to read or listen” (August 12, 1998).

SLIDING INTO A PROFESSION

Krummel’s interest in libraries began at home with his father, a German Evangelical minister, who delighted in abstract ideas and encouraged him to read. He remembers being fascinated with Will Durant’s The Story of Philosophy in his teens. One of his earliest memories of books is graphic and prophetic not only with respect to the profession he would enter but also the librarian and teacher of librarianship he would eventually become:

How did I end up in libraries? One of my first memories, I had forgotten it until just a few days ago. Back during World War II, there were a lot of drives for materials in short supply, metal drives, paper drives among them. And on one occasion, the high school library was preparing to throw out a number of books that it didn’t need. Here was a Ninth Edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, the whole thing lacking one volume. Big, thick, black, very difficult stuff to get through. I asked the superintendent “do you really want to throw that out?” And he said “well, if you’ll pay for its weight in
paper, you can have it." Well, we weighed it and it came to, I think, ninety-five cents. I had to borrow some money to buy it. I remember loading it up (shades of Rosebud) on my sled and carrying it home in a huge box. And could I read it? The Ninth Edition is pretty impenetrable—it's long articles on bad paper in small type. I did use it, I did browse through it, and it became my introduction to the big world. (April 29, 1998)

The set was not a virtual library in today's sense, but it was the kind of overpowering experience that a library should be. When, years later, Krummel read Borges's announcement that "the library is limitless, universal," he did not find it hard to understand. He had few experiences in libraries as a boy growing up in small towns in Iowa and Michigan, but his memories are vivid. They include the location of libraries he rarely visited, and the fact that books in one of his school libraries were organized by color (July 14, 1998). His interest in, and knowledge of, libraries began to take shape during his undergraduate years as he pursued interests outside of music in history, philosophy, and art: "I was attracted to libraries, I did find myself hanging out in them more and more, for no good reason other than to browse and read" (April 29, 1998).

At this time, Krummel was enrolled in the School of Music at the University of Michigan from which he received both a bachelor's and master's degree. His interest in music also dates back to his home life—his father was a violinist—and his experiences composing and performing as a teenager and young adult. For a short time he served as an organist in his father's church where he began to learn music theory on his own. "I just did not have the performer's instinct. I took to theory, but practice needs a different discipline and, while I knew what I was excited by, I never learned how to exteriorize it... how to make music out of it" (April 29, 1998).

Reflecting on his career, he sees his move toward librarianship as something of a homecoming:

I have a very strong affection for music but, not being a performer, I can never really understand it... On the other hand, with libraries, I feel both the affection and an understanding, although the understanding has changed over the years as the affection has ripened. It is certainly different now from what it was when I was a student. I do feel I understand what a library is and what it ought to be. What did attract me to the work? In many ways it was not the work itself—sitting behind a desk or helping people, or doing cataloging, or anything like that—but just being part of the institution, part of the library. Like so many people, being a reader. (April 29, 1998)

A CAREER

Libraries are human networks and Krummel has many stories about the readers who use them, both his own and those others have shared with him. He says readers (whom he never refers to as patrons or users)
have defined the library for him; they are its "lifeblood" (May 30, 1998). One story, from his days as head of reference at the Newberry, is compelling not only because it reminds one of how interesting libraries and their readers are but also because it reflects Krummel’s humorous, yet compassionate, perception of them:

**DWK:** Good old Edgar, I have forgotten his last name. Edgar was a benign genealogist who came in regularly—sweet, old, harmless. On one occasion, though, the circ desk person said “help, you’ve got to come out and help us, old Edgar is giving us a problem.” And I went out and said “look, Edgar, you can’t do (whatever he was doing, I’ve forgotten).” “You can’t say that to me, I’m the King of England.” “Okay, Edgar, yes you are, but let’s talk about this outside here.”

**LSM:** Did the guards come in?

**DWK:** The guards came in and took him out, poor old man. How do you handle these emergency situations? And in this case, in the genealogy reading room, where some would have thought “My God, maybe he is the King of England.” (May 30, 1998)

Krummel’s vision of a library was shaped, both positively and negatively, by his experiences at the Library of Congress and the Newberry and by libraries he has used for his own research, particularly the British Museum. Stanley Pargellis, head librarian of the Newberry, who hired Krummel and for whom he worked in 1962, was an important influence. In his introduction to Pargellis’s festschrift, *Essays in History and Literature*, Ray Allen Billington (in Bluhm, 1965) remarks: “Not the least of his [Pargellis’s] qualities was the ability to infect others with his conviction that librarianship was both a challenging and an essential profession and that upon it depended much of man’s success or failure in mastering his fate” (p. 5). Billington credits Pargellis with taking a library, little known outside of Chicago, and building it into an internationally famous institution that attracted scholars from all over the world (Billington, 1965, p. 5). Reading Billington’s essay, one recognizes in Pargellis some of the beliefs and qualities one appreciates most in Krummel, including the view that no institution is more central to the fundamental health and well-being of a society, particularly a democracy, than its libraries. One story, a particular favorite, reflects Pargellis’s administrative style at the Newberry. It concerns the time Krummel asked to see the Newberry organization chart:

Donald, my boy,” he recalls Pargellis saying, “the organization chart of this library is a pig pen. You get in, and like a pig you have to find a rut, and, if any other pig tries to push you out, you push them out and that’s the way this place runs, that’s the organization chart. (May 30, 1998)

Krummel’s approach shows the influence of this experience:
DWK: My most meaningful experiences in libraries have been ones that were not predictable. They are random rather than routine, with human elements, flesh on the bones. The story of Pargellis's pig pen recalls that behind the organization chart lies the invisible organization chart, the way things really work. I've often used a handout, a summary of Hazzard Adams' *The Academic Tribes*. The tribalism of communities, the invisible network of libraries, is very important and I've been more concerned, not with the rules, the laws, the science of it as with just making things work, the processes that make libraries function.

LSM: What is the difference?

DWK: The difference when it comes right down to it I suppose is the difference between Plato and Aristotle and don't ask me to explain that briefly. The one is essentially concerned with attributes, characteristics, qualities, and the other with analytical processes, the idea that the duty of a proper scientist is to destroy chaos, to see that chaos no longer exists. The problem I have with this is that I rather like a certain amount of chaos. It's one of the reasons why I've been a bad cataloguer I suspect. There's also the adage that a good historian is like a vampire attracted to blood. Good librarians are attracted to human elements as well as principles and processes. (June 4, 1998)

Pargellis's conception of the Newberry and his responsibilities as librarian were large and imaginative. Among its special assets was The Irving, an apartment complex of four-floor walkups where the Krummels lived. This community comprised an important aspect of life at the Newberry and its society reflected the library's cultural activity:

It was a wonderful living condition because of the group that was there. Across the hall from our apartment were members of the Czech nobility. . . . On the first floor, below us, were Wright Howes, the bookdealer, author of *US-iana*, and his wife Zoe, . . . the other first floor apartment belonged to a secretary for an ad agency, whose great love was her grand piano, and she played Chopin on it after work as late as she could. *Poetry* magazine, then edited by Henry Rago, had one of the apartments for its headquarters [Karl Shapiro was its editor when he wrote the poem that opens this article]. A few apartments were reserved for those with direct ties to the Newberry, and with the undergraduate program with the Associated Colleges of the Midwest, apartments were needed for resident scholars and students in the program. Other people were also eminent in their own specialties. Among other Newberry staff members, Hans Baron, the great Renaissance historian, and Colton Storm, the Western Americana bibliographer, lived in other units with their families. (May 30, 1998)

But what really emerged, what Stanley Pargellis encouraged and I think was very valuable, was a microcosm that would reflect the library. It would help establish the library as part of the community,
would not be the only community that was reflected in the apartments, but would establish an identity. (August 12, 1998)

**Influence and Confluence**

For Krummel, as scholar and academic research librarian, the best collections stimulate, reflect, and further the interests of good minds in frequently unpredictable ways; collections of people parallel collections of books. His personal and professional life and work as librarian, teacher, and scholar cannot be separated from his complex network of colleagues, friends, acquaintances, and students. While he was associate librarian, the Newberry acquired the J. Francis Driscoll Collection of sheet music—a good example of how networks such as his benefit institutions and future scholars. During the 1950s, when Krummel was working on his dissertation (*Philadelphia Music Engraving and Publishing, 1800-1820: A Study in Bibliography and Cultural History*, 1958), he met Driscoll, a pioneer collector of early American sheet music. In *The Newberry Library Catalog of Early Printed Sheet Music* (1983), Bernard Wilson, his friend from Ann Arbor and colleague at the Newberry, describes the strong, mutual admiration that existed between Krummel and Driscoll, and Krummel’s role in the complex negotiations, at least a decade later, that brought the Driscoll collection to Chicago.

Krummel thinks the library’s organic and elusive systems, rather than theoretical models, are the ones on which library practice is based and should be taught. These are the systems for which he has genuine affection. He has delighted in their labyrinthine and surprising perspectives as gleaned from his journeys and examinations. Art Young, his first doctoral student, focuses on the professional significance of this approach in a letter written to Krummel on the occasion of his retirement:

> You have always sought to discern the patterns, interconnections, and parallels. As we plunge into the age of discontinuity, momentariness, and ahistorical posturing, one can only value more those like yourself who have sought to probe and explain. It may be said that you have practiced in full measure what I would term “fractal librarianship,” the study of recurring essences. (Young, personal communication, May 7, 1997)

Krummel’s attitude toward human systems and their architects is playful, affectionate, and familial to the extent that he respects the result or the expenditure of effort. This is evident in his lectures and in conversations with him. Sometimes it is also reflected in his writing: “ESTC [*EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SHORT TITLE CATALOGUE*] is most usefully viewed not as a single work, but better as a complex lineage of parent projects, cousins overseas, siblings, in-laws, house guests both welcome and unwelcome, and offsprings of stepchildren . . .” (Krummel, 1985a, p. 1459).

Collections are particular to institutions and reflective of the institution’s nature, its location, and the interests of its librarians and
They include tangentia intended to spark the imagination and expand the reader's notion of what is possible. During the 1960s, research libraries had a great deal of money to spend on collection development, and there was pressure to spend it on "high spots" (expensive rare books) in subjects in which they specialized. I asked Krummel to what extent he thought imagination played a critical role in building a good library:

"Imagination is important, and in many ways the opposite of it is the idea that imagination is determined by the institution. This is what we need and therefore this is what we have to get, which turns out to be, of course, what every other institution is getting too. Imagination is what's involved in defining the unusual collection." (August 12, 1998)

He recalls being caught in a tough spot at the Newberry when James M. Wells, associate director, and the late Richard Colles Johnson, a librarian, disagreed on the acquisition of materials Johnson believed were important:

"Being a loner in his own right, Rick was interested in building a collection of books on hermits in America: "How I lived in a cave in Pennsylvania, Western Pennsylvania, in 1810," and the memoirs of somebody in Missouri in 1870. The study of hermits, he argued, was an extension of the strong Newberry collection of Indian captivities, narratives of "how I was caught by the Cherokee and then was held in bondage for three months and broke away and lived to tell about it". . . . I was very much on Rick's side on this one. Jim wanted to celebrate great books, we wanted to get the interesting things that might be useful some day." (August 12, 1998)

Krummel's recollections of his career at the Library of Congress and the Newberry abound in acquisition tales—great detective, espionage, and adventure stories—that involve international travel and interactions of intrigue far from the exhibition halls of ALA conferences. They focus on the strategies of hunting, courting, and chasing involved in building great collections, not to mention the villains and fellow collectors one must elude, and the accidents (happy and sad) that sometimes intervene to determine one's success or failure. The negotiation skills involved are apparent in this story Krummel told about attending the movie "The Sound of Music" with three friends of the Newberry's, two of whom who had a very different reaction to the film:

"As the Newberry started getting interested in fundraising, developing a friends group, one person who we got to know quite well was Mary Langhorne, a very elegant and sweet lady. The Langhorne's were a distinguished Virginia family; Lady Astor was a cousin. We knew Mrs. Langhorne and many of her closest friends. One of them was Mrs. John Alden Carpenter, whose grandchildren studied piano with my wife. Another was the great opera singer, Claire Dux, who
had married into the Swift meat packing family. She was one of the
great Mozart singers of her day and an early patroness of the
Mozarteum in Salzburg. On one memorable evening in Chicago,
Marilyn [Mrs. Krummel] and I were invited to attend a movie with
the three of them. We were driven in Mrs. Langhorne’s limousine by
her chauffeur. I had the unfortunate pleasure of sitting between
Claire Dux Swift, who thought [The Sound of Music] was a perfectly
awful movie . . . “she [Julie Andrews] does not know how to sing. . .”
on the one side, and Mary Langhorne on the other, “Oh, isn’t it
lovely, isn’t it beautiful, what do you think?” And how do you sit be-
tween the two of them and say anything? (Krummel, personal com-
|nication, July 14, 1998)

The movie the five attended is particularly interesting in light of a later
event. Claire Dux Swift left her personal papers to the Newberry and
when she died the original manuscript of “Conservate, fidele” (K. 16),
one of the first manuscripts in Mozart’s hand, was found among them. It
now resides at the Newberry, a tribute, perhaps in more than one way, to
“The Sound of Music.”

Just as the acquisition of collections is unpredictable, so is their ben-
cfit to readers. Krummel recalled this adventure with Rudolph Ganz:

Rudolph Ganz, this was the great concert pianist. I knew him just a
bit in Chicago. On one occasion he particularly wanted to see a very
little-known Liszt piece. “Oh, you’ve got this here, I’ve been looking
for this for so long. Ah, here it is! Yes, this proves that A-flat is the
navel of the keyboard.” I was talking to a female member of the staff
at the time, and when we looked puzzled, he took great delight in
embarrassing us by explaining that A-flat is best played by the third
finger. I still have no idea what he was talking about, but we were
glad he had finally found Liszt’s navel. (Krummel, personal commu-
nication, September 3, 1998)

MENTOR AND SCHOLAR

Libraries are complex organic systems that serve to educate readers,
not just provide information in relation to their expressed needs. They
are filled with readers, also librarians, who benefit from experiencing them:

I do feel I understand what a library is and what it might be. It’s
been a lifetime project. And I believe I understand how information
works, at least as much as anyone. It can mean either facts—as simple
units of data processing, and to me these seem mighty trivial—or
basic ways of controlling people through them—so as to involve man-
agement activities that brought our Hitlers and Stalins to power, and
these are mighty scary. Allowing people to grow, so as to become
more responsible as they become more informed—such as takes
place when you read what’s in a library—is what warms my soul.
(September 10, 1998)

He resists the idea of librarianship as a science:

I dislike the idea of the discipline being called library science, if sci-
ence is meant in the English rather than French sense,7 but again,
we’re stuck with that. It’s not scientific although it is synthetic, a mixture of other fields, of social sciences, humanities, science. This blending makes it rich if it is also limiting. Other academic departments specialize in their own subjects, so that as librarians become historians, or sociologists, or writers, they do get marked as second class citizens. (September 10, 1998)

Openness and an unbiased approach to the world of knowledge is essential to a good librarian. Thus, the fact that students have traditionally entered library school without an undergraduate education in librarianship can be an advantage, since this means they must be self-starters. They need to be “people who easily make the transition from one field to another, learning on their feet and learning quickly” (September 10, 1998). Many of Krummel’s students come with master’s degrees or even Ph.D.s in other fields, or have deep interests in subject specialties and thus end up working in academic or research libraries:

The people I’ve been most attracted to as students and faculty and colleagues have been the ones who have worked in books rather than with books (July 20, 1998).


There are many sides to issues, and Krummel acknowledges that his approach to education is not for everyone:

In some library work, creativity can be disastrous. Cataloguers with wonderfully original quantum leaps of mind are dangerous. One of my limitations in teaching in a professional school is that I make heretics out of students who could become bad cataloguers. Should teaching be a matter of rote learning? Where do originality and critical thought leave off and heresy and incompetence begin? (September 10, 1998)

In describing his approach to teaching, he comments:

You wanted me to talk a little bit about general philosophy, whatever that is, of teaching, my relationship to the discipline, to the activity. . . . I do like to bring in contexts from all over the map. Some of them are probably irrelevant, but that’s the way my mind works. One of the great things about libraries is that they specialize in the whole world, the range of human knowledge, and librarians have the privilege of introducing everything, and the responsibility to range widely and imaginatively. One of the things I most respect in colleagues, [whom] I admire is their ability to move all over the map. (September 10, 1998)

Over the years, Krummel has taught almost everything from core courses, designed to introduce students to librarianship, to cataloging (once), and library administration. His focus has been on reference,
selection, bibliography, library history and, of course, music bibliography. The typical syllabus includes an introduction to the course, outlines of the lecture format, and an extended bibliography of suggested readings and sources. Rarely is there an assigned textbook. His lecture notes consist of a loose-leafed version of the syllabus interleaved with material (articles, examples, jokes) to share with the class:

There is first the fixed agenda, elements that need to be covered. In addition, there are the added perspectives, the spin that I want to put on the whole lecture. These perspectives change, and they often include anecdotes. The perspectives are often dichotomies, ways of seeing the yin and the yang of things. These often hit me the day before or the morning of. Some of them come suddenly into focus in the middle of the night when I can’t sleep. If I remember them when I wake up they go into the outline, the crib sheet that I come up with. (September 10, 1998)

Krummel makes a commitment of five to ten years to the architecture of a particular course to allow for flexibility in emphasis, anecdotes to be included, and adaptation to special student projects: “I will often work against [the outline] with a perversity, in that I anticipate points, repeat points, jump from one point to the other to bring out some new organic unity. A library is organic; it changes to reflect and also determine the needs of its community; this also holds true for courses” (September 10, 1998).

Students often become frustrated at the independence of thinking required. Most syllabi include from 200 to 800 sources, most of them books not articles. I asked Krummel why he doesn’t provide short-cuts:

The quick perspectives are useful, but again, you will rarely completely agree with any one of them. Being quick, they will miss particular perspectives and will emphasize others too much. Some students will need to work from this angle and some from that. What will be meaningful? The basic monumental source is different to rare book librarians, children’s librarians, automation specialists, the general public, professors, administrators. There are many different takes one should get on one given achievement and, furthermore, the right perspective cannot be embedded in any single text. You need at least two melodies if any counterpoint is to emerge between them. I really would wish for more. One way is through your own writing. My history overview, “Fiat Lux, Fiat Latebra” (1994), is one such text. (September 10, 1998)

Information needs to be seen in context, students must read for themselves, think for themselves, make connections, and draw their own conclusions. His approach to reading is hypertextual:

The important experience is taking what you read, sizing it up, and asking what you want to get out of it. Is my own habit of reading really uncommon? I don’t know; I doubt it. Some books I read cover-to-cover but most I bounce around in: Read chapter seven, then go to the index, find another section and spend several hours
in it. In other words, I use them as reference books. Right now I’m reading several books. I have yet to read any of them cover-to-cover but I will. As soon as I know what I may want to say, I will go through each one of them from page one to the end. In order to get a gist of a book, my practice has been to start with the table of contents and the footnotes and gradually figure out where I am going to find what interests me. It may not be the way authors want you to do things, but in this case they’re not the readers, I am. (September 10, 1998)

Generous with his time in helping students develop papers or bibliographies, Krummel is elusive when asked for guidance on grades and useful shortcuts to getting good ones. I remember his response to one student who asked how many citations it was advisable to include in a bibliography for his academic research libraries course. “I really can’t answer that question” he said, “I received a brilliant one once with only three; I’ve received some bad ones with several hundred” (Krummel, 1995). Students must want to learn.

**Knowledge and Bibliography**

Bibliographies, to many, are lists they consult at the end of books or articles to find out which sources authors use to research and think about a particular topic. They are the means by which readers judge the background and authority of authors to make the assertions they do. Boswell noted that in browsing the shelves of a library, Dr. Johnson saw two kinds of knowledge: Subjects and guides to subjects. His “backs of books” were surrogates for bibliographies and catalogs. Subject bibliographies are portals to knowledge. However, subject bibliography is just one aspect of bibliographical work.

Simply stated and broadly speaking, bibliography is the study of books. One activity is devoted to compiling lists, called bibliographies . . . . because library catalogs mostly are centrally planned, the lists prepared by subject specialists and enthusiasts, describing new titles and obscure writings are all the more essential. Another field of bibliography involves work with printed documents as physical objects. As part of the graphic arts, layout and type design need to be studied as a means of conveying good taste and readability. Detective work of a sort calls us to look at early paper, type, ink, presswork and binding as we examine authentic and falsified documents, often of great historical or monetary value. Textual critics need bibliographical skills as they decide whether Hamlet’s flesh was solid or sullied or whether Melville’s fish was soiled or coiled. Growing out of both these fields is another which considers the impact of printing on our civilization. It is no coincidence that Gutenberg’s invention coincided with the Renaissance in Western thought, [which] first reached a wide audience during the Reformation and the emergence of the large European nations, and was well established in time to advance the great scientific Age of Reason. (Krummel, 1978, p. A2)
In *Bibliographies: Their Aims and Methods*, Krummel (1986a) discusses the origin of subject bibliography in greater depth:

The earliest bibliography, however defined, is lost in the dawn of historical records. It perhaps coincided with the origins of research in the time of Aristotle, blending scholarly exposition with the identification of relevant evidence. This was also the characteristic of several medieval Byzantine and Moslem texts that function both as exposition and bibliography. Lists from the late Middle Ages were mostly inventories of particular collections; only with the Renaissance and the advent of printing do we find lists conceived mostly for the purpose of defining the literature of particular topics. (p. 7)

Bibliographers set about their task in myriad ways. Bibliographies, the results of their passions and quandaries, are libraries in and of themselves:

The fascination of bibliographies stems from their evocative power. We muse over their riches, envying those who may actually have the time to look into their contents . . . . They are virtual libraries, devoted to everything we might wish to read (or may not—the choice is always ours). Subject bibliographies are our ideal special collections. They include treasures that no single library can ever possess, but scaled down for those who like the things we like, arranged to suit our tastes and needs, with access features needed by specialists in our area, with citations suited to our needs, and with none of the superfluous features other readers might need. It is no surprise that real libraries, in search of new missions, should use subject bibliographies as desiderata lists. (Krummel, in draft)

Krummel's interest in bibliography began in library school at the University of Michigan. There was no course in descriptive bibliography (Fredson Bowers' [1949] *Principles of Bibliographical Description* had just appeared), but two instructors whose work he found particularly exciting were Raymond Elgour on the history of books and printing, and R.C. Stewart on regional and national bibliography. The first led to his work in historical bibliography, the second to his specialty of bibliographical searching. Out of both of them came his dissertation; its analytical bibliography components are seen in his first scholarly article on "Graphic Analysis" (1959):

At this time there was growing interest not only in European but also in American music and somehow that sort of caught my fancy. Because of my music background, it was natural that research for my Ph.D. should focus on something having to do with music librarianship, and I hit on the idea of looking at printing. One man on my committee, Allen Britton, had done landmark work in American religious music. I pointed out: "Do you realize there were only two type faces that were used in early American religious music?" Out of this I became interested in typography (or engraved music, the study of punch forms). The question, in the '50s, is my dissertation: How can you look at a piece of music and say Philadelphia
1793 or 1821? . . . How does a romantic piece of music look? Why does it work the way it does? Why do performers like this particular arrangement of notes? Why is one tradition legible and another less so? This question of the picture, the sign, the image you read. How is it distinctive of a particular period, a particular tradition? (April 29, 1998)

Publications that grew out of this work include, on the one hand, his book on assigning dates (an anthology that reflects his work in the International Association of Music Libraries) and, on the other, essays such as "Early German Partbook Type Faces" (1985b) and "Clarifying the Musical Page: The Romantic Stichbild" (1986b).

Krummel's mentors in bibliography were Irving Lowens, whom he met in 1953, and William Lichtenwanger and Richard S. Hill, for whom he worked in the Music Division of the Library of Congress from 1956 to 1960. Lichtenwanger's amazing memory contrasted with Hill's eccentric interests. The two would spend twenty years untangling the complicated history of the "Star Spangled Banner" as a result of a request from Harold Spivacke, head of the Music Division, for a 500 word pamphlet to reduce the number of individual replies staff members had to write in response to reference requests (Bradley & Coover, 1987, p. 72).

Independently wealthy, Hill had grown up in Oak Park, Illinois, a classmate of Ernest Hemingway and Theodore Geisel16 (Bradley & Coover, 1987, p. 8). He had been on the Library of Congress/American Research Libraries mission to Germany after World War II, visiting bombed out libraries and publishing houses. "He knew what had been lost and what needed to be saved," Krummel commented (July 22, 1948). He loved to play piano four-hand. On one occasion, Krummel remembers Hill telling him that, while a student at Oxford, he and a friend stayed up all night playing four-hand arrangements of all nine Beethoven symphonies, ending, as the sun rose, with Stravinsky's Petrushka. Krummel recalls:

He [Hill] was widely learned, a man of great charm, also a bit quirky. I often recall the string quartet concerts; we sat outside the Coolidge Auditorium to talk about bibliography, Mozart first editions and the like . . . he generally filled me with a lot of lore. On one occasion, in the middle of the last movement [of Mozart's D-minor string quartet, K-421], the Budapest was playing "Oh, that's the Puddle Dum Quartet." "The what?" "It's the Puddle Dum Quartet." "What do you mean the Puddle Dum Quartet?" He said "it's the one that at the end goes puddle dum, puddle dum, puddle dum" . . . he also got me interested, as a result of all of this, in the whole question of how we identify works of music. (July 14, 1998)

One of Krummel's stories concerns the activities of a book thief who appeared and disappeared, elusively, throughout his professional life. The first encounter with Joachim Krueger took place after Krummel purchased books from the Bayreuther Musikantiquariat in the 1950s and noticed
that, while his books were sent from West Berlin, his check was canceled in East Berlin. Krueger was caught. However, stolen books can remain on the market for a long time and, years later, Krummel was to innocently purchase two more of Krueger’s stolen musical treasures for the Newberry:

At the Newberry, one of the things we were always looking for was early Renaissance lute books. It was well known that we had a great collection and we wanted to build it. We did buy a very important lute book, one of two known copies, and we were very proud of it and called it to people’s attention. It was a major coup to get the Viaera lute book. The only other known copy was in Trier in Germany. About two years later we were offered another lute book, and what do you know, the only known copy was in the city library at Trier. At this point I got suspicious. We were working with a major dealer in this country, very well respected, one of the top people in the country. I was often in touch with a Renaissance musicologist at the University of Chicago, Howard Brown, and knowing of Howard’s bibliography of printed instrumental music, I suspected he had copies of a lot of these books on microfilm thanks to the Countess of Chambure and the Isham Library at Harvard. He had a microfilm of the copy at Trier.

So I said, “look, what can you tell me about this book?” We began comparing points and found that an ownership stamp on the title page, clearly visible on the film, had been removed from the copy. It turned out there was only one copy of the book and it should have been at Trier. We made arrangements to return it, which is very complicated business in and of itself, because you don’t want it to end up back in the hands of the crook. Happily, we were able to claim the first lute book as our own so it’s still at the Newberry. This is the kind of a thing that makes one very interested in checking into original evidence. It’s by hook or by crook that you get things like this. But how do you tell this to a class of students as an anecdote? However, it is part of the folklore of the whole world of scholarly books.

Hill had early recognized Krueger’s signature on Krummel’s cancelled check returned from the Baureuther Musikantiquariat. I pressed him to talk more about Hill and the impact Hill had on him:

A lot of it was really the fascination of an encyclopedic knowledge of the field. A fascination of being able to pick a fact here and one there and putting them together. Figuring out this means this if this means that and talking about the Puddle Dum Quartet, piecing together the Krueger story. Remember, Dick Hill was a person who read mysteries into the night... [.he] was the first editor of Notes Magazine, also its financial patron. The first issues were printed on his Varityper, an old, horrible, clattering typewriter. And when Dick died, I went down to the auction house and bought it; we still have it in the attic. We’ve moved it, with our possessions, ever since. (July 22, 1998)

Krummel has had an impact on others similar to Hill’s impact on him, whether or not they attended his classes as students. Bill Brockman, En-
glish librarian at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, wrote to him at the time of his retirement:

I came to know you first through your *Bibliographies: Their Aims and Methods*, which appeared at just the time I, as a compiler, needed judicious advice on thorny problems of citation and sequence and the confidence to resolve for myself those problems. Your book offered me both, and confirmed for me the power of lists to offer insight into their subjects that transcends the details of their construction . . . . It's funny to see how the seemingly inconsequential things so often take on greater significance through time. You bought me a bagel and lox after one of the classes [Brockman was a regular guest lecturer in Krummel's arts and humanities reference class]; I hadn't had lox in years, and I won't forget my pleasure in biting into that tasty lunch. But the little things cohere and, in their coherence, come to mean more in sum than they do in part. Sort of like bibliographies, perhaps.

(W. Brockman, personal communication, May 29, 1997)

As a librarian and a bibliographer in a competitive academic environment, Brockman is emphatic about the importance of good subject bibliography to good scholarship. When one considers the sources that go into the making of bibliographies, and the complexity of their design, one realizes why. In the syllabus for his bibliography course, Krummel (1996) defines what he means by the term "book":

But what exactly is a book? Several definitions are common: Hardbound, "book trade" publications; all printed matter involving verbal messages, excluding ephemera; all printed matter; maps, music, pictures, and other non-verbal communication; all communications media [for purposes of this course]: A concentric arrangement of all of the above, concentrating on the first in the center, and moving outward with a view to studying the casual and functional relationships between them. (p. 4)

In other words, the study of bibliography is the study of the whole range of recorded human knowledge, every bit as critical and overwhelming now as it has always been, if not more so.

**Text and Urtext**

During my interviews with Krummel and later, as we reviewed the draft of this article, he discussed his professional life and talked about the people, places, and ideas that have meant the most to him. In the process, he told many stories and spoke directly to the essence of libraries and librarianship and how much depends on our continued commitment to preserving their ideals.

I reflected on what I had learned: In the most philosophical, transcendent sense, a library is the center of all ideas in the world, limitless and universal, bearing the tradition of inherited wisdom upon its back. It consists of all the wonderful things it signals. Its best collections are organized both from the inside/out and the outside/in. Its tangents as well as
its essences spark our imagination and expand our sense of what is possible in totally unpredictable ways. It is subject to redefinition and is indestructible. It creates our interests and needs and reflects them. Its contents, upon which the continuing future of our past depends, are open to examination and verification. It smells, tastes, looks, and feels good and is environmentally rich on a multitude of levels. It serves as arch support for our flights of imagination, trampoline for our wild leaps, and arsenal for our revolutions. It is a not-for-profit educational institution, much more than an information warehouse, staffed for reasons of necessity by well-educated humanists who provide information without motivation: librarians whose area of specialty, the whole world, is viewed as both a serious privilege and a serious responsibility; librarians capable of transforming requests for information into open-ended journeys which delight, enlighten, and sustain, leading ultimately to knowledge and wisdom.

Legends survive in the telling of them. In agreeing to be interviewed for this project, Krummel stressed the importance of preserving library lore:

The lore of libraries reminds us that libraries are entities, both systems and human activities (May 30, 1998). As systems, they are rationalized if not always rational, and as human institutions, often impossible for outsiders to grasp. They are tools, which you can put to use, and objects of affection. The tool and the object are really one, but you use or react to it with different faculties. Babe Ruth loved his bat but that isn’t how he looked at it when he stepped up to home plate. The anecdotes of library history need to be preserved to tell us how the library as a tool is constantly changing. They also need to be preserved to remind us that our understanding of libraries is grounded in our affection for them, both their faults to be tinkered with and their virtues to be cherished. (September 10, 1998)

As I brought this article to a close, Russell Martin, a GSLIS graduate, now Curator of Newspapers and Periodicals at the American Antiquarian Society, provided its ending. Martin had not read the article and supplied this anecdote coincidentally:

Recently, Professor Krummel was in Worcester to visit the Antiquarian Society (another institution he has served long and well, both as a member and as a prisoner on various committees). As we drove from the hotel to the library, he asked me how I liked my job. I told him all was well; it could not be better, in fact. What I enjoyed most about AAS was that it was not just a collection of books, but a collection of voices, all from the past. In fact, there were times in the stacks when I could hear them speaking. He smiled in agreement and told me “keep listening.” (R.L. Martin, personal communication, November 12, 1998)

Notes
1 The basis for this item was a similar one at the Newberry in its Midwest Manuscripts Collections.
2 Krummel’s e-mail moniker has long been the source of curiosity to those who know him. A former student, Herman Peterson, wrote: “One of the things which has al-
ways intrigued me about you has been your alexia login: donkay. You said in class once that there are at least six puns hidden in it, but I have always thought of one being primary, namely the suggestion of Don Quixote embedded therein. On this occasion of your retirement, I decided to go to Bartlett's Familiar Quotations, a book about which I can remember you droning eloquently, to see if any of the quotes from Cervantes' work reminded me of you. I found several: 'Has a face like a benediction,' 'of good and natural parts, and a liberal education,' 'between jest and earnest,' 'the proof of the pudding [or the Australian Pavlova] is in the eating,' 'the bow cannot always stand bent, nor can human frailty subsist without some lawful recreation,' 'it is not the hand but the understanding of a man that may be said to write,' 'journey over all the universe in a map, without the expense and fatigue of traveling, without suffering the inconvenience of heat, cold, hunger, and thirst,' 'ne'er look for birds of this year in the nests of the last' (Peterson, personal communication, April 23, 1997).

Quotes are based on recorded interviews with Krummel and his reaction, in person or by e-mail, to the more than 200 pages of transcript they comprise. I asked him to look back over his professional life from the beginning and talk about it with me. With the exception of questions I asked in response to his statements, the structure imposed on the interviews is his own. This article expands upon some of the themes that emerged. Quotes from personal communications with him are cited by date only. My comments or questions, as they appear within the passages quoted, are preceded by my initials (LSM) as distinguished from his (DWK). In addition, quotes from e-mail messages exchanged during the process are also included. These take on a life of their own and form a separate, but related, oral history and record of the research experience.

Krummel grew up in an era before school libraries received federal support.

The Irving was torn down during the 1970s and the land on which it stood was sold. It is now the site of a high-rise apartment building.

"A library requires materials and their importance is something we may tend to be losing in library school today. Materials, the presence of documents, determine the character of the institution" (June 19, 1998).

Krummel comments: "To us, science has come to be seen as something separate from the humanities . . . . In France, science is all of learning and distinct from investigation (recherche)."

The author thanks W. Boyd Rayward for this observation and also for suggesting that Krummel's pattern of reading is a good example of what reception theorists mean by textual appropriation. Krummel thanks him, too, although he asked the author to point out that one of the reasons he thinks computers are a big drag today is that he's been thinking hypertextually all his life.


Geisel is best known as "Dr. Seuss."

Krueger was arrested in Hanover for selling manuscripts stolen from libraries to collectors worldwide (Olsen, 1960, p. L11) and sentenced to eighteen months in prison on March 25, 1960 ("Book Looter Convicted," 1960, p. L6).

When the Music Library Association decided to turn its occasional journal, Notes, into a regular publication, Dick Hill was named editor-in-chief, which he remained until his death in 1961 (Bradley & Coover, 1987, p. 28). Hill was the guiding light behind the development of Notes and kept it going throughout his lifetime, donating his time and paying half its publishing expenses during the years he was editor (Bradley & Coover, 1987, p. 36). Bradley comments: "Notes was the first American periodical to have a regular department for music reviews (Bradley & Coover, 1987, p. 37). Krummel began writing book reviews for Notes: "I worked with the editor, I did get into book reviewing
too, and this has always been one of my special interests" (August 12, 1998). More than fifty of his reviews, and a number of his articles, have appeared in Notes.


REFERENCES


These Keys . . . Written Personal Narrative as Family Lore and Folk Object

Bernie Sloan

These keys won't unlock any door or lock.
—Ellen Colgan Sloan
Inscription on Envelope

ABSTRACT
This article explores the idea that written family stories—although not strictly a part of the oral storytelling tradition—are akin to folk objects. These stories convey information about a specific family but, in a sense, might be considered more universal. Such stories may have the power to “deliver” information that they do not actually contain by triggering personal memories in the reader. An analysis of these stories also suggests that folklore is a powerful medium for transmitting information and should be incorporated more fully into the curricula of schools of library and information science.

INTRODUCTION
This discussion posits the suggestion that written/published family stories could be categorized as folk objects. Folk objects, upon being viewed or touched, have the power to produce memories or images beyond their range of “experience”—a quality my mother’s stories have as well. These stories would seem to be more closely related to the concept of folk object than to the oral tradition. There are many similarities between my mother’s written narratives and the oral tradition, but there are also some fundamental differences. These differences suggest that such written narrative falls outside the more commonly discussed oral tradition of family stories.

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In one context, these stories do neatly fit into the role of folk object—i.e., the physical object of the printed newspaper column was distributed widely. Readers clipped the columns and affixed them to refrigerators and bulletin boards and mailed them to friends and relatives who didn't subscribe to the paper. But it wasn't the physical form of the newspaper column that made the impact. Rather it was the power of the ideas expressed in the columns. While I will raise the concept of "written-story-as-folk-object" and present preliminary evidence supporting this contention, further research is required to flesh out this concept more fully.

The stories analyzed for this article were written by my mother, Peg Sloan, and published as newspaper columns in the Kankakee (Illinois) Daily Journal from 1975 through 1986. My mother's stories, while perhaps not all "family history" in a strict sense, are stories about family and help to establish and reinforce a sense of family identity and context and a sense of place. Her stories have also established a family "tradition," with a number of my siblings also having published family-based stories in newspapers.

In this article, I suggest that my mother's stories fit more into the category of folk object than the oral tradition. I also categorize the stories I have selected for analysis, interview the storyteller, and focus on analyzing stories that feature my paternal grandmother as a recurring theme.

Finally, there is one interesting sidelight. In the course of interviewing my mother, some additional family history has been created. I'm not sure if anyone in the family, up to this point, knew the full story of how my mother became involved in writing these stories. The interview with her, while interesting to me on a personal level, is also more broadly interesting in a context of folkloristic analysis.

**THE POWER OF FOLK OBJECTS**

Before starting on the central topic of this article, I want to recount two recent experiences regarding a family gathering in June 1998 and relating to the power of folk objects. Both of the folk objects concerned deal with the primary people treated in my mother's stories: my maternal grandfather and paternal grandmother. What's the purpose of telling the following two stories? For one thing, they highlight the power of folk objects, especially to the immediate folk group. Another aspect is that I wanted to try to get a feel for what my mother might go through when writing her family stories. Finally, I wanted to explore the concept of the folk object, as I have started to think that my mother's stories are more folk object than oral tradition. While I suggest that this is the case, I do not attempt to prove it. For the purposes of my investigation, it was sufficient to explore whether formal (i.e., published) original stories might be considered folk objects.

One Saturday, I walked into my father's study as he went through his
genealogy resource materials—old newspaper clippings, family photographs, old yearbooks, genealogy charts, etc. From this collection he extracted an object and handed it to me—a plain white sealed envelope with the following inscription: “These keys won’t unlock any door or lock.” It was written in my paternal grandmother’s handwriting and, even though it had been over twenty years since she died, the envelope had not yellowed, and the bold strokes of the fountain pen remained a vivid blue. In a sense, it was as if she’d just entrusted the envelope to my father for safekeeping.

Holding the envelope, feeling the weight of the useless keys sealed inside, I glimpsed my grandmother’s character one more time: a no-nonsense waste-not organized woman. Gram Sloan had lived a hard fruitful life on the farm. Dropping out of school in the seventh grade, she had lived to see her three children graduate from college and go on to very successful careers. But one of my strongest impressions of her was as an organized woman who could not stand to waste anything, not even keys that fit no locks. I do not even recall her having garbage pickups.

As part of her “recycling” system, if it was paper, it went in the rusty oil drum down the lane for burning. I’m no pyromaniac, but I clearly remember the first time I was old enough to be sent down the lane alone with a box of Ohio Blue Tip kitchen matches and a bag of combustible items. This felt like I had taken a giant step toward adulthood. I carefully crumpled and arranged some of the old newspapers so that they’d get the proper oxygen mix for a good clean fire. I had remembered my grandmother instructing me that you did not want to make any more smoke than you had to, and that a clean fire produced less smoke. I slid the Blue Tip across the sandpaper on the side of the box and carefully ignited the papers in several different spots. I was pleased to see that my fire produced only a plume of thin white smoke. It wasn’t the act of starting a fire that pleased me; rather it was that I had been allowed to take part in a family ritual and that I had performed the ritual well. Even today, as I prepare my charcoal grill for a cookout, I sometimes think about that ritual. I arrange the charcoal so the fire will get a good supply of oxygen and light it in several different spots. And, as I work, the dark inside of the grill, with its slight patina of rust, bears an uncanny resemblance to the inside of that old rusty oil drum.

If Gram considered that what was to be thrown out was organic, it went into the “slop bucket” to be put out for the chickens. As a young child, the slop bucket both intrigued and repelled me at the same time. It was a pretty disgusting thing from one perspective—a galvanized bucket to the left of the kitchen stove, half filled with water, into which my grandmother deposited just about everything that could be considered to be organic: egg shells, coffee grounds, bones, banana peels, vegetable scraps, apple cores, etc. Looking into it, you would halfway expect some mutant
creature to come crawling out. But, while I thought the gunk in the slop bucket was pretty gross (and while I thought that the term "slop bucket" was about as apt a description as I've ever seen applied to something), the chickens thought it was pretty special. I'd walk out the side gate with my grandmother, and she would grip the bucket firmly and toss the slop in the general direction of the chicken houses. In not much time, there would be a big commotion as the chickens started to fight each other for choice morsels of, well, slop. As I got older, I'd help carry the bucket and eventually get the opportunity to take it out and toss it myself. It's been a long, long time since I've performed this ritual, but it still somehow has meaning for me.

If it wasn't combustible and wasn't organic, it was usually glass or metal—basically jars or cans. The jars were often re-used to hold buttons, small miscellaneous objects, and loose change. The cans were another story. My grandmother would rinse them out, remove the lids, and then step on the cans with her blocky black shoes to flatten them out. The cans were carried out the back door, straight to a small wooden shed at the west end of the small back yard. Then the flattened cans were stacked carefully, joining the hundreds or thousands of other flattened cans that already lived there. As a child, I could never figure this out. Now I can imagine that, at one time, maybe an itinerant junk man came by infrequently and bought the cans for scrap. But, in my childhood, I never remember seeing that shed empty. I just remember it getting fuller and fuller. I think about this occasionally as I toss bottles and cans into the recycling containers in my garage, and I find myself wondering if my grandmother ever contributed even one item to a landfill anywhere.

Now, back to the keys with no locks to unlock. I think these indicate a big aspect of my grandmother's personality. She was very organized and would not waste anything. The keys could not be burned or used as chicken feed. Unlike the cans, they still had a purpose, however unfulfilled. So she categorized them and labeled them, perhaps so that future generations would not have to repeat the process of trying to locate their locks. Standing in my father's study that afternoon holding the envelope, I could see my grandmother clearly again, and I was reminded how much her strong no-nonsense personality had influenced me and continues to influence me to this day. And I was struck by the thought that, while a picture might be worth a thousand words, an object, especially an object that is grounded in family history, might easily be worth a thousand pictures.

In June 1998, I attended a gathering of my mother's extended family in the Chicago suburbs. The occasion for this gathering was my Uncle Jack Dalton's celebration of the fortieth anniversary of his ordination as a priest. There were about 150-200 people in attendance (at one point my mother said: "You know, you're related to at least 90 percent of these people") and the invitations had been limited to "close relatives" to keep
the group to a manageable size! The reunion occasioned many examples of material and customary or ritual lore: my uncle had been given a book of family photos, contributed by relatives in the United States and Ireland, as a memento. There was a display of photos and newspaper articles chronicling my uncle’s adult life—photos of him during World War II, in the seminary, and as a priest. The celebration was capped off by cousins performing traditional Irish dancing routines, followed by a pilgrimage to a cousin’s house to watch the Chicago Bulls win another playoff game (there were scores of rabid Bulls fans in the group, along with one Utah Jazz fan—my brother Chris from Salt Lake City).

As people stood around the church hall visiting after an early meal, my Aunt Mary drew everyone’s attention to make an announcement. She held a gift-wrapped box. She began talking about a project she had coordinated where she had gathered reminiscences about her parents from her children, nieces, and nephews. She talked about how one of her nephews, in particular, recalled how much her father had enjoyed music, singing, and dancing. Then she announced that the gift-wrapped box held her father’s concertina. As people’s attention focused on what she was saying, she announced that she was giving the concertina to my cousin Dave. It was a very appropriate choice, as Dave has been a major figure in a popular Chicago Irish/rock band for years. The concertina would not “just” be a prominently displayed treasured memento but would once more be used as our grandfather used it—by someone who enjoyed making music, and music with Irish roots. Dave was surprised, and moved, and literally speechless—he could barely say anything, although he did manage to say that he had a friend who actually gave concertina lessons. Dave is used to standing up on a stage, talking and performing. He has been interviewed in newspapers and by the broadcast media. But he was so emotionally moved by the gift that he didn’t know what to say.

This concertina is a powerful folk object. As Dave opened the box and took it out, the memories it evoked in those watching were palpable—you could almost sense my grandfather’s presence. I had a flashback to the times when I would lie on the floor next to my grandfather as we looked over the Sunday papers, each of us with our cup of tea (mine was actually milk and sugar laced with a touch of tea). It also evoked memories of his telling stories about Ireland, including the occasional ghost story that would leave me a little pleasantly uncomfortable as a younger child. It reminded me of hearing how my grandfather so obviously disliked a guy named “Cromwell,” who must have been some boyhood rival (it was only later, in high school, that I learned who Cromwell was and how deeply his actions have touched the Irish psyche). I remembered my grandfather, in his eighties, dancing to a Creedence Clearwater Revival tune at a wedding reception. And I recalled him, at a family gathering, playing the spoons—and that concertina.
It also brought back memories of my maternal grandmother. I can remember her house on Christmas Eve. I can especially remember her Christmas tree. I don’t know if I had ever been close to a tree like that before—silver aluminum, illuminated by a floodlight with a rotating multicolored lens. The smell of cigarette smoke permeated everything, as both my grandfather and visiting friends and relatives smoked. For many people, when they walk into a room where someone has been smoking, the first word that comes to their minds might be “stink.” For me, to this day, the smell of cigarette smoke brings pleasant memories of visiting my grandparents on Christmas Eve with their amazing Christmas tree.

I can also see my maternal grandmother sitting at the end of a Wisconsin dock at 6:30 A.M., fishing. She would catch more fish than we could, and then scale, gut, clean, and cook them for dinner. She would even bait our hooks and take off the fish we’d catch. When we were younger, and watched freshly caught fish prepared, the blood and guts and smell could be overwhelming. At the same time, it was inexplicably fascinating to see something go full cycle from living creature to the dinner plate in one continuous sequence. I remember one time thinking that I was absorbing some sort of lesson but was unsure what that lesson was. In a way, it was very similar to watching my paternal grandmother run down a fleeing chicken, kill it, hang it from a fence post to bleed it, soak it in hot water to remove the feathers (a smell I can’t forget), and finish preparing it for dinner. I know it might sound odd to file such memories away under “treasured,” but I think there was an elemental lesson to be learned from observing the full process from start to finished product on the table—something that just cannot be learned by going to the local mega-supermarket and buying a shrink-wrapped package of boneless skinless chicken breasts.

Why do I relate these stories? There is the previously stated and obvious use of the stories to demonstrate the power of folk objects, especially the power of such objects within the folk groups where they have the most significance. There is also the idea that these stories parallel my mother’s stories of family, in that the focal point of my stories (my grandparents) also serve as the focal point for many of the more significant stories that my mother tells. Beyond this, it could be posited that there is a strong interrelationship between folk objects and written lore, that perhaps written lore can be more closely related to folk object than to any oral folk tradition.

**Written Personal Narrative as Folk Object**

As I began reviewing the literature on family lore, I was bothered by a fundamental schism. In part, the subtitle of this article is “Written Personal Narrative as Family Lore.” Are my mother’s stories “personal narrative” and do they qualify as folklore? What bothers me is the arbitrary
distinction between orality and literacy. My mother’s stories were never, for the most part, oral stories, or at least not to my recollection. They were delivered as written stories.

Most of the folkloristic theory of verbal lore focuses on orality, as these definitions of personal narrative attest: “The personal narrative is a prose narrative relating a personal experience; it is usually told in the first person, and its content is nontraditional” (Stahl, 1989, p. 12). Is written narrative folklore? “[F]olk narratives are generally conceptualized to be those narratives which circulate primarily in oral tradition and are communicated face-to-face” (Oring, 1986, pp. 122-23). What is family lore?

Almost any bit of lore about a family member, living or dead, qualifies as a family story... These stories last not because they’re entertaining, though they may be; they last because in ways large and small they matter... The family is our first culture, and, like all cultures, it wants to make known its norms and mores... “Folklorists have long recognized [family stories] as a genre, part of the oral tradition...” (Stone, 1988, pp. 5, 7, 9)

Barre Toelken (1996), however, suggests that medium of expression may vary:

Because most informal expressions among human beings have been embodied in lingual, musical, and kinesic modes (since these are most direct, and the average person is easily capable of reproducing them), it is likely that the study of folklore will always be heaviest in these areas. However, this situation should not obscure the fact that the same kind of informality, expressiveness, and traditional dynamism may also occur when some visual or material mode is used that represents the same level of communication in the same cultural context of traditional exchange. While the written word is often a solidifier, a freezer of dynamism, it may sometimes be a vehicle for tradition when...the conditions of informality, community exchange and taste, and anonymous tradition are present. (p. 44)

While oral lore may be predominant, then, written material is not automatically excluded from the realm of folklore. But the last phrase, with its emphasis on “conditions of informality, community exchange and taste, and anonymous tradition” still raises questions. The concept of informality may apply, as my mother’s stories generally were reproduced as she wrote them, without being subjected to any rigorous editing process. But “community exchange” and “anonymous tradition” do not seem to apply. These stories, once they are written, are my mother’s stories. There is no component of community exchange, at least in the sense of the sort of give-and-take that would eventually modify the stories. While readers are free to make sense of, retell, and interpret them as they see fit, the original stories remain unchanged and fixed forever in their initial state. And these stories are by no means anonymous. It’s obvious who is
telling the stories, and it's obvious (sometimes more than others) who the stories are about.

**STORIES AS OBJECTS**

At the beginning of this project, I had equated my mother's stories with oral family history. But recently I have started to think of the stories along the lines of folk object, much like a photograph, or envelope with homeless keys, or a concertina. Each has the power to evoke feelings or memories for members of the folk group, memories or feelings that work themselves out in different ways for different members. These objects remain what they are, unchanged, but have impact beyond their shape, form, and original function. People react to the objects in personal ways, but people seem to interact with oral family stories, changing them as they go along in little ways. In a sense, written stories as objects create oral family stories, as people recount the memories and emotions produced by exposure to these objects.

In a sense, my mother's stories are more folk objects, like the information found in a family Bible, or the impressions and reminiscences recorded in family diaries and journals, than they are a part of the oral tradition. Her columns were clipped from the newspaper, affixed to bulletin boards and refrigerators, and even mailed to out-of-town friends and relatives. They are there, recorded, immutable. Yes, they do say something to the members of the folk group (and often to those beyond the group), but her stories do not neatly fit into the framework of the oral tradition. Yet, these stories do fit into the overall folk framework, although not where I originally thought.

**CATEGORIZING THE STORIES**

I selected 65 of the approximately 100 "family" stories for analysis. These sixty-five stories were selected because they dealt specifically with my extended family rather than generic family stories that are not directly linked to this family. Most of the stories emphasize several common themes. I selected fourteen of the sixty-five stories as being illustrative of the common themes repeated within this group of stories as a whole. One of the fourteen stories won an award from United Press International (UPI) in 1978. I have also isolated seven basic themes in my mother's stories, which are identified here. Of course, many columns contain more than one basic theme.

**IMMIGRANTS' CHILD SYNDROME**

This is a term that my mother used, and it is a recurring theme in her stories. My mother was first-generation American. Her parents came to this country from Ireland at a young age. While her father told stories of Ireland, she did not really have much regular contact with any relatives
back in time beyond her father and mother and their siblings and cousins. My mother didn’t make her first trip to Ireland until well beyond her formative years. She married and moved away from the Chicago area when she was twenty-one. She didn’t move back to the area until she was in her forties, so she didn’t have the same day-to-day extended family interactions that her siblings did during this time.

To a certain extent, my mother lacked the kind of sense of extended family history that one gets from being directly and regularly exposed to older generations. Contact with extended family (history) is an important element in establishing/reinforcing identity. My mother talks about the importance of “a sense of family.” This particular issue is a main underlying theme of all of her columns dealing with family issues/stories. Growing up without the benefit of many generations of family history made it important to establish and reinforce family identity and sense of place. It is not that my mother’s family had no sense of its history or no sense of place; rather, that it is more difficult to maintain these qualities growing up in a place far from the family’s historic roots.

Beyond establishing/reinforcing this family history and sense of place for herself, my mother’s stories were also a means of establishing or continuing family history and tradition for future generations. All too often, one talks to members of immigrant families, several generations in this country, who are not sure of exactly where (e.g., town or region) their families originated. They may know the countries where their families came from, but no more than that. While my mother says she wasn’t consciously aware that her columns might be family history and might help future generations find links to the past, she subconsciously may have been inspired, at least partially, by a drive to establish family history and sense of place for those in following generations.

**Sense of Place**

My mother grew up without much direct sense of place, except for her neighborhood on the West Side of Chicago, and that place was new to the entire family, including her parents. Quite a few of her columns deal with establishing a sense of place. One of the columns I analyzed deals with a family vacation spot in Wisconsin, sadly no longer accessible by the family. Another discusses rivers and a sense of place, an example of how bodies of water can serve as a point of reference. And another deals with my father’s family farm (and my grandmother). There is a fair amount of irony in a city kid from the West Side of Chicago finding a sense of place in rural Iroquois County. But her parents’ generation came from rural backgrounds in Ireland. Perhaps the tales of rural and farm life in Ireland gave my mother a subconscious longing for a rural retreat. But my mother will always be a city kid, and some of her stories discuss the urban/rural dichotomy.
FAMILY OUTSIDER

"Outsider" is probably too harsh a term but, even from childhood, my mother felt "different" to a certain extent, largely because she lacked a strong resemblance to anyone in the family. Coupled with the fact that she was geographically removed from her immediate family for quite a while, this may have made her feel temporarily "outside" of the family. It is interesting to note that these stories were all written after she returned to the Chicago area and had once again become more actively involved with her family—perhaps they were a way to help re-establish a family identity to a degree. Her stories most definitely were a way of celebrating family.

RITUAL/TRADITION/HOLIDAY

One way of establishing family identity and continuity with the past is by telling stories about family ritual/tradition. Most of my mother's stories of this nature center around Christmas, but she also told stories about other holidays—e.g., St. Patrick's Day. Some stories also dealt with my father's side of the family and the ritual of farm life with its comforting cycle of seasons.

TRANSITION

A fair number of stories deal with family transitions—the aging of her father, the death of her mother-in-law, children growing up and leaving home, becoming a grandparent, etc. The irony of many of these transition stories is that—like folktalesthe impact changes as one's perspective changes. Stories of her grandchildren (my children) struck me as cute and touching at initial publication. Re-reading them now, they take on a poignancy that they didn't have back then. Stories about children growing up and leaving home really didn't register but now hit close to home, as I have a son living far away in Utah. And stories about the aging of her father now hit close to home, as my parents are both past seventy years of age.

SPECIFIC PEOPLE/CHARACTERS

The most predominant characters in my mother's stories are my maternal grandfather and paternal grandmother. Beyond my grandparents, quite a few of my mother's stories are about my two sons, as they were the first two grandchildren. My son, Sam, was her only grandchild for four years, until, to paraphrase Sam: "The floodgates opened up and those seventeen other grandkids ruined a good thing."

FAMILY FOLKLORE

There are references to more traditionally obvious folklore, such as my personal experience with a schoolyard bully and the "sticks and stones"
folk saying (i.e., when I followed my mother's instruction to recite the "sticks and stones" saying, the bully actually started throwing sticks and stones at me). There's also a reference to my grandfather passing along the legend and lore of the Shannon River in Ireland. And there's another reference to my paternal grandmother's stories about such things as having an ancestor who was imprisoned in the infamous Andersonville prison during the Civil War and an ancestor who was among the signers of the Declaration of Independence. The latter story is rather interesting in that a genealogist acquaintance of my grandmother told her about this contention but later died along with the evidence that supported it. My father (the family genealogy expert) later could find no evidence to back it up. This is made even more interesting by the fact that when we once visited Washington, DC, and stood admiring a mural of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, my father said "Okay, which one is Charles Carroll?" Without hesitation, we chimed in: "That guy there, he looks just like Gram Sloan!" The legend accompanying the mural indicated that the man was indeed Charles Carroll. Recently, my father showed me a portrait of Charles Carroll that he had photocopied from an old biography. There was an uncanny resemblance to my grandmother.

These stories dealing with retellings of family folklore are significant and play an important role, as they, more than many of the other stories, serve to establish/maintain a sense of family history, a sense of place, and a sense of continuity across multiple generations.

**INTERVIEW WITH THE STORYTELLER**

During my analysis of my mother's stories, I formulated a number of basic questions about the creative process, the potential impact of the stories, etc. In keeping with the basic theme of written, rather than purely oral, narrative, the questions were presented in written form, and the answers were provided in like manner. I met with my mother, gave an overview of what I was trying to do with the project, went over the questions, and provided clarifications and explanations where required. Then I left the questions with my mother for her to answer as time allowed. I tried to formulate questions that shed as much light on the storyteller as on the stories.

Reading and re-reading the text of the interview has given me a new perspective on my mother by putting her in a context of her times. For one thing, while it is trendy now to talk of retooling and beginning new careers later in life, my mother actually did this at a time when it was rare. Even today, I hear many colleagues, not much older than my mother was then, talk about how they are "too young to retire and too old to start another career." I can't underplay the significance of starting a professional career after twenty-seven years of doing something different, nor can I underestimate the courage it takes to do so.
Another aspect of the interviews that I found enlightening was the feminist perspective. Like a lot of other Baby Boomers, I tend to think that our generation must have invented many of the things that went on in the 1960s and 1970s. Reading my mother’s comments, makes it seem that feminist leanings predated the “women’s movement.” And she suggests that it was the women of her generation, thwarted by earlier sexist mentalities, who made sure that their daughters (the bulk of those involved in the women’s movement) had opportunities that were previously unavailable to women. These opportunities may well have provided the spark that fueled the feminist activism of the 1960s and 1970s. I never explicitly thought of my mother as a feminist. It wasn’t that she didn’t have a strong personality, it was just that most kids probably don’t tend to think of their mothers as having feminist leanings. But, as she relates her experiences, it all makes sense and seems to fall into place. This is a very important piece of family history to pass along.

Finally, in the process of conducting this interview, I feel that, while writing about family history, I have also helped create another bit of family history. As I mentioned, my mother started her career as a professional writer at the age of forty-eight. It was a second career, following up on her first career of raising six children. I don’t think that many of us in the family were quite sure how this shift developed. To us, her columns and articles just seemed to start appearing in the paper. The following interview gives a sense of how all of this happened.

The interview itself follows:

**Interviewer:** Why did you/do you write stories? What got you interested in writing stories?

**Mother:** I was born into a large Irish clan in which storytelling was a way of life. My father was born in Ireland where his clan was known for its ballad-makers.

There never was a time when a story wasn’t brewing somewhere in my subconscious, thanks in large part to the Irish tradition of remaining around the dining room table after dinner, moving unhurriedly from one timely subject to another until someone (often my father) would be reminded of a story, which would trigger another—and another—often into the wee hours of the morning. Children were not rushed off to bed at 8 or 9 o’clock. Only when we were beginning to nod were we made aware (by a subtle glance from my mother) that it was time to slip away.

I entered many competitions during my high school years, urged on by supportive nuns who taught us. Higher education was not a given for children of working class parents until the G.I. Bill was passed after WWII, making it available to veterans who, of course, were mostly men. My own parents were aghast when I suggested that I wanted to be a journalist, which was tantamount (for our Victorian-bred elders) to being a streetwalker in those days. Careers as nurses and teachers were considered the only respectable routes for young women.
Working-class immigrant parents saw the obvious advantages of a college diploma for their sons who would eventually become the "bread winners" of their own families. However, they saw sending daughters to college as a waste of badly needed dollars, since their role in life was as wives, mothers, and homemakers. Even those who could afford to, and did, send their daughters to college saw it as a way for them to meet (and marry) promising young men who would provide well for them and their future children.

It was the frustrated females of my generation that saw to it that their daughters received an education commensurate with their talents and goals, without having to struggle uphill to gain the college degree that eluded many of their mothers who, once married, had to set the dream aside. All of which played an important part in moving us forward to the Women's Liberation movement of the 60s and 70s—but that's another story.

Interviewer: Why written storytelling rather than oral?
Mother: It was never a matter of either/or. In the years I was immersed in raising my children, I enjoyed telling stories and listening, in turn, to their own imaginative offerings. I took pride and pleasure in their expanding way with words, their writings, and their inherent love of language, so much a part of my own childhood. When time allowed, I corresponded with family and friends. Most of my letters were written in essay form.

Interviewer: How did you get started writing your columns?
Mother: I owe my emergence as a professional writer to the Women’s Movement. In the 70s, I belonged to a literary women’s group in Kankakee, whose members were called on once a year to submit a paper on a certain theme. We were into consciousness-raising then, when I became conscious of a growing divide between the women of my generation and the next. Increasingly, I was aware of the thinly veiled contempt in which we were held by the younger generation.

And so my paper had a two-fold purpose: to reassure our own badly-shaken generation of our worth and, by describing the experiences that had shaped us, to provide our children’s generation with some understanding of the women who came before them.

It was a serendipitous choice. One of the members of our group, Jean Alice Small, was the wife of the publisher of the Daily Journal and only recently had assumed the position of associate publisher and editor, thanks to her own consciousness-raising.

She had listened to several of my papers in previous years, but it was the theme of this paper that hit the mark. I was forty-eight years old at that time, had not worked outside my home since my marriage at twenty-one, and my youngest child would soon be leaving the nest. In February 1976, she offered me a full-time job as a reporter. Six weeks later, I became editor of “Accent,” the women’s section. In retrospect, I would like to have done more writing as a reporter on a deadline which tends to hone one’s talents to a fine edge and, of necessity, curbs the tendency to rework and rethink one’s efforts.

In the Fall, I returned from a trip to England and Ireland and wrote a humorous article about my husband and his lost luggage, for which I received several complimentary letters from readers. My duties as editor impinged upon my desire to write more. With three reporters in my section, most of my time was spent assigning story
ideas, laying out pages, proofreading, etc. So the first year or so, I wrote my columns long-hand on weekends at home.

If I had to guess (and I'm certainly not about to count!), I'd say that I wrote approximately 500 columns in the ten years I worked at the Journal.

**Interviewer:** What role/impact, if any, did editors have on the final versions of your stories?

**Mother:** I was fortunate that I was able to choose my column editor. Since writing a column was not part of my job description, I began by varying the days on which my "articles" would appear. That way, I could get my style worked out without pressure from the front office.

I decided to ask the county editor, whose work I respected, if she would edit my articles. She was uncommonly generous with her time and diplomatic with her suggestions. In a few months, my style evolved, and I felt confident enough to anchor my column at the top of Friday's page, where it remained during my tenure there.

I won many in-house awards in competitions between the Journal's six sister newspapers in Illinois and California. My first state award came from United Press International for a column about my aging father that appeared just before Father's Day. Several awards followed, including some for editing, but the one I was proudest of was the award for best column from the Women's National Press Association.

**Interviewer:** How do you select topics?

**Mother:** I think it's more a matter of the topics selecting me. I'd have to say that many of my "inspirations" came while sitting in an airport or on a plane. Human interest stories abound there if one takes the time to listen and observe.

The best stories crop up when you least expect them. Often, they tug at your heart: like the small vivacious girl who kissed her equally vivacious mother goodbye in San Francisco, bounced down the aisle and settled herself in the main cabin like a veteran. In Chicago, I watched as she raced toward her father, bubbling over with excitement, and received a lukewarm acknowledgment of her presence. On the passenger-mover, they stood ahead of me, the little one trying vainly to get her father's attention and, finally, giving up and standing mute beside him.

**Interviewer:** Who is your target audience?

**Mother:** We were told, in a newspaper seminar in 1979, that Dear Abby became successful by writing to the sixth-grade level—e.g., simple words, short paragraphs. That was back in 1980.

However, I don't think that a single "target audience" ever entered my mind. I was never pressured to aim at a certain target reader; I was free to write about whatever caught my fancy (this "hands-off" attitude might have resulted in part because I won the best-in-state from UPI during my first year).

In the story of the little girl above, I wrote it as a compassionate observer, with emphasis on her attempt to reach her father and his rejection (subconscious, perhaps) of her. Readers were free to condemn or commiserate with him. My hope in writing it was that it might give pause to fathers among our readers who might then examine their own relationships with their children. As a result of my
varying targets, letters from readers came from a broad spectrum of subscribers.

My columns received considerable feedback. I was often invited to speak before disparate groups: hospital employees' awards banquets, women's church groups, PTAs, local NEA groups, etc. Yes, I still hear from people who enjoyed my columns, many of them strangers, at the Jewel, at Barnes & Noble, at the mall. It's nice to be remembered.

I wish readers knew how much a note, especially one with a copy to the editor, encourages a columnist to continue. During those lean times when you begin to think that nobody is reading you, a thoughtful letter or remark from a reader can do wonders for your morale.

**Interviewer:** What about family stories?

**Mother:** Most of my columns touched on relationships. Though they were often about "family," I like to think that the common thread among them was the unspoken plea for communication and understanding, not only among those joined by blood but among those to whom we are joined by business and community ties.

That, I think, was what I wanted to accomplish. The accolades, the awards, the community recognition were nice but not crucial to my self-image. By my late forties, when I started writing professionally, I was already very comfortable in my own skin.

I did have one important advantage in writing family related columns: none of the family lived in our reading area. I could never have done it otherwise.

**Interviewer:** What might you have written about had you started writing columns sooner?

**Mother:** I have never wasted time wondering about how much I'd have accomplished or how far I might have gone if I had started twenty years earlier. At 71, I know I've been lucky to have had the full life I've had. Receiving recognition as a writer has been great, but it's only one piece of the pie.

**Interviewer:** What might you be writing about now if you were still writing columns?

**Mother:** I'm sure it would still be about relationships.

**Interviewer:** Did you ever think of what you did as "family history," as a way of passing family information along from generation to generation?

**Mother:** Not as I wrote it, but in recent years it has become apparent that columns about Nelle Sloan (my mother-in-law) and my father, in particular, will bring their goodness to life for many of their descendants. I am compiling some for my grandchildren.

**Interviewer:** Did you ever think about telling family stories to people outside of the family folk group?

**Mother:** If I read this question correctly, it concerns the issue of invading the family's privacy. First, none of my family lives in the *Journal* circulation area, though most have read and enjoyed my stories; and second, my stories were born of the love and respect I have for the people who live on in my fondest memories.

**Interviewer:** What might you say about your stories from the feminist perspective?
Mother: Many of my columns reflect my feminist leanings. I think I was a feminist long before the phrase was coined. I came by it through the natural progression of life experiences. I was ever aware of slights and oversights in the business and social world. Younger women tend to think of our generation as out of the loop—that’s what comes of generalizing.

When I started at the Journal, it was at the behest of a woman born in 1912 who saw the opportunity to bring middle-aged homemakers “into the mainstream” (1960s catchword) and used her position and power to do so. I was only one of the women whose lives she changed or enhanced.

When her husband was killed in an auto accident, she took over his position as publisher. She effected remarkable changes, moving women up in management, equalizing pay scales, etc. Today she is eighty-five, three women are company directors, and she is still in control of the top job.

Although my young reporters at first were skeptical about me, they learned that my Irish sensitivity to unfairness and bias and my innate aversion to being pushed, served them admirably. Our biggest challenge back in the 70s was the sports department, which would send women’s golf news and girls’ sports results to me because they were “social” news. We fought back and loved the fight because we knew their bias was unjustifiable.

There were many subtle put-downs: from the camera department which felt that our photo requests were far less important than other departments, to the men in the composing room who were still living in the dark ages. As one reporter noted: “They supported ‘women’s new role’ until they realized that it was not a new baking powder biscuit.”

I had wonderful role models: my mother whose strength and purpose kept her family going during the Depression, and my mother-in-law whose son’s respect for her hard-scrabble struggle through years of drought on the farm plus her own unfailing sense of her own worth made him a “liberated” man long before the word was coined, for which I am eternally grateful.

When her husband died, she continued to manage the farm from her wheelchair until her death at eighty-eight.

Analyzing the Stories

I have analyzed my mother’s stories throughout the text of this discussion by constructing such stories myself, by categorizing the approximately seventy-five “family” stories chosen for review out of the approximately 500 columns and stories she has written, by selecting fourteen stories which I think are representative of these general recurring themes that crop up in her writings, and by interviewing the storyteller in an attempt to establish a personal context from which the stories had been written.

As a final exploration, I have selected two stories for further analysis. I believe these two stories are representative of the major recurring themes in all of my mother’s “family” stories: (1) sense of family history, (2) sense of place, and (3) sense of a strong central character. As mentioned ear-
lier, these sorts of stories focus on two people: my paternal grandmother and maternal grandfather. I have selected two stories about my maternal grandmother.

My grandmother was a very strong person. She lived with many hardships—losing two children to a post World War I influenza epidemic, losing her husband, the hard work of the farm, and living out her last years by herself on the farm while confined to a wheelchair. She was a no nonsense person. All in all, she exhibited a very strong personality without saying much and without being overbearing. She obviously felt a strong sense of self worth, and it is that, more than anything else, which seemed to contribute to the impression of a strong personality. She was an equal partner on the farm and, after her husband died, she ran the farm. As my mother mentions in the interview, my grandmother's strength had a strong impact on my father. He grew up seeing women differently than many men in his generation did and, as my mother notes, was influenced by this to the point where my mother referred to him as being a "liberated" man before that term had been coined. In looking back, one could say to a certain extent that my grandmother’s influence during my father's formative years is one reason why my parents have had a successful marriage. My father wasn’t loaded down with a lot of the negative baggage that other men in his generation carried.

From the analysis that I’ve done to this point, it is easy to understand why my mother would write these two columns in tribute to my grandmother. My grandmother was a rock solid person with roots in the distant past. She had ancestors that came to central Illinois in 1839, and the family farm that my father grew up on has been in the family for more than 125 years. She was a hard worker, a woman with a strong sense of self, and a strong sense of family. She embraced my mother, even though my mother was an immigrant’s child and a city kid who knew nothing about things rural or agricultural. I think that she tacitly understood that she had raised her children right. Anyone that her children loved was deserving of her unconditional love, too.

My mother was a person with shallow roots in this country. The roots she had here were strong but did not extend far back chronologically. She grew up in a place that was distant from the land on which the generations before her had grown up. She instinctively felt that a sense of place was important for her and for her children. My grandmother, and the farm, offered all of this, but it also offered more: it offered a strong role model in my grandmother. While my mother and my grandmother were very different people, from very different backgrounds, with different personalities, it was obvious that there was strong mutual respect and affection. As my mother notes in one of her columns, “the bounty of her labor is indeed finished and done with. But the greater bounty—her love and goodness—will be a part of my life always.”
Another thing became clear to me while analyzing these stories. The stories convey information about family. Specifically, they convey information about my parents' extended families, but they go beyond that. Somehow, the power of these stories can convey information beyond that information literally represented in the words of the story. My mother frequently talks about readers who tell her that the stories in her columns remind them of their families. To these readers, my mother somehow is writing about their families and their family experiences. Her stories become their stories. I had the same experience with the two stories at the beginning of this discussion after sharing them with a colleague. He noted: "In a strange way, I found myself 'remembering' things about my grandparents as I read your essay." In further describing his reaction to the stories, he commented: "For me it was positive (remembering family, events, happy times); for others it could trigger negative memories of objects that represent sad or troubling times."

CONCLUSION

Much of this discussion has been devoted to the "written-story-as-folk-object" concept. But there is another side to the study of my mother's stories: how folklore serves as an information transfer mechanism. If one accepts the "written-story-as-folk-object" premise, one then also accepts the premise that folk objects transmit information and perhaps should be studied in more depth in schools of library and information science. This article had its origins in a research paper that I did for a doctoral seminar on folklore offered at the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science. When I signed up for the seminar, a number of people I talked with wondered what the connection was between folklore and LIS. I have to admit to wondering about that myself at the time. But, after analyzing my mother's stories, it became clear that folklore can be a powerful medium for transmitting information. This medium is deserving of more study, and a higher profile, within the LIS academic community.

Finally, on one obvious level, my mother's stories convey family information to my mother's and father's families, transferring this information from generation to generation and even within the same generation. This transfer of information is very valuable, helping family members establish a sense of place and family history. Her stories are not "history" in a formal sense; they are more like slices of time. But there is another level beyond this obvious one. My mother's stories also convey family information about other people's families and experiences. My mother has indicated that "analyzing subtext, I believe, requires third party objectivity." And, as my colleague noted, the information that is transmitted through these stories can be either positive or negative, depending on the background of the reader. This suggests the intriguing notion that written family narrative transmits information that is not consciously transmitted.
by the sender (the author) and that literally does not exist in the text. In a sense, one could say that this "nonexistent" information is merely subtext, but such information seems to be more than the implied meaning or theme of the text itself. The same story can transmit very different information to different people. One person may be reminded of happy times, another may recall a sad or traumatic experience, while yet another may be serendipitously reminded of an event with little or no resemblance to the original story. The concept of an information medium transmitting nonexistent (yet still very real) information certainly warrants further study.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

The objective of this article was to gather and analyze family stories written by my mother, Peg Sloan, and published as columns in the Kankakee (Illinois) Daily Journal. My mother wrote these columns from 1975 through 1986, publishing about 500. While not all of the columns touch on family issues, a substantial number (at least 100) do seem to qualify as "family stories." At least one of the family stories won an award from United Press International in 1978. Another column won the award for best column from the Women's National Press Association.

The stories were gathered from my mother's archive of her approximately 500 columns. While many of her stories deal with family issues in a very general sense—i.e., with no real identification of specific family—a good number deal specifically with her family and are identified as such. For my project, the stories selected were any family-based story that was about actual family members. Additionally, my mother annotated some of the stories to emphasize certain points.

The interview with my mother was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, we met and briefly went over the questions to ensure there were no questions about the interview or about the questions themselves. In the second phase, my mother prepared written responses to the questions, partly in keeping with the general issue of written lore. My mother's responses are reproduced exactly as I received them.

REFERENCES

Customary and Material Lore

“Folkloristics of Educational Spaces: Material Lore in Classrooms with and without Walls,” Cecelia Merkel

“Paper, Piles, and Computer Files: Folklore of Information Work Environments,” Laura J. Neumann
Folkloristics of Educational Spaces: Material Lore in Classrooms with and without Walls

CECELIA MERKEL

ABSTRACT
This article focuses on the relationship between people and the spaces that they inhabit on a college campus. A folkloristic approach to the study of space examines the way people shape space through their practices and the way space shapes people's practices. People shape space through the way they organize physical objects in their environment, the way they talk in spaces they inhabit, and the ritualized behaviors they perform in particular spaces. Understanding how people talk about, and interact within, a physical space is especially important as we move toward distance education models of learning. It raises questions about what is gained and what is lost as we move toward classrooms without walls and also suggests the importance of understanding the new practices that people develop to organize and make sense of their real, virtual, and hybrid spaces.

INTRODUCTION
A folkloristic approach to the study of space examines how people organize and shape their space and how people are organized and shaped by the space around them. A university campus is an ideal setting to examine a folklore of space because it is like a mini-city with a range of activities and spaces including classrooms, dormitories, campus centers, faculty offices, athletic facilities, and health centers. People shape their space through the way they organize the things in their environment (material lore), talk about—and within—their environment (verbal lore), and
perform the ritualized activities that occur in these places (ritual/customary lore). As we move toward hybrid models of education where more of the activities surrounding academic work occur online, it is important to recognize how academic practices translate, fail to translate, or are transformed in this new environment.

We are moving toward educational environments in which all or part of the activities surrounding research, teaching, and learning occur online. In these hybrid environments, some people may be physically co-located with each other while others never may have met in the physical world. While the technology in these hybrid environments facilitates collaboration between scholars, it is also forcing academic institutions to redefine the types of activities and products that constitute academic work (Burbules & Bruce, 1995). These environments raise questions about traditional educational practices such as what constitutes a publication, what counts as academic work, and what is the best way to structure a virtual learning space to achieve one's educational objectives.

The goal of a folklore of space is to uncover how the organization of a folk group's physical and virtual environments reveals its worldview. In the physical world, people define space through structural features of enclosed and unenclosed spaces and through the organization of objects within these spaces (Lawrence & Low, 1990). In the virtual world, people define space through various strategies such as categorizing people by their status and location, by the type of technology that is used, and by the activities that occur in these spaces. People also use these strategies in the physical world, but they tend to be less obvious because the cultural values these strategies represent are embodied in physical objects.

**Approaches to the Study of Space**

The organization of one's environment is not random but, instead, reflects and can be understood only within the context of a group's folk practices and values (Toelken, 1996). Toelken provides a useful example in his description of the weaving practices of the Navajo Indians with whom he worked. Navajo artists purposely place a flaw in the rugs they weave, which Toelken relates to a belief that a design can never be finished. He argues that scholars should examine how the production process reveals the Navajo's worldview rather than focusing on specific design features of the artifact. Similarly, a study of a folklore of space must relate the way a folk group organizes its physical environment to its worldview. This perspective involves understanding the impact that space has on people's practice and how people shape their space through their practices (Latour, 1987).

Two approaches to the study of material lore acknowledge the importance of relating the organization of the environment to a group's culture. One is work on the folklore of architecture (Glassie, 1972, 1983;
Roberts, 1972) and the other is the folklore of artifacts (Babcock, 1992). These approaches work well together because they provide tools for analyzing both large-scale structural features of buildings and smaller scale objects within these buildings. These tools are also important because, in studying material culture, scholars may have access to a group's worldview in a way that is not possible through the written word (Babcock, 1992).

Research on folk architecture (Glassie, 1972, 1983; Roberts, 1972) analyzes structural features of buildings including their shape, size, and layout for repeated motifs and variations of motifs. This research identifies the building methods, the materials, and tools used during construction. Folklorists also look at where a building is placed, the site on which the building is located, and how the building is used (Roberts, 1972). Patterns emerge in the way that homes and other buildings are constructed, which reveals how a community adapts to its environment.

Research on the folklore of artifacts has two foci: (1) historical, where artifacts from the past are studied as a way to learn about the past, and (2) social, where artifacts reveal the value system underlying people's practices, especially people who are often ignored in traditional research (Glassie, 1983). Because people shape and reshape their space in large and small ways, an artifact can take on different functions and meanings in various contexts (Babcock, 1992). Buildings, rooms, and spaces that were used for one purpose are converted to meet new needs and purposes and at the same time another layer is added to the history and meaning of the space (Brand, 1994). The presence or absence of artifacts also serves an important identity function and can reveal the values of a folk group.

In extending this approach to school settings, a folklore of educational space relates both large- and small-scale features of the campus environment to the underlying folk practices and values of students, teachers, administrative staff, and other university personnel. On a large scale, the structural features of enclosed and unenclosed spaces reveal the values that the university tries to encourage, such as collegiality or competition. On a smaller scale, school settings are full of everyday objects that reveal its culture, including books, the arrangement of the classroom, and the presence or absence of technology.

Material Lore in School Environments

There is no formal study of the material culture of space in school settings. The approach used here has been to identify how space is discussed in education research literature and to indicate ways that the organization of both large- and small-scale features of the campus reveals academic culture. As Dutton (1995) notes:

Schools in particular are never neutral sites or free spaces above the conflicts of society. Tangled within the infinite relations of society, they unavoidably produce, reproduce, and challenge political, social,
cultural, and economic directions in society. Schools, like any institution, are places of ongoing struggle over meaning, truth claims, the organization of knowledge and interpersonal relations, classroom practices, and so on. (p. 172)

A study of the organization of space in school settings reveals the way that teachers, students, administrators, and other university personnel respond to these societal forces and ongoing struggles over meaning. This section represents both an argument for a folkloristic approach to the study of space in academic settings and an application of a folklore of space to a university setting.

Campus Design

Historically, the layout of the college campus has been marked by a shift toward more buildings as well as an increase in the types of spaces required as schools provide more services (Dober, 1996). Early colleges had fewer building types (and functions) which included housing, a chapel, classrooms, a library, dining facilities, and administrative offices. College campuses today contain a greater variety of building types including athletic and physical recreation buildings, classrooms, faculty offices, visual and performing arts centers, campus centers, libraries, laboratories, support facilities, and housing (Dober, 1996). The physical structure and layout of each of these buildings differ dramatically and are related to the type of activities conducted in each space.

Members of a university have specific ideas about what it means to be part of an institution of higher learning, and campus planners carry out these ideas through features of design. The campus and various parts of the campus are seen symbolically as instilling a sense of order, encouraging collegiality, providing a place for interactions, and providing a sense of place (Chapman, 1994). Architects and campus planners create these symbolic meanings through “place making” and “place marking” functions of design (Dober, 1996). Place making involves “articulation, classification, and differentiation of building groups and significant structures, landscapes, and circulation elements and then their arrangement and positioning in response to site conditions, climate, programmatic and functional relationships, and desired visual sequence” (Dober, 1996, p. 174). Place marking involves taking the overall design and giving it a sense of character.

Campus designers create a sense of place and community through the use of planned open spaces such as ovals, malls, middle path, walkway, lawns, or commons (Chapman, 1994; Griffith, 1994) and through the use of landmarks (Chambers, 1989). Griffith (1994) associated a number of benefits with the use of open spaces, including their ability to produce a sense of place, to integrate or separate portions of the campus, and to provide emotional relief from being in small or crowded spaces. Simi-
larly, landmarks also create a sense of place on the college campus because they come to represent a person's connection with the institution. Spaces that were not designed as landmarks can also take on special significance and create a sense of place for segments of the campus population.

Campus planners design buildings and arrange physical objects within these buildings to encourage values important within an academic community. Brand (1994) described how the Lewis Thomas Molecular Biology Lab at Princeton was planned to encourage both collegiality and competition (pp. 179-80). The building was the home for a group of microbiologists who valued interacting with each other and with others in their scientific community. The designers built the lab with only three floors, so that people could meet in stairwells, and built corridors wider than is typical to encourage informal interaction. The designers added kitchenettes and blackboards to lounge areas to encourage informal gathering and impromptu work sessions. The department chair also wanted to instill a sense of competition, so designers clustered offices so that people could monitor how far other teams were in completing their projects.

Designers use symmetry in organizing the campus and classrooms to instill a sense of order (Chapman, 1994; Griffith, 1994). Toelken (1996) discussed an emphasis, in mainstream U.S. culture, on straight lines and symmetry and, by extension, on order. On the campus level, the grid patterning of the quadrangle creates a sense of order and community. The use of the quadrangle can be tied to the organization of medieval English colleges that used this design to protect the school from aggressors and to gain greater control over student behavior (Griffith, 1994). American college planners use the quadrangle form because it fosters a sense of place and insulates the campus from outside distractions and noise. On the classroom level, the grid-patterned seating arrangement allows an instructor to regulate student behavior.

On a large scale, the existence of certain buildings carries an implicit message about a folk group's position within society and within an institution. It is not possible to consider all the different building types on a college campus in this article, but an example should help to illustrate this point. Universities began to offer on-campus housing to students due to concerns about the quality of off-campus living accommodations and the fear that living off campus could lead to moral corruption (Dober, 1996). Many universities today still have rules that require students to live on campus for one or more years when they first enter the university. Similarly, the rise of fraternities and sororities can be related to a similar desire to protect students and keep them on or near campus. Students, therefore, are a group that need to be protected from the outside world, and it is the job of the school to provide this protection by providing safe on-campus, or close to campus, living accommodations.
The layout of a college campus can also reveal shifts in societal values and roles for groups over time. For example, women were spatially segregated in university settings in the United States in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Spain, 1992). In the early 1800s, women could not attend universities because of the perception that their place was at home taking care of their families. Later in the century, women could attend college but were confined to women-only schools because of the fear that contact with men’s ideas could harm them emotionally. While women now have access to most colleges, this analysis raises questions about the spatial segregation of other groups, such as the poor, from institutions of higher learning.

While educational institutions may attempt to encourage values through campus design, the physical arrangement of the campus can also become a focal point in struggles for recognition among marginalized groups on campus. At issue is the way that designers can include the voice of these groups in campus design (Dutton, 1995; Dutton & Grant, 1991; Dutton & Mann, 1996) and, by extension, the extent to which the university makes decisions to account for differences in people’s experiences. A tangible example of how some people’s experiences are considered in limited ways in campus design is the approach that universities take in adapting spaces for disabled students and staff on campuses (McGuinness, 1993). McGuinness described three approaches to dealing with accessibility issues: (1) a risk management approach, in which changes are made until the likelihood of a lawsuit is small, (2) a priority management approach, in which priorities are set to make the most used areas of campus accessible, and (3) a comprehensive management approach, in which a “readily achievable” plan and a design response are set up. The decisions about how far to go in accommodating the needs of disabled people on campus reveals who is valued and who is not valued in an institution along with the university’s management policy and culture.

Budgeting is another issue that reveals a university’s management culture (Leggett, 1985; Marsh & Griffith, 1985; Murphy, 1994; Stewart, 1985). Much of the research in this area tries to define the value of a space by assessing how much and for what purpose a room is used. This line of research also suggests ways to get departments on campus to recognize the value of the space that they inhabit and to pay for that space. The use of classroom space, a topic much discussed in the education research literature, is explored in the next section.

**Classroom Design**

Environmental planning researchers examine the physical layout of a classroom to determine its effectiveness in allowing students and teachers to function comfortably in the environment (Council of Educational Facility Planners, 1991; Gorham, 1981; Ledford, 1981; Muller, Probasco,
Schuh, 1985; Owu, 1992; Rath & Ittleson, 1981; Tessmer & Harris, 1992). Typical classroom features that are studied include the visual environment, acoustics, temperature, media use, and room layout (Ledford, 1981). In this section, I examine the way that features of classroom design reveal cultural values in educational settings.

Some pictures of classrooms at the University of Illinois help illustrate my points. In analyzing these pictures, I am making some assumptions about the meaning of selected artifacts in classroom settings. The ideas here represent starting points in analyzing artifacts within the classroom, but the ideal study would look at how these features shape and are shaped for a particular folk group in a particular context.

Room layout is one aspect of classroom organization that includes the type of furniture used, its design, and its positioning (Ledford, 1981). Classrooms can be divided into two types—fixed designs or flexible designs (Blackett & Stanfield, 1994). Classrooms with a fixed design do not allow a room to be changed easily and include the conventional large lecture hall, the tiered classroom, and the camera equipped classroom suite. Classrooms with a flexible design allow a room to be rearranged to meet the needs of a particular class and include the small seminar rooms and other rooms that accommodate about twenty to fifty students.

The amount of flexibility in a classroom and the restrictions that are made on student movement through the environment can be tied to either a teacher’s or to a school’s perspective about the educational process. In contrast to teacher-centered visions of learning, a constructivist approach suggests that students must be active learners with instruction centered on supporting the construction of knowledge rather than on its transmission (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996). From this perspective, objects in the environment are important tools in helping a child construct knowledge. This may imply a classroom design that is more flexible in allowing students and teachers to rearrange the room as they co-construct this knowledge.

Figure 1 contains an example of a classroom design that is inflexible, with the chairs bolted to the floor. It provides very little flexibility in terms of providing a space for group work or student interaction. Figure 2 is an example of a learning space that is flexible with a movable table and chairs. There are more possibilities for students to work individually, in pairs, or in groups.

Researchers have specific, and often contradictory, ideas about what makes a “good” classroom (Blackett & Stanfield, 1994; Owu, 1992; Vaughan, 1991). According to Owu (1992), the layout of a classroom should direct the student’s attention toward the instructor and the presentation area. The room should be flexible enough to accommodate large and small class sizes and changes in technology. There should also be attention to aesthetics including form, line, color, texture, and visual variety. Decisions
Figure 1. An Inflexible Classroom Design with Bolted Desks.

Figure 2. A More Flexible Classroom Design.
about the layout of a classroom provide tangible evidence of beliefs about what the learning experience should be like and about the role of teachers and students in the learning process.

The culture of university settings differs from that of other levels of education, and this is revealed in classroom design. Educators seem to make a distinction between the types of space needed for young children (Dudek, 1996; Gareau & Kennedy, 1991; Greenman, 1988) and spaces for older children and adults. Young children need environments that encourage them to use their imaginations, to play, to interact, and to form relationships with peers and instructors. These environments are supposed to encourage learning through discovery and, at the same time, create a sense of order and security. The need to design learning spaces that promote creativity is typically not an important design criterion once children get older. College classrooms avoid distractions, with many rooms being barren of decoration. This lack of decoration can be attributed to the migratory nature of teaching at the college level. Instructors do not have their own room for more than a semester and often share a room with many people throughout the day.

Figures 3 and 4 reveal differences in beliefs about how graduate and undergraduate education is conducted and provide examples of the emphasis on the teacher in classroom design. Figure 3 shows a teacher in a large lecture hall standing on a platform that looks like a stage. This platform accentuates status differences by physically separating the teacher and the students. This picture also demonstrates an effort by the designer to construct an environment appropriate to a large lecture hall through the use of a large blackboard area that is lit up so students can see what the instructor has written. Figure 4 is a smaller room that contains a three-sided table with a separate space for the teacher. This represents a graduate classroom that is more similar to a conference room than a typical undergraduate classroom. Both pictures show relatively barren classrooms that do not contain distracting material.

Despite the best efforts of designers, people adapt their environment to meet their own needs (Brand, 1994). Figure 5 depicts a class that decided to meet outside on a sunny spring day and provides an example of the way that people adapt campus spaces. Beyond classroom spaces, a great deal of the learning that takes place on a college campus occurs outside of the classroom in the hall, in dorm rooms, in the cafeteria, and in other spaces that people claim as their own.

The values of a folk group are also revealed by the way that its members talk about—and within—their space, as well as the rituals associated with a particular space. Although the focus of this discussion is on material lore, the next section will provide examples of the way that verbal lore and ritual/customary lore relate to particular spaces.
Figure 3. An Instructor on the Stage of a Large Lecture Hall.

Figure 4. A Small Conference Style Classroom.
VERBAL LORE AND RITUAL/CUSTOMARY LORE

Folkloristic studies about college campuses tend to focus on the lore of undergraduate students (Baker, 1983; Bronner, 1990) more than other groups on campus. Bronner (1990) provides a classification of the verbal lore on college campuses among undergraduate students. The verbal lore of students includes stories about the academic side of school life, such as tests, exams, grading, cheating, and professors. There are also stories about the social side of campus life, including class competitions, dorm games, practical jokes, singing events, seasonal festivals, sports rituals, and fraternity/sorority traditions. Also, stories about haunted places, and unexplained events are typical on college campuses. Graduation ceremonies are also a source for a great many rituals and stories.

An especially useful feature of Bronner's (1990) work is that he tries to connect the verbal lore that he collected to issues surrounding student life:

Folklore provides a passage from one stage to another from ritual, custom, and object. It defines and describes the subgroupings within the student's world: the "frat rats," "the grinds," the "jocks," the "profs," and all the rest. It is the students' unofficial cultural orientation held through the college experience. It offers parables to ponder, rituals to observe, values to honor. Folklore from the nation's colleges opens a legacy of creative expression reflecting student culture, concerns, and roles within an exclusive institutional setting. Most importantly for many students, folklore helps guide them to identities within a new setting, often large, mysterious, and imposing. Folklore is a place to begin and to belong. (p. 22)
Verbal and customary/ritual lore provides a way for students to define themselves in relationship to other students and to the institution. Through verbal and ritual/customary lore, students learn the unofficial curriculum of how to navigate through the university to earn their degrees.

The lore of professors and graduate students is relatively uncharted, but these groups, too, must become versed in the lore of the university and of their department. Professors learn the official and unofficial rules to gain tenure, and they tell stories about difficult classes, research nightmares, and the long hours of academic work. Graduate student lore reveals the ambiguous position of being a student for many years, the poor pay, and the lack of prestige in the academic community. These tensions of academic life are revealed in the stories and jokes that graduate students ("You just might be a graduate student if," 1998) and faculty members tell ("Why God never received tenure at any university," n.d.). Each field, too, has its unique jokes and stories that are reflective of the topic area and common experiences of members of these groups ("You might be a library media specialist if" <http://www.col.k12.me.us/bjh/203a/libhum.html>).

Maintaining control is an issue in any institution and it appears in the verbal and ritual/customary lore in educational settings. The emphasis on maintaining control is an explicit focus in K-12 literature (Henry, 1993; Powell & Solity, 1990). Some practitioners (Wong & Wong, 1991) have elaborate procedures for taking control of a class through setting routines for all activities that occur in the classroom. These procedures include ritualizing the start and end of the day, entering and exiting the classroom, asking for help, turning in work, handling materials in the classroom, and creating activities to occupy children who complete assignments quickly. Teachers guard their own spaces by rigidly controlling access to areas occupied by the staff such as teachers' lounges and administrative offices (Gordon & Lahelma, 1996). While university teachers may have less physical control over the movement of students, there are parallels in terms of setting up routines to control the classroom.

Given the amount of control that an institution has over an individual, a frequent topic of the verbal lore in school settings involves stories about people who have overcome institutional control. Mechling (1995), for example, described how students use secret words and gestures to hide their communication from those in authority. Baker (1983) described some of the verbal lore of students at the University of Illinois, which included campus legends and other stories about beating the grading system and getting back at difficult professors.

We are moving toward models of learning where students are no longer required to be physically present with other learners or the teacher. This new learning environment raises questions about what is gained and what
is lost when activities are conducted in virtual, rather than real, spaces. It also raises questions about how the educational process is changing as a result of using technology to deliver instruction.

**Considerations of Space in Classrooms without Walls**

Distance education is becoming a realistic option for pursuing an advanced degree. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (1997), one-third of all higher education institutions offered distance education in some form via video, audio, Internet-based technologies, or other computer-based technologies in fall 1995. Another 25 percent of the institutions surveyed planned to offer a distance education course within the next three years. Several models exist that challenge the traditional "residential higher education" model, including: (1) extended traditional universities, (2) for-profit adult-centered universities, (3) distance education/technology-based universities, (4) corporate universities, (5) university/industry strategic alliances, (6) degree/certification competency based universities, and (7) global multinational universities (Hanna, 1998).

Discussing space issues in distance education settings is difficult because one cannot rely on structural features of buildings or rooms as defining features. One of the challenges in exploring virtual spaces is to recognize the language and concepts people use to define their spaces. An approach that is helpful in understanding the social context surrounding technology use is social informatics. A social informatics approach "examines social aspects of computerization—including the roles of information technology in social and organizational change and the ways that the social organization of information technologies are influenced by social forces and social practices" (Social Informatics Homepage, 1998). This line of research is useful in identifying the strategies that people employ to define their physical and virtual spaces. The themes identified in this section are embedded in the material, verbal, and ritual/customary lore of virtual environments.

Classification is one way that people define their virtual spaces (Star, 1996), and this is achieved in a distance education setting through classifying others by their status and their geographic location relative to the university. People are classified as on-campus versus off-campus faculty, students, and technical or administrative staff. Each of these groups represents a distinct culture and subculture within the larger department and university. For example, both on-campus and off-campus students may share some similar experiences because they share the same status as students, but they differ in terms of how the work of being a student is accomplished. The unique experiences and values of these groups and subgroups play out in the stories that they tell and the rituals and customs that they share.
The type of technology that is used and the forms of communication afforded by various delivery methods also serve to define space. Technology affordances are the physical properties of an environment that support activities and interaction (Gaver, 1991, 1992, 1996; Gibson, 1966). Gaver (1996) provides a useful example in comparing the affordances of a card catalog to those of a computer database. The two types of technology can be compared in terms of the resources they provide to support certain activities such as accessing information. In electronic environments, people compare technologies in terms of the types of communication resources that they afford. Face-to-face communication has a number of affordances, including nonverbal cues, verbal cues, and the physical objects present in a setting. Remote communication technologies offer affordances that are different from face-to-face settings such as the ability to communicate asynchronously. From this perspective, space is defined by the delivery method that is used and the affordances that are available, so people talk about having an e-mail discussion or meeting in a chat room.

Finally, people define space in virtual environments by the practice of doing research, teaching, and learning in academic settings. People define their space in relationship to the things that they do given their role in the institution. Students go online to attend class, turn in assignments, do their homework, and talk to colleagues. Professors go online to teach class, grade assignments, and mentor students. The activities are conducted differently in online environments as compared to physical classrooms, so it is important to notice the extent to which educational practices are transformed in virtual environments (Bruce, 1997).

I have had the opportunity to think about how the absence of space affects learning through my involvement in a project (LEEP Project Homepage, 1998) at the University of Illinois that studies a long distance electronic education program (LEEP3 Homepage, 1998) in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science. The LEEP program uses short on-campus visits once a semester, and delivery of course content through Internet technologies including Web Boards, Real Audio, the World Wide Web, and Internet Relay Chat (IRC). Some of the examples used in the next section stem from interviews and observations from this project.

**Material Lore in Virtual Environments**

The practices surrounding educational settings are inextricably linked to the infrastructural support provided by all sectors of the university (Besser, 1996). Infrastructure includes access to physical objects in the environment such as computers, computer programs, and library materials. It includes access to the social resources of the university such as a professional library staff, faculty, and other students. Infrastructure also relates to a person's access to opportunities such as jobs, assistantships,
and networking or mentoring opportunities. Providing these resources to distance education students requires the university to grapple with decisions that affect both on-campus and off-campus students. For example, in providing access to class materials and resources, a university must deal with issues such as the financial cost of subscribing to a database across a network, copyright issues, developing and maintaining library collections, and security issues. Because the infrastructure of a university is geared toward on-campus students, distance education students often need to be resourceful to get access to the materials that they need.

The lack of a shared physical space and artifacts leads to problems of defining traditional educational practices such as attending class and class participation. Students can disappear in a distance education setting because, if they do not post a message, the teacher has no contact with them. In the physical environment, even if students are quiet, the teacher has some contact with them because they are physically present during class. Similarly, instructors can disappear in a distance education environment if they do not post regular messages. Students and teachers need to develop new skills to maintain a virtual presence and to demonstrate participation.

The lack of a shared physical space also leads to problems in presenting material because of the lack of shared face-to-face and auditory cues. One instructor in the LEEP program described it as a problem of emphasis: “You can’t just use voice inflection or you can’t just put it in bold letters like you would in the classroom. . . . In the classroom, I can say if you don’t come away with anything else today remember this . . . . Somehow saying that in the LEEP format doesn’t have the same kind of impact. You really just have to kind of hit it over and over again.” This relates to the different affordances available in an online, versus a live, classroom setting.

A great deal of learning in physical environments occurs informally through unplanned conversations, which can be hard to achieve in virtual settings. One of the problems with using technologies such as a Web board is that the exchanges tend to be formal and there seem to be fewer opportunities for informal conversation. Unlike face-to-face conversations, there can be a permanent record of what is said in virtual environments through archives. The existence of an archive may discourage a student from expressing an idea because a record exists of a person’s mistakes. The existence of a permanent record of one’s interaction also creates a more formal environment because the teacher has a permanent record of the number and the quality of posts made by a student.

**Verbal Lore in Virtual Environments**

Some have argued that the use of computers is fundamentally changing the stories that people tell and the way these stories are expressed (Jennings, 1990; Murray, 1997). The stories and jokes that people tell are
communicated in electronic form so they differ from an oral performance. A story or joke reflects both the values of a folk group and the computer context in which it is told. For example, you could throw a virtual spitball at someone in an Internet Relay Chat (IRC) environment. This relates to student culture because throwing a spitball is something that one might do in a school setting. It also relates to computer culture because part of what makes this joke funny is that someone typed the command to make the description of the spitball appear on people's computer screens.

Some of the jokes and stories of the LEEP students involve the trade-offs inherent to participating in a virtual class. One of the LEEP students provided the following example:

Everyone always makes jokes about sitting in front of their computer naked. I'm not really here, this is actually someone else. We do jokes about who we really say we are. In IRC there's this command where you can whisper to other people. Once in awhile people will do it incorrectly and they say something that you probably wouldn't actually say. People joke about that.

On the one hand, it is nice to be part of the LEEP experience because you can do things that you cannot do in a live classroom setting, but the virtual environment has trade-offs such as the difficulty of discerning if people are who they claim to be. This example is also interesting because it touches on an affordance of the technology that is heavily used. In IRC, when someone whispers, they type a private message that goes only to a selected person rather than to everyone in the chat room. It is possible to make a mistake so that instead of whispering to one person a message is sent to everyone in the chat room. Mistakes become fodder for jokes, and the ease with which they can happen may also cause participants to have more tolerance for mistakes than they would in face-to-face settings.

Many hero tales crop up in virtual environments; these are important to explore because they reveal characteristics that people in this culture value. In the LEEP environment, there is a hero tale about a novice who masters the difficult technology and who either receives recognition for his or her effort or who goes on to become a technical master herself or himself. This story came up repeatedly and differed slightly depending on whether the instructor or the student was the hero. In one version, a teacher who was apprehensive about teaching in the distance education environment taught a class that seemed difficult to translate to a virtual environment and went on to win a prestigious teaching award at the university. In another version of the story, a student who had some difficulties learning the technology at the beginning of the program went on to become the technical guru at the student's workplace. Certain elements of each of these stories may not be literally true, but these hero tales highlight a desire to overcome the difficulties in learning and using technology to become masters of the technology.
One type of computer story has what Tenner (1996) calls revenge effects: "[T]he tendency of the world around us to get even, to twist our cleverness against us" (p. 6). Tenner is specifically interested in the way that technology is supposed to help us but in reality produces a number of unintended consequences. One example of an unintended revenge effect is the increase in repetitive stress injuries that are associated with prolonged use of computers in the workplace. Tenner suggests the existence of a folklore of computer revenge effects. For example, one unintended consequence of a move toward the use of virtual resources for on-campus classes seems to be an increase in the amount of printing that is done in the computer lab. Because students find it difficult to read academic papers online, they print these papers in the lab rather than buying a packet at the beginning of the semester that contains all of the readings.

Another type of story that relates to computer use is the way that technology takes over people's lives and the ways that people resist the virtual life. Teachers and students tell stories about how they are always in class in distance education settings, and they feel the need to constantly check the messages for a course. At the same time, academics tell stories about how they resist the virtual life through various strategies such as not checking e-mail on weekends.

Interestingly, the experiences of the distance education students at the University of Illinois also highlight the importance of gathering together in a shared physical space. As part of the LEEP program, students are required to attend a two-week on-campus session where they take a class and learn the technology that they will use in their classes. Through this experience, the students meet their fellow classmates and form friendships that often continue in the virtual environment. Many of the stories and jokes the LEEP students tell refer back to the time when they were physically on campus.

**Ritual/Customary Lore in Virtual Environments**

In the absence of physical spaces, people create new virtual rituals and customs to take the place of some traditions that are tied to particular places. These new virtual rituals may bear some similarity to their physical counterparts, but they also assume their own character, taking advantage of the affordances of the virtual environment. A good example is the graduation ceremony that took place in May 1998 at the University of Illinois for both on-campus and LEEP students (Being there, 1998; 1998 LEEP Graduation Ceremony, 1998). A live version of the graduation ceremony took place with all of the typical rituals such as graduation speeches, traditional dress in cap and gown, the distribution of diplomas, etc. In conjunction with the live graduation, a virtual graduation took place that had elements of the live graduation but also contained its own rhythm and activities.
In the virtual ceremony, LEEP students and their families were able to gather in a chat room and hear the events occurring at the live graduation ceremony. Unlike people attending the live ceremony, participants attending the virtual graduation were able to “talk” to fellow graduates and their families throughout the ceremony by typing messages back and forth. They were also free from other rituals such as dressing up in a cap and gown and listening intently to graduation speeches because they were not a captive audience.

In an important event like a graduation, it is relevant to think about the quality of the experience if all of the rituals cannot be translated to the virtual environment. Many activities surrounding the graduation experience are not captured by the one moment when students hear their name being read as they walk across the stage to receive a diploma. Some of these things include: getting yourself and your family dressed up for the graduation ceremony; driving to the graduation ceremony and passing by the statue of the Alma Mater, knowing that somehow this statue represents your accomplishments; knowing that somewhere your family is sitting in the stands anxiously waiting to see you and capture a picture as you walk across the stage; and the energy of the crowd. These moments make the graduation day memorable and add to the aesthetic of the event but do not carry over to the virtual ceremony.

The move toward distance education has affected the rhythm and flow of academic life. Professors may need to change their work practices to be effective in virtual environments. It can be difficult to make adjustments to a course schedule or to assignments because it can take much time to prepare course material suitable for this environment. Some instructors find it difficult to do things spontaneously in virtual settings because it requires significant time and thought to find an explanation that will make sense, given the communication affordances of the technology. Similarly, students in this environment are much more accountable for doing their work, so the roles and obligations of being a student are different from those of on-campus students (Burge, 1996; Linn, 1996). In many cases, there is no real way for the teacher to check if the students are keeping up with their work or if they are doing the work themselves.

CONCLUSION

Much of the literature on space tends to ignore the connection between membership in a community and the spaces that people inhabit. Space is treated as being either neutral and is ignored or as something that must be controlled in order to influence the behavior of people within a setting. This disconnect between membership in a community and the space that a group inhabits is precisely what a folkloristic approach tries to bridge. Space cannot be considered outside the context of the value structure and practices of a folk group. Because there is no literature on the
folklore of space on college campuses, this article has focused on how space is discussed within education research literature and has pointed to places where a connection can be made between space and the value structure and practices of members of the academic community.

Scholars must examine both real and virtual spaces because college settings today are hybrid learning environments in which part or all of academic work takes place online. Even when traditional teaching models are used, activities are no longer confined to only one space, because of the increased use of electronic tools such as e-mail. By ignoring computer lore and computer contexts, folklorists may miss important aspects of culture and the ways that work gets done in academic environments.

Both real and distance education environments are being affected by the lack of boundaries created by the increased use of computers in education. At the same time that a distance education student is listening to a lecture delivered by a teacher, she or he may be preparing dinner for the family. Similar problems exist in identifying boundaries between work and school settings. Resources that are available at work become resources for school and vice versa. Because schoolwork can be done both at home and at work, blended work spaces must be negotiated. The problem of negotiating boundaries is also true of more traditional educational environments, especially as more academic work is conducted via the computer.

The lack of boundaries is also an area that researchers might examine for conflicts between various groups and subgroups in the university. People classify each other as on-campus or off-campus students or instructors. The needs and expectations of each group are different, and the infrastructure needed to support each group can vary tremendously. While some aspects of being a teacher or a student may be similar for both on-campus and off-campus groups, the actual practice of teaching and learning may be different. In addition, the existence of on-campus and off-campus groups inevitably raises questions about whether there is equality in terms of the experience and access to resources provided by the university. Categories of location are also potential sources of conflict as on-campus and off-campus groups seek to structure the institution in ways that suit their own needs.

New environments require new interdisciplinary ways of studying space that include elements of both folklore research and social informatics. The study of material culture provides important insights into the way that physical structures reveal the culture of a folk group. The study of social informatics provides insights into the way that people organize both their real and virtual spaces and how this reveals culture. The structural features of the physical world remind us of the importance of looking at how traditional practices translate or fail to translate to the virtual environment. The strategies used to define space in the virtual world remind
us of the importance of uncovering the cultural values that are embodied within artifacts. Examining the practices that translate, or fail to translate, to virtual environments and the new practices that develop both in the physical and virtual world, in response to hybrid models of academic work, will reveal those cultural values.

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Paper, Piles, and Computer Files: Folklore of Information Work Environments

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ABSTRACT

A FOLKLORE OF INFORMATION WORK ENVIRONMENTS adopts the holistic in-depth methods from the folklore of work and applies them to modern information workplaces. Like some other fields, folklore of spaces and artifacts takes the perspective that people's folk practices are a part of the things they interact with, that environment impacts people, and people impact their environment. Thus a folklore of space enfolds many of the research interests of diverse fields that deal with the modern work setting and the elements within that setting, from cubicle design to information systems. This article reviews literature from several bodies of research and attempts to bring them together in a projected folklore of information work space. It emphasizes the importance of studying folklore of information work environments in the context of the current shift toward removing work from any particular place via information systems, e-mail, and the Web. A deep understanding of the folklore of work space can give clues to the impact of this trend and can inform design of information systems and modern work environments.

INTRODUCTION

1 sit in the middle of the room at a round table that barely leaves space to pass around it. According to the sign on the open door, there are four people assigned to this cubicle, each facing one corner. Around the perimeter of this little—maybe 10 foot by 10 foot—room is desk space and counter space. There are drawers underneath the counters and shelves above; computer monitors serve as place markers for the occupants of this workplace.
The variety and accumulation of things implies that the inhabitants of this cubicle have been here for some time. The shelves are full of mainly books and binders; the counters are piled high with papers, folders, and binders. A box for a chess set is crammed on one shelf where it threatens to fall along with boxes from Mathematica, Office 95, and other software packaging. There are at least a dozen different coffee mugs and soda cans scattered throughout as well as a small pot for heating water on an upper shelf supporting a row of unlabeled binders. There are four Unix workstations, two personal computers, and a Macintosh computer set at various points on the counters, and all but the PCs are on, humming and drawing line patterns over and over. The walls have calendars, a graph of a three dimensional parabolic curve, and children’s watercolors. When I look at the contents of the table before me, I find blank paper and overheads, paperclips, a bus schedule, a German-English dictionary, and a geometry text 1948 copyrighted. Its dog-eared pages have layers of different handwriting, different colors of ink, and its cover is stamped “Property of North High school.”

**WHAT IS A FOLKLORE OF SPACE?**

There is a great depth, breadth, and diversity of resources in the information work environment described earlier. The information in this environment lies not only on the written pages of books, photocopies, and computer screens, but in how they are organized and piled (either deliberately or accidentally) and placed in relationship to each other and the occupants of this space. An outsider to this space can learn a great deal about the people who work here and the nature of their social relationships to each other and to their larger social group. The space contains information about the organization they work for in the quality and quantity of the things in the room, what is or is not visible, and the range of resources displayed. An investigation of environment and material, verbal and ritual lore that addresses these issues is a folkloric study of space.

Typical folkloric studies emphasize the way individuals carry out or enact folk practices in the material environment with attention to verbal and customary lore. For example, based on the description above, research questions might include: How is information stored and conveyed in this setting? What are the organizational practices at play? What work tasks are carried out here? To what social and cultural groups do these people belong? How are the various materials working together? How is this space personalized and why?

These questions are based on the idea that the practices displayed here are learned behaviors with some individual variation, and that investigating this environment would give some information about how members of the larger folk group(s) involved might also behave. Methods involved in answering these questions range from collection of artifacts to
historiography to ethnography, using folk groups as a central unit of analysis. For the physics researchers described above, folk group memberships would include academia, physics as a field, their particular department, their research group, and so on. As research on information work spaces now stands, there is a large body of literature that deals with the information work environment but not with folkways. In the folklore literature, there is some research on environment but largely not on the information work environment. There are a few areas of research that fall somewhere between these two positions.

This discussion broadly reviews some of the research from a wide variety of fields and what they can tell us about work environments and space, what perspectives have been used to address space, and particularly the dialectic between how people shape and structure their environment, and how people are shaped and structured by their environment. The goal here is to bring these diverse pieces of research together in a way that has not been done before in order to create a starting point for research on the folklore of information work environments similar to the one described at the beginning of and throughout this article.

**WHY A FOLKLORE OF SPACE?**

Most studies of work that feed into library and information science (e.g., in terms of creating tools for people; learning about how people communicate, use tools, and share information) do not take the things that surround workers and the material and cultural conditions of work into account (e.g., Barreau, 1995; Kwasnik, 1991; Nardi & Barreau, 1995, 1997). However, the research on more singular elements in the work environment (such as people's reaction to windows or how e-mail is used) can be used as a starting point for research. There are some exceptions in which a holistic picture of work and environment is developed that will be discussed later. The research approach that is best suited to dealing with work space is drawn from folklore, and it brings material, verbal, customary, and ritual lores together under one framework of study; thus this article is about launching a folklore of information work space.

Creating tools for particular work settings is about dealing with the situated nature of work (e.g., Ehn, 1988; Hutchins, 1995; Kyng & Mathiassen, 1997; Suchman, 1987). Part of the situation in which work occurs is that of the material objects that surround, play a part in, and contribute to or hinder, the work that is ongoing in particular places such as the cubicle described earlier. In addition, this single cubicle and all the clutter inside of it are located within a warren of other cubicles, on a larger floor, within an entire building that is spatially located in relation to other buildings at the northernmost apex of a large institution. All of these relations contain multiple layers of social cues and embedded meanings about the culture and social behavior of the people who inhabit them.
As others (Hutchins, 1995; Norman, 1993; Suchman, 1987) have shown, people embed knowledge in their environment. Information is contained in tools, in spatial relationships of objects, and in hands that know where to reach for particular things. Exploring these embedded layers of meaning can contribute to understanding work practices and to better supporting these work practices and building useful information tools.

This discussion will begin with a brief overview of different fields that concern themselves with work space and their research approaches. A discussion of architectural trends in office design sheds light on how information work environments have developed. From there, individual scale resources will be discussed, and the way flexibility in the work place (both in terms of physical malleability and an organization's rules) affects how much, and what kind of, folk practices are enacted. Interaction in the information work environment is always affected by the social structures of the work place, and corporate culture has a strong impact on the material environment in which many people work. I will conclude with a discussion of some of the issues surrounding the newest trend in information work—i.e., removing work from its material and spatial context. The issues discussed here will be illustrated by one extended example of an information workplace that I studied in 1996. This is the setting that sparked my interest in studying environment and how it relates to folk and work practices.

A focus on the materials and environment of work settings is particularly appropriate at this point in time. The de-localizing of work is creating a shift in many aspects of work, particularly in its material conditions. Only through a deep understanding of how people interact with their work space can these changes be fruitfully dealt with. New information systems, such as digital libraries, are being constructed to operate with the idea that they can be used at any place and time. Discussion of these new systems has largely not engaged the issues of space and environment and what dislocation will mean in terms of use and extant social practices.

**Literature and Environment on Space**

However overwhelming this little room full of stuff seemed at first, after some time, I begin to notice it really has its own order. There are at least three obvious work spaces here. To the left, the counters are cleared in a three foot area around one computer. Only two things hang on the fuzzy walls around this space: a calendar (clear of any handwritten marks) and the three-dimensional geometric drawing. On the right, the Mac and a Unix box face the same chair. Several piles of papers are on these counters, along with a box of tea bags and a mug. That hot-pot is just above. A file drawer is open with empty file folders pushed to the back to make room for a large stack of photocopies. These two work areas are on either side of the door to the hallway. It is the third corner (kitty corner from the first)
that gives the room the chaotic air. There are no discernable piles, but more of a nest shape around the computer in the center. Even the keyboard is covered. A “recycle” can sits next to the chair, and it too is overflowing. There are binders, books, and notebooks mixed in with typed and handwritten pages and equations. Photocopied articles are being pulled apart at the staple by the shifting tectonic forces of the piles. Every available bit of wall space above these piles is covered by a child’s drawings. This area is an overwhelming presence.

Overview

How people interact with their space is not a new area of research. Several different broad fields of study concern themselves with examining space and environment from different angles and highlight different aspects. The disciplines drawn upon in this overview include architecture, psychology, sociology, managerial science, civil and environmental planning, and computer and information science, as well as folklore. Reviewing these areas provides some starting points and a vocabulary with which to build a study of information work spaces. The underlying idea that all of the researchers from these various fields hold in common is that space and environment contain, both in structures and artifacts, knowledge and social practice:

[The environment provides a setting which elicits standard behavior according to binding but as yet unverbalized rules which are more compelling and more uniform than such individual variables as personality. Far from being passive, environment actually enters into a transaction with humans. (Hall & Hall, 1975, p. 9, italics in original)]

There are as many different ways of discussing this interplay between people and environment—and of analyzing impacts—as there are disciplinary perspectives. Many researchers take a planning and construction perspective. They hope to create and manipulate space and environment in order to encourage or facilitate particular behaviors within that space. They draw on and report on research that can inform these goals. Others are more interested in what ways people work with (or around) their environment without any angle of manipulation. Another important body of research is concerned with how people draw upon the information that is embedded in their environment to accomplish work, and how social order and value structures are a part of the space that they inhabit.

In looking at the literature, one might think that environmental engineers, architects, and interior designers, in consultation with managers, determine the spaces where people live and work. However, while work settings are often purposefully constructed (e.g., cubicle walls are six feet high for a particular reason, windows can or cannot be opened by design, available plug-ins decide how many and where computers will be) nothing is completely determined. On a smaller scale, people adapt and change and organize the space around them every day, in order to make that
space work for them by hanging up calendars or children's pictures, posting reminders, or filing papers alphabetically by author's last name. Much of this shaping is the result of the social groups to which people belong, the actual process of our daily work, and personal preference.

**Folkloristics of Work**

There are several fields and schools of research that deal with studies of information work, the materials involved, the social practices around it, and environmental issues. Folklore literature can be generally divided into research on lore about artifacts and materials, verbal lore such as storytelling, and ritual or customary lore. This framework is useful in categorizing literature that goes beyond folkloric studies. Anthropology and sociology of work also contribute to the folklore of the modern office setting. These studies have taken typical modern jobs and office settings as settings for research. They have paid particular attention to the activities of work and work practice, social interaction at many different scales, and ways technology affects work. Finally, work in science studies is important to the development of a folklore of the modern office environment because of its attention to the details of the materials of work, a focus on work as it happens, the social relations that allow work to be accomplished, and the language involved.

First, research that is relevant to the study of artifacts in the modern day office can be drawn from each of the fields mentioned earlier. There are many different approaches that have been taken to studies of artifacts—i.e., description and classification, stylistic analyses, the techniques and technology of production, social uses and cultural meanings, the politics of production and reproduction, and contextualizing objects in terms of performance are just some of the possibilities (Babcock, 1992). Artifacts can be seen as both resources for work and traces of activities (Glassie, 1972, 1983; Roberts, 1972).

Babcock (1992) describes folklore studies of material culture and different approaches that have been taken to studying material lore. Material culture is particularly challenging to analyze due to the multifunctionality of objects, the many frames or contexts that can alter an object's use and meaning (think of the high school geometry book on the table in the physicist's cubicle). Objects have many dimensions that signify different things: a page of handwritten notes on a topic is very different from that same information published in a book. E-mail has different significance from a letter on thick paper with a university letterhead. Materials also can be recycled and re-combined to be used in new and different ways other than those intended. The frame of a monitor can become the resting place for work-related reminders, and a thesis originally used because its content was pertinent may be reused (or simultaneously used) as a model for structure when the content is no longer an
Finally, some aspects of material culture are ephemeral. This is particularly relevant when a topic of focus is the relationship between objects and ways information is organized—piles of resources are regularly taken apart and redistributed to other places (Babcock, 1992; Glassie, 1983).

Analyses of materials and artifacts are also important in sociological and anthropological studies of work. These studies have dealt with a broad spectrum of work, from blacksmithing (Keller & Keller, 1996), to large ship navigation (Hutchins, 1995), to photocopy machine repair (Orr, 1996). Many of these studies take one particular element or technology as their point of focus. For example, Gasser (1986) discusses how computers are integrated into routine office work but does not go into depth about details of work that do not touch on computer use or other materials. Suchman (1987) takes a very careful look at the work that goes on around using a copy machine but does not describe materials or events that do not directly tie to photocopying. Studies such as these, though, are very informative about specific artifacts in the work environment.

In contrast to the research on particular items, there are studies of work that pay careful attention to materials but also to the social practices, activities, and interactions in the work setting. Many of these are studies of scientific work which can also inform studies of information work. For example, Traweek (1988) explores the work and social practices of high energy physicists; Shapin and Shaffer (1985) describe the invention of the air-pump; Latour (1988) details the invention of vaccinations; Orr (1996) focuses on photocopy repair. Star and Griesemer (1989) describe how objects can be used as points of translation between individuals and folk groups as each group assigns a different meaning to the same object. Many of these studies of science emphasize the social and cultural aspects of the material world, the importance of context for understanding practice, and the role of social interaction.

Verbal lore is an important element of work. One of the most important styles of communication at work is storytelling, as Orr (1996) has demonstrated. Photocopy repair was greatly facilitated by technicians sharing "war stories" about different types of problems that they encountered. Boje (1991) discusses storytelling as a means of "sense making" in office settings. He notes that people use stories to interpret and reinterpret events and to create cohesion. He talks about stories and narratives as being repositories of company history, practice, and lore, and of storytelling as a powerful means of socializing newcomers into an organization. Tenkasi and Boland (1993) argue that storytelling and narrative creation are the "generative process[es] in cognition" (p. 77), that people think through talking out loud or to ourselves.

Other researchers who have studied verbal lore have focused on collecting stories tied to work settings. For example, there are many variations
of a man sneaking out of work early, or leaving the workplace during working hours. This man then goes home to find his wife and boss in a compromising situation, and in some stories ends up filling the boss’s car with cement (Green, 1993). There are not many collections of verbal lore from the modern information work setting, but other lines of work have been studied in detail. Some examples of well studied work lore include loggers’ stories (Dorson, 1972; Toelken, 1996), factory folklore (Nickerson, 1983), coal miners’ lore, cowboy verbal lore, railroad lore (Michell, 1983), and so on.

Office lore and storytelling are just beginning to be researched. For example, Dundes and a few others have collected examples of “photocopy lore,” cartoons, farces of common paperwork in the business setting such as joke business cards or memos, verses, and other items that are passed around or displayed in modern work settings (Dundes, 1983; Dundes & Pagter, 1978; Dundes & Pagter, 1986). Although the collection of these items is growing, there are few analyses of this material (Groemer, 1994). Storytelling is the focus of some research in managerial studies in which managers are encouraged to use stories to manipulate workers (Armstrong, 1992; Beyer & Trice, 1988; Neuhauser, 1993; Tommerup, 1988). Neuhauser (1993) reports that 90 percent of the stories workers tell about their work are negative—e.g., how people are taken advantage of, exploited, or made to do ridiculous things as a part of their jobs. There is even a Web site devoted to collecting stories about the worst bosses and work horror stories (http://wu.w.myboss.com). However, corporations also often have tales about the founder or the early days of the company, stories about various eccentric workers, the ultra-organized or the exceedingly sloppy person. Just as in other situations, folklore functions to create community bonding as well as to pass on skills and workplace culture (Toelken, 1996).

Finally, there are certainly rituals tied to the generic workplace, such as initiation rituals for newcomers, as well as customs from specifically office or information work settings. Work implies a particular type of attire and particular way of looking—e.g., the presentation of the self as “busy,” all of which may have little to do with job performance. If these conventions are not followed, although they are often unwritten rules, the employee could be fired (Henson, 1996). Ritual or customary lore in the modern work setting has not been a prominent focus in research on work, although these lores are often subtly present in many analyses. For example, Gasser’s (1986) discussion of office work and computing describes “workarounds” that allowed people to accomplish tasks in spite of the “correct” way of doing things. Consulting with local “gurus” is often part of accomplishing work. Other rituals tied to information work settings, such as the power lunch, job interviews, and presentations, remain unexplored in studies of work.
Another topic of research that does not fit neatly into these categories is invisible work. This is the work that needs to be accomplished before any other work can happen, the behind-the-scenes work that keeps organizations running smoothly but that is not overtly or specifically acknowledged as work that goes on (Gerson & Star, 1986; Star & Strauss, 1999; Suchman, 1995; Wichroski, 1994). The organization of materials, the personalization of work space, and the gathering and situating of resources can be included in this category of overlooked or invisible work. Perhaps there are materials that are necessary for doing such work that are not acknowledged or supported. This particular stream of research is also key in pointing to the need for looking below the surface of what is supposed to be happening in the workplace or the ostensible role of material resources.

An examination of folklore in information work environments should take into account the relationship among objects, spaces, and people as well as the larger social system affecting the space (Lawrence & Lowe, 1990). Each of these categories of research is artificially separated from the others; in practice, each is closely linked. Artifacts bring stories to mind, stories are tied to different customs, and customs are tied to particular places.

With the above areas of research in mind, the rest of this article will describe literature from disciplines which do concern themselves with the material environment and space, but which take methodological and theoretical stances that differ from those described above. Beginning with a general review of workplace design, I move through various issues that have been shown to be important in the work place setting. These topics suggest starting points for folklorists (or anthropologists or sociologists) who want to study work spaces. Finally, I will discuss the newest trend of dislocating work from space and what the research literature implies about that.

**Material Lore in the Office Environment**

The room is fairly quiet today except for the hum of seven computers and the clacking of two keyboards as Jill and Tim work. Every so often, the muted chime of Eudora's "You've got mail!" is heard from one of the ten other cubicles in this cavernous room. Jill stops typing to stare at her blue computer screen then turns to open the top left drawer next to her and pulls out a blank sheet of paper and a pencil. The bottom drawer is then opened, and her fingers walk across labeled file folders until she opens one and withdraws a journal article. She adjusts her chair to work at the countertop and makes notes and drawings on the blank paper as she reads the photocopy.

Tim is moving between the Mac and the Unix box as he works. The Mac is running Netscape, and he moves through pages of a site of another research group. He stops to read a bit of text there, then turns back to the other computer and types, back and forth between the two. At one point he pauses on a Web page and jots what appears
Mike walks into the room with a paper in his hands and sits down. "Hey," he says to the other two, "do either of you know where that one thesis with all the graphs has gone? I think it is from 1992, and it has a blue cover." "No," they both answer him. Mike begins to rifle through his heaps of paper and, after a moment, stops. "Hey!" he speaks a little louder, "who knows what happened to that blue thesis with all the graphs in it that I was using?" A voice from the next cubicle answers. "Not here," it says. Another disembodied voice chimes in "I'll ask Professor Smith." A knock on a real wooden door sounds; as the door opens, classical music is heard and a shaft of sunlight shines across the top of the cubicle area. Then the door closes and the music is gone. Mike turns back to his piles. "What will you do now?" I ask. "I'll do what I always do when I lose something I really need... clean." He begins picking up groups of papers and goes through them one by one. The first few handfuls get sorted through and neatly stacked but, the further down he moves in the pile, the more items that go into the recycle bin. Nothing ends up in drawers. It strikes me that his piles of paperwork are just like the organization of an archeological dig site—i.e., stratigraphic layers can be used to age and order the material.

Studies of Elements in Information Work Environments

Workplaces are highly designed structures that oftentimes are deliberately set up by builders, designers, planners, and management to reflect or instill a particular corporate culture; symbolism and metaphor are overtly and covertly imbedded in built forms. However, the careful planning of work space extends far beyond building structure—e.g., there are years of ergonomic research on singular topics such as lighting. Most studies, whether they focus on a single element or an entire environment, are oriented toward maximizing worker output and minimizing cost and how this plays out in the interaction between personnel and the work setting. There are schools of workplace design that are opposed to this top-down corporation-oriented approach, but in the United States, England, and France, workplace design continues to be oriented toward the bottom line and management's needs.

"Productivity" is thus a key motivating force in much research on work environment from architecture, managerial studies, environmental psychology, and other related areas. These studies aim toward finding the optimal combination of high worker satisfaction, low levels of stress, and high levels of contentment—all of which result in all-important gains in productivity.

Research on the work environment from this literature takes a social-psychological perspective on work space and people's relationship to their environment (Fischer, 1997; Lawrence & Lowe, 1990). The focus is on
the individual worker and his or her reactions and perceptions to a small number of environmental variables. Some central issues in this research include studies of territoriality, such as the need for personal space and privacy. These studies relate much of human behavior in space to the basic needs for control over a place of which one feels ownership. Environmental cognition is another frequently encountered topic of study. This refers to how people find their way through and remember space. A large component of environmental cognition is how people perceive their environment and the symbolic nature of the artifacts and buildings encountered. Spaces are most commonly differentiated on the basis of function—i.e., what activity occurs within that space (Fischer, 1997).

Although work spaces are generally designed to maximize workers' psychological comfort and memory (after all, when these are thwarted, productivity will fall), there is a great deal of variation in the form that the work environment takes. This is true for several reasons. On a macro scale, there have been different schools of thought in office building design. Each of these trends has been intermingled as work spaces have changed over time, and each floor plan is implemented according to a company's policy and funds.

Corporate policies and funds also affect the more micro forms and varieties of materials found in the work setting. Many firms have rules about how visible each person's decoration of her or his space may be, what types of plants are allowed, or how computer resources can be used. However, individuals in the workplace are a dynamic force. At the same time that their work practices and behaviors are being shaped by their environment, they shape and change the spaces around them. Instructions about how not to jam the copier get taped up, family photos are often displayed in individual work areas, and the organization of computer and paper files varies according to personal preferences.

There are several aspects of folkways in this mix. First, there are conventions of design that are a part of the folk practices of architects, interior designers, building planners, and others. Second, there are aspects of folklore at play in both the general corporate culture and the specific organization. Finally, individuals enact and maintain folk practices of the groups to which they belong as they set out their vacation memorabilia or build several versions of "to do" piles. The folklore of work space should be given attention by anyone looking at aspects of the workplace environment, whether they are interested in such things as building information systems or studying information flows and uses.

TRENDS IN WORKPLACE DESIGN: CLOSED OFFICES TO OPEN OFFICES TO NO OFFICES

The two most common models for office floor plans in use today are the corridor office and the open-plan office (Duffy, 1992). The corridor
office has a hallway running down the length of the building, with doors that open to offices on either side. These offices usually have windows to the outside, permanent floor to ceiling walls, and traditional furniture such as a free standing desk and chair. The result is often long skinny buildings with several wings. This type of building configuration allows for privacy and more personal control over space (each office has its own light switches, window, heating adjustments). At the same time, it encourages a small range of interaction between office dwellers.

The open-plan office, on the other hand, has few enclosed offices for managers, and the rest of the floor is completely open with desks arranged in tight rows. These buildings are usually large squares. No space is "wasted" on corridors, workers are easily supervised, the layout of desks can be easily changed, and communication is very open. There are some hybrids of these two models—e.g., buildings with closed offices around the perimeter of the building and open office space in the middle.

The most widespread philosophy in office design today was invented in Germany in the mid 1950s. It is called "bürolandschaft" or "office landscape" (Duffy, 1992). The idea was to combine the advantages of both types of office plans by using large open spaces, but creating groupings of furniture and desks for people who need to communicate, along with some enclosures created using large plants and movable partitions. Desks are not arranged in rows but in groups in a flowing pattern. Ideally, the open spaces provide necessary privacy and quiet. This design has been widely adopted but, as businesses expand, desks are usually forced closer and closer together; mobile partitions are used more frequently than open space. The now common arrangement of closed offices around the building perimeter and cubicles in the center is a descendent of this concept (Duffy, 1992).

Recently, there has been a new wave of discussion about the design of office space that calls for flexibility and the need for team work space. It is based on the idea that the nature of work and organizations has shifted from being functionally differentiated and fixed to focusing on teams of people with different specialties that dissolve and reconfigure as needed. Researchers argue that this openness to change creates the "high performance workplace." They advocate creating all offices of the same size out of modular panels. In this way, when work groups are reconfigured or when people move, there is simply the matter of moving people from one generic space to another. They note that this requires the average office to move up in size so that it serves more functions, but also that there should be no (or few) large offices for senior management. In addition, services such as electricity, network cables, and air ducts can be run through central "spines" in the middle of the floors, and offices can be located on either side of the spine. In this way, everyone has access to needed facilities.
The modular panels are useful in that open spaces can be created easily or partitions taken down when open communication is called for.

There is a shift in attitude toward the amount of interpersonal interaction, which is now viewed as a necessary asset. Creating proximity for interaction is now a major part of new designs (Becker & Steele, 1995; Duffy, 1992; Duffy, Laing, & Crisp, 1993). The need for general purpose gathering areas for informal interaction is emphasized. "Functional inconvenience" of making people walk to a common work space such as a photocopier room has become an element of design because increased interpersonal interaction is supposed to be good for business (Becker & Steele, 1995; Laing, 1993).

The work setting that Jill, Tim, and Mike inhabit clearly fits into the open office landscape that got too full; offices with real walls and doors and windows encircle the large open room in the center of each floor. The open room is filled with multi-dweller cubicles, a concession to the high number of people crushed into this space. The cubicles allow limited privacy but do encourage fellow cubicle dwellers to get to know each other and their neighbors. The missing ceilings allow for a special variety of interaction—i.e., calling out questions or comments into space and often getting the answer needed. Although many cubicle dwellers wish for real offices, this kind of information richness would no longer be "in the air if they had them."

On the same floor as Jill, Tim, and Mike are three conference rooms, a kitchen, and lounge chairs near the elevator, perhaps constructed as concessions to the newer philosophy of workplace design. The conference rooms are seldom used casually, and the kitchen can only hold a person or perhaps two at a time. The more interactive group location is the tiny room that contains a photocopier and a large printer.

A few researchers follow a more social-action oriented approach. They emphasize that these newer, more flexible offices are required by market demand for more creative teamwork and by shifting cooperation between specialists from previously segregated departments—e.g., accounting, design, engineering, customer relations. They also discuss the need for employee participation in design decisions (Hodgkinson, 1993; Laing, 1993). Research links the participatory approach to more traditional concerns with productivity—participation in design is closely related to employee satisfaction and a higher sense of community which in turn relates to increased productivity and quality of work (Spreckelmeyer, 1993). However, participatory design of buildings and post-occupancy evaluation are still the exception rather than the rule for building construction (Brand, 1994; Duffy, 1992; Duffy et al., 1993; Leaman & Borden, 1993). In Jill, Tim, and Mike's building, there is a long waiting list for space, so it is unlikely that general use areas will open up or that any major changes will be made.
Buildings that are based on some of these principles of flexibility in spatial configurations are already in existence. Hall and Hall (1975) conducted a five-year study of the John Deere headquarters in Moline, Illinois, beginning when construction was almost complete and then five years into occupancy. They wanted to see how the building affected the people who worked there and what they thought of their work space. This building was based on the landscape office model but also tried to draw on the advantages of having uniformly sized work spaces so that employees could be moved around easily. At the time this study was conducted, people were grouped in departments by specialty or function, but there was also space for multi-specialty teams to be co-located. Reactions to the new building were generally very positive, and the corporation took advantage of such things as movable walls to alter the work space. The two greatest complaints of employees were, first, that in the open areas they felt “on display” and “exposed” and, second, that the company had a “clear desk” policy so they could not leave any personal or work items out overnight.

While there have been some trials of these newer theories of office design, as Hall and Hall (1975) found, along with others studying more recent buildings (Becker & Steele, 1995), there are still issues to be resolved. However, while these problems remain unsolved, corporations are moving on to yet another largely untested strategy for managing their space—i.e., removing workers from any place to call their own.

This up-and-coming trend in office design involves eliminating the office from “office work” (Becker & Steele, 1995; Bleeker, 1991, 1994; Duffy et al., 1993; Gray, Hodson, & Gordon, 1993; Gunn & Burroughs, 1996; Lipnack & Stamps, 1997; Vischer, 1996). The reasons behind removing the tie between work and a particular locality range from the high cost of real estate and building maintenance, to the advantage of increased interaction with customers, to the greater environmental benefits of fewer workers commuting, and so on. There are multiple ways in which this idea is being implemented. In some cases, workers no longer have a space to call their own. This is often called “hotelling.” Workers spend a portion of their time traveling, and overall office space is reduced by removing a significant number of office spaces and creating ones where none (but the boss’s, of course) are private. If a worker will be at the office, he or she should either call ahead to reserve a space, or spaces will be granted on a first come, first served, basis. The “satellite office” is also a part of this trend—smaller branch offices are placed in convenient locations so that employees do not have to travel as far from the customer to get to work every day. Visits to the main office are more rare. “Telecommuting” (also known as “telework” or “virtual work space”) is, of course, at the root of both of these ideas; the theory is that, through new computer technologies, workers can perform their tasks anywhere they can plug in their laptop and modem cord. Everywhere is a “workplace”—airports, dining room...
tables, customer sites, etc. Jill, Tim, and Mike all frequently work from home or other locations. This de-localizing of work will be discussed in detail later.

Although the rhetoric behind these new workplace strategies includes discussion of their advantages for individual workers, it is too soon to assess the effects of de-localizing work. Do folk practices change in nature? How? Only a few corporations have implemented these programs, often on a small scale or trial basis, because of concern over the loss of individuals' presence and interaction with their peers. A review of the literature on individual work environment gives clues to how the de-localizing of work might play out.

**INDIVIDUAL RESOURCES**

Corporations generally provide employees with "basics," such as a desk, a chair, computer equipment, and a phone. Beyond this, there is enormous variety in the quality of these items, what else the company provides for workers, and what workers are allowed to do to their work space.

The amount of flexibility or fluidity built into the space accommodated by the environment is crucial. This allows for the workplace to change over time, according to the demands of the marketplace, new theories of
management, group practices, and personal taste. There is a continuum of what can be made changeable, and by whom, in the workplace. At the large and formal end of the scale, buildings can be designed so that, for example, the interior physical infrastructure is mobile. At the small and informal end of the scale, individual employees can make changes to their own work environment such as adjusting the chair height. This flexibility (and there is always some) is what allows folkways to emerge in the workplace setting in different ways. Over time, a space can be modified drastically to reflect the work practices, culture, and personality of the people that spend time there (Brand, 1994).

In terms of the work environment, all of the research points to the importance of people being able to make changes to their work space and of allowing personal storage space and some privacy. In the sample workplace described here, resources such as post-its, white boards, and file organizers are important in managing work flow. Spatial arrangements of such things as desktop piles are key in personal work systems. Obviously, Jill, Tim, or Mike could not use each others’ systems of storage.

Additionally, artifacts may be used in ways that they are not designed or intended for. Just as people plant flowers in old tires on the lawn or make art out of found objects like tin cans and plastic (Toelken, 1996), Tim uses a drawer meant for hanging file folders to store piles of papers. His hot pot serves as a bookend. Monitor frames act as message centers. In Figure 5 an envelope is used as a storage pocket on a bulletin board.

Allowing individuals to control some elements of their work environment has often been found to be important to employee morale, productivity, satisfaction, and stress levels. Not surprisingly, researchers have found that it is important that people first have a permanent space that they feel they “own,” and second, that they be allowed to control who enters their work area and when (Wollman, Kelly, & Bordens, 1994). Other studies discuss the importance of people being able to store personal items in their work space as well as being able to adjust furniture and equipment (Hall & Hall, 1975; O’Neill, 1994). It is well documented that workers do not like to be out in the open (Block & Stokes, 1989; Oldham, 1988), but there are several theories about this. Most of these have to do with openness and crowding creating too many distractions, too much noise, and a feeling of being on display (Hall & Hall, 1975). O’Neill (1994) found that, although people generally like higher partitions that provide more privacy, they are less disturbed by noise if they can see the source (like a nearby photocopier). Of course, there is a strong relationship between a higher general noise level in the work environment and lower feelings of satisfaction about the job (Sundstrom, Town, Rice, Osborn, & Brill, 1994). The sense of ownership and control over the work environment has been traced to the territorial instinct, but how people establish this control and ownership and how it is played out in specific settings is a matter of folk practice.
If people are allowed to modify or adjust their personal work space (assuming that they have one), what are they doing with it? Scheiberg (1990) describes two very different units at a university. One, “book cataloging,” is hidden away from the public in the basement of the main library. In this space, workers have covered nearly every surface and even have hung things from the ceiling—e.g., posters, pictures, slogans, comics, and other items. In the second work setting, a part of the financial management, there is much interaction with the public. Workers there are not allowed to decorate with anything that could be seen above cubicle partitions. Decoration in this area is much more subdued, limited mainly to pictures standing on desks or counter spaces. Scheiberg (1990) argues that personal decorations provide an outlet for emotions that must otherwise be suppressed. The work of book cataloging requires concentration and quiet, but the financial office allows more talking. Visibility to the public also plays a large role—for instance, the people in the cataloging department recognize that most people do not even know they exist, while people in the financial office are very careful about the image they present to outsiders.

Other researchers have found similar decor protocols when they examined whether or not people substituted pictures for a lack of windows (Biner, Butler, Lovegrove, & Burns, 1993; Hall & Hall, 1975). What they
found was that people decorate their spaces with items that they enjoy looking at because they want to make their work space look more personal, and they put up items they want their co-workers to see. In situations where the organization’s rules limit personal items, researchers have found that people want to put out similar items but are not allowed to (Hall & Hall, 1975; Scheiberg, 1990). When folklorist Alan Dundes and others collected photocopy lore, they also found cartoons, jokes, and drawings that people kept in their personal spaces either publicly visible or hidden away (Dundes, 1983; Dundes & Pagter, 1987; Dundes & Pagter, 1996). It appears that, while rules limit what is visible, personal modifications still find their way into the work setting.

These findings also appear to be true in Jill, Tim, and Mike’s cubicle. They are allowed to set out or hang up personal items, and their work setting is filled with such things—posters, children’s pictures, calendars, etc. A “clean desk” policy is obviously not enforced by the management. If a clean desk policy was implemented, Mike and Tim would need to make some changes to their work habits. How would these play out? Personalization of work space is important for the actual activities that people perform. Both Mike and Tim seem to use their desktops to contribute to information organization and retrieval of their personal stores of resources. Literature from library and information science emphasizes the importance of having and accessing personal collections.

Personal collections of information are the most drawn upon and used of all information resources (Barreau, 1995; Kwasnik, 1991; Nardi & Barreau, 1995; Nardi & Barreau, 1997; Schneider & Rice, n.d.; Soper, 1976), so it is important that people be able to create and store a personalized collection of materials such as photocopies of documents, books, journals, notes, manuals, departmental or organizational policy handbooks, phone/address books, etc., in addition to the “decorative” type items mentioned earlier. Access to a personal collection is yet another issue as workers are packed into smaller spaces, and spaces that they must share with others. Sufficient and convenient storage space that is always available, accessible, and undisturbed by others is an important issue (O’Neill, 1994). Having a space that will not be disturbed is not simply a matter of satisfying some territorial instinct. Researchers have found that people organize their desks and set out items to help themselves find important items and also to remind them of things that they need to do (Malone, 1983; Nardi & Barreau, 1995; Nardi & Barreau, 1997). The two main units of organization are files or piles, each of which can be either purposefully arranged and labeled or not (Malone, 1983). As Malone (1983) found, the largest challenge in organizing information is the difficulty of filing, classifying, or grouping it in terms of content, context, and media. Most office or information work now takes place in a variety of media and across many levels of formality. People must shift between paper and com-
puter screens, written reports, and electronic memos. In addition, there are shifting timelines of work and deadlines that must be met or ignored.

The difficulty of classifying all these diverse items is an important mediating factor as to where they are physically located in the work space—e.g., the most pressing work is put front and center on the desk, with piles moving outward in descending order of importance (Malone, 1983; Soper, 1976). People routinely use location as a reminder in the same way one might put the dry-cleaning receipt next to one's lunch in order to remember to pick it up. This is just one means of distributing knowledge in the work environment—the dry cleaning is "remembered" by the lunch (Hutchins, 1995). Computer files are organized along exactly the same lines (Nardi & Barreau, 1995, 1997). Research has shown that co-locating files that are related, such as grouping items according to a project, is the most common way to organize computer files. Recall then operates in terms of remembering what was being done at the time that the file was used or seen. Several researchers who study the use of personal collections of physical items note the importance of context both in terms of finding and using items. Kwasnik (1991) found that the context of an item is the single most important factor (that is not a document attribute). Context is important for accessing items; recalling the circumstances of their creation and use; and showing ownership, source, and purpose as well as how the items are related to the individual. Barreau (1995) followed up Kwasnik's research in the electronic environment and found the same issues to be important. Context is an important factor in interpreting and re-using documents, which is especially pertinent given the fact that computers can be used to help re-combine and alter bits of documents more easily than paper documents (Paepcke, 1996). However, not all of the affordances of computers are useful.

While the ability to make "shortcuts" or "aliases" for files helps with putting one item in multiple categories, other computer capabilities are used less than one might guess. Certainly, the strategy that Mike uses—creating a sea of resources that constantly shift according to the last time they were accessed, their importance, and their associated content—could not be electronically replicated. On computers, the "find file" function is hardly ever used; visually scanning folders and lists of files is the preferred method for finding things (Barreau, 1995; Nardi & Barreau, 1995). In addition, some tasks are simply more easily done in the physical world, such as using post-its and taking advantage of visibility and co-location as reminders. On a computer desktop, the space is limited in such a way that items are easily covered up by other windows, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to have multiple items visible at the same time. Putting "odd" items together (such as URLs and file names) is virtually impossible without creating new documents (think of attaching comments received via e-mail about a paper written in MS Word and a relevant Web site). A mix of
paper and electronic resources seems to be the most common way to deal with a wide variety of information, such as sticking post-it notes onto computers (Schneider & Rice, n. d.). Tim uses this tactic, as do others in the pictures of work spaces included (see Figures 1, 2, & 3). Finally, a great deal of information work involves dealing with “ephemeral” items—e.g., things that require action immediately and then are thrown away or a business card with an e-mail address that will be needed at some point in the future. While dealing with this ephemeral information seems to be problematic in both the electronic and physical realms, physically most people use designated spots—often piles on the desk or lists of things (Barreau, 1995; Nardi & Barreau, 1995, 1997). Again, Tim’s post-it notes, Jill’s handwritten notes, or the white board seen in Figure 3 are examples of these practices in action.

Another dimension of the multi-functionality of items in the work setting involves the use of artifacts and space as symbols. Corporations use artifacts in a highly complex system to signal rank in the hierarchy, corporate image, and managerial presence.

**Hierarchy and Control: Space and Materials as Symbols**

Many elements of our environment serve as symbols (Fischer, 1997; Lawrence & Lowe, 1990). Lawrence and Lowe break symbolic analyses into two types: those that take a psycho-symbolic approach and those that

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Figure 3. White Boards and Tack Boards are Common Means of Putting up Ephemeral Reminders, as is the Post-it on the CPU Case, or Notes on the White Board.
focus on social symbolic and metaphoric accounts. Obviously, corporations and office spaces are ripe areas for these types of explorations; both of these dimensions of symbolism are present in Tim, Jill, and Mike’s office. The fact that they are three people in a cubicle tells them and their colleagues that they do not rank single occupancy or one of the “real” offices around the perimeter of the building. They share important equipment such as the printer and photocopier with many other people, but each of them has at least one high power computer with a large monitor. They must have some status to warrant such expensive machines. Status symbols are also presented by employees (Roemer, 1994)—Mike hangs pictures by his children and Jill displays a geometric graphic of a difficult problem that she solved. None of them need to worry about censure for having clutter or even nonwork related items—such as a chess game lying around. These people exist in an academic research setting. Other studies show that work spaces in the private business world are more rigid in the symbolic nature of artifacts.

**Corporate Culture**

Although it is easy to see that people should be given resources as needed to do their work, and that environment is a part of social practice, corporate culture often operates on a different plane. Office space and furnishings are commonly used as a part of the hierarchy, symbolically noting an individual’s importance in the structure (Becker & Steele, 1995; Duffy, 1992; Fischer, 1997). Warren (1997) argues that “your workspace is the biggest clue to your rung on the corporate ladder.” There are all sorts of environmental indicators of status: not only whether or not plants are provided but also what size and variety; whether or not “art” is provided, what kind, how many mats, and how fancy the frame; whether the chair has armrests, an adjustable seat, how much padding; and many other items. There were no plants, no “art,” and only plastic trash cans in Jill, Tim, and Mike’s cubicle, although their chairs were padded and had adjustable arms and seats. Many corporations and the federal government have entire books that spell out the size and quality of the items in each office (for up to sixteen categories of employees for the federal government). Not surprisingly, researchers have found that environmental satisfaction and job satisfaction both have a strong positive correlation with rank (Sundstrom et al., 1994). This linking of desirable physical amenities to rank is what new office design theories are arguing against.

Personal control of workspace, flexibility, and personalization are often regulated by management, even at the level of the individual’s work space (Becker & Steele, 1995; Duffy et al., 1993; Fischer, 1997). The question becomes not whether something is possible but whether it is allowed. Hall and Hall (1975) noted complaints about this at the Deere headquarters. Others have also described regulations that did not allow any
Figure 4. The Symbolic Message of Exposed Plumbing and Few Resources in an Underground Office is Very Different Than.

Figure 5. The "Messages" of State-of-the-Art Computer Equipment, Shelving, and Desk Space.
personalization to be visible to the public. However, employees in some offices did not mind minimizing personal effects that they felt would damage the public image of the office (Scheiberg, 1990).

Issues of control are not only important aspects of material culture, but they tie into verbal and ritual lore as well. Many stories in work settings focus on attempts by institutions to try to exert control over members and on hero stories and trickster tales about how people have overcome or dealt with these pressures. Perhaps just telling the story to others is a coping mechanism. For example, one anonymous contributor to the Web site dedicated to boss horror stories (http://www.myboss.com) describes an encounter with her or his boss: “My Boss encouraged me to do something that was clearly illegal. When I resisted, he said, ‘Don’t be a sissy. There’s no need to worry unless there’s an investigation’” (anonymous, 1998). Similarly, people share rituals about how to “really” get work done in ways that are not part of the official process of doing things.

Managerial control often reaches beyond formal rules that employees are asked to follow into the spaces they occupy. Cubicles are a “perfect example of a structure designed to assure the invariable control of its occupier” (Gordon, 1998, p. 18). Gordon cites Michel Foucault’s theories discussing the structuring of buildings and space to discipline or control the people within them. He examined the development of the modern-day prison, which is designed so that there are points of control where all prisoners can be viewed, but prisoners in turn do not have an all-encompassing view. Cubicles fit into Foucault’s panopticon in that they are mostly open, any conversation can be overheard, and many walls are low so they can be looked over. As Gordon (1998) points out:

> What is most intriguing and insidious about the cubicle is that there is no identifiable site of control; no boss stands at the door to secure compliance, no executive continually inspects one’s work. No monitor is needed. The mere possibility that a person from a higher echelon or even a co-worker will overhear a discussion or notice an employee resting, is sufficient to ensure that the corporation’s standards, customs, restrictions and prohibitions are observed. (p. 19, italics in the original)

Management often prefers this means of control despite studies that show autonomy, flexibility, and privacy to be linked to higher performance and satisfaction (Becker & Steele, 1995; Duffy, 1992). There are examples of management installing technology to monitor employees movements and work, which is actually at the expense of efficiency (Sachs, 1995).

The partitioning of space can be seen as making ideological distinctions in domains of control, centers of activity, and ownership and belonging. One study indicates the connections between gender and space in a discussion of women’s employment patterns in Worcester, Massachusetts (Hanson & Pratt, 1995). What is particularly relevant about this work is
that the authors bring post-modern, critical theory, feminist, post-structuralist discussions of locality, exile, ownership of space, geography, and nationality back down to a concrete study of how space and distance affect women's employment opportunities. They consider how spheres of action are embedded in space with the women's sphere being in the home. The abstract "embodied" or "situated" knowledge becomes very concrete in mapping the radius where women traditionally find jobs. This research stands as a reminder that any representation of space necessarily implies a vantage point, and that concerns about mapping, territories, mobility, and containment must be brought to any research of the folk practices in a particular environment (Wood, 1992). Spaces can devalue the experiences of some members of society.

Simply walking onto the floor that Jill, Tim, and Mike work on is enough to testify to the way even six foot high cubicles contribute to surveillance and control. All sounds, even the clack of keyboards, permeate the walls. I witnessed a discussion over cubicle walls about who had what illness based on who had been heard sneezing or coughing across the entire floor of some thirty people. This kind of interaction can be useful—e.g., Mike took advantage of the fact that everyone could hear him ask his question at the same time and could immediately answer him about the whereabouts of the blue-covered thesis he wanted. In addition, there is some anonymity in the fact that everyone and his or her actions are always audible. While office gossip is probably a dangerous indulgence in this setting, it is difficult to tell precisely which exact person is making what sounds. For example, with the door closed, the sounds of typing could indicate that any or all members of the cubicle are hard at work. Hero and trickster tales circulate about the range of activities that employees are able to get away with in this setting, from playing computer games all day to sleeping.

Recent recommendations in architecture and business management literature emphasize backing off from constant control and rigid symbolism of space and artifacts. There are frequent calls for multiple spaces for work of different sorts to take place (Bleeker, 1991, 1994; Duffy, 1992; Fischer, 1997; Gunn & Burroughs, 1996). For example, Becker and Steele (1995) suggest providing lounges for informal conversations, rooms with large tables for group work, and quiet spaces for reading, as well as cubicles for computer work. They describe a building in Sweden in which all levels of employees participated in the design and building process. It has many different sorts of spaces for people to work, and employees are free to move about from lounge chairs for reading or making calls, to an open cafeteria with computer terminals. The appearance of business in the United States will need to be renegotiated in order for spaces such as lounge chairs to be occupied without fear of reprisal (Becker & Steele, 1995; Henson, 1996). Researchers argue, continuing a debate of decades,
that it is in a business's best interests to encourage and support employees' personalizing their space, and to find ways to make potentially alienating general areas more friendly.

As others have testified, the appearance of "busy-ness" (sitting at a desk and writing, typing, reading, or shuffling papers) is sometimes more important than getting anything done at all (Henson, 1996). Duffy, Laing, and Crisp (1993) note that, although Scandinavia has a long tradition of participatory design (so the exemplary building in Sweden is not surprising), this kind of design is not feasible for other parts of the world and for large-scale businesses. However, the marketplace is pushing for more flexible space that will accommodate rapidly reconfigured teams, more mobile workers, and fewer resources spent on buildings. The result is the same: a space where many of the hierarchical trappings of office space are removed to be replaced by uniformly sized offices with mobile walls and multi-use informal spaces (Becker & Steele, 1995; Bleeker, 1991, 1994; Duffy et al., 1993). This philosophy of work and thus workplace design is beginning to catch on, while at the same time there is a call to be rid of the workplace as the main setting of work altogether.

CONCLUSION

New ideas about de-localizing work have taken on a trendy aura. The theory is that you can work anywhere, at your, or your customer's, convenience. The underlying assumption is that the place where you are working is unimportant; a table in your kitchen or a seat on an airplane is as good as an office, and all the necessary resources move easily with the individual worker.

This trend of removing people from an environment usually associated with working and into a sort of "anyspace" that individual workers create is disturbing given all the research and literature about the numerous ways that environment does matter. Environments are more than just backdrops; these are embodiments of culture, social practices, and knowledge. The implications of removing people from particular locales of work have not been deeply explored, nor is there much known about how this might change the way work is done and how folk practices change as well—e.g., those associated with workplace community and with information storing, finding, and reminding.

Studies reviewed here show that many elements important to accomplishing work, including changes in managerial structure (Griffith, 1995), will be altered or missing when work is removed from the office. Telecommuting is heralded as the answer for mothers who need or want to stay home with children but who also want to work. But what happens to the important issue of control over work space? How many homes are equipped with a room devoted exclusively to office space? When a different space is co-opted, work cannot be left out, nor can the "office landscape"
that Schneider and Rice (1996) and Kwasnik (1991) described be established. Knowledge that is a part of the piles and files that Soper (1976) and Barreau (1995) discuss cannot be built up. Parts of people's lives, home, and work which have been kept separate for this particular type of work for the last fifty years come together, sometimes with jarring results (Hanson & Pratt, 1995). Multiple work and home identities are intermingled; time and work spent on otherwise separate tasks overlap with the result of overwhelming and literally dislocating people. But some workers, such as traveling salespeople, have always had to juggle work and home identities, and perhaps the telecommuting option could be extended to those whose work makes it appropriate (Griffith, 1995). Allowing people who do isolated work to join their peers via the Internet can be a positive change.

The work group that Jill, Tim, and Mike belong to has an extensive Web site and tools for online collaboration, such as a Web board for discussion of work, and a specific protocol for posting draft papers which other group members can then read and comment on electronically. Each of them noted that e-mail was probably the most common means of communication among their fellow workers, even though they all occupy the same cubicle warren. They noted that this was because many people worked at home at least part of the time, and that group members worked at radically different times of the day. The Web and e-mail are also used for collaboration with another group on the other side of the country, although, for privacy issues, there is a parallel site for "outsiders" to use. "Teleworking" is a large part of their work practices, yet they are obviously not even close to being completely a "virtual organization."

Being part of an electronic community has been more extensively studied and discussed. The metaphor for an online environment is, of course, "cyberspace." Electronic communities have become commonplace as more and more people participate and interact on the net. Some elements of physical space and face-to-face interaction are reproduced with interesting transformations, while other new environmental factors are created (Rheingold, 1993).

For example, one study (Correll, 1995) described a chatroom called the "lesbian cafe." It was designed as a place for lesbians to chat and meet, especially for people who would not otherwise get to meet because of physical distance, a common element to communities on the Net. However, in this particular group, members began to incorporate in their "chatting" (literally typing) physical elements such as a bar, drinks, a fireplace, and chairs. When someone familiar with the group would log on, she would begin the session by typing something like "I am sitting at the bar and have ordered a martini." In the same vein, Bayni (1995a, 1995b) described a newsgroup devoted to the discussion of daytime soap operas. She described how, through their interaction, these aficionados have de-
veloped a strong sense of community and membership. There is a definite distinction between insiders and outsiders in this group and a structure to the community. Both of these "electronic communities" are examples of people who came together over the Net when physical space actually separated them. This interaction is supported in electronic space but not physical space, and these are just two of many examples of similar interactions. System designers have been increasingly interested in addressing social aspects of interaction that are taken for granted in the real world but prove to be a stumbling block in the electronic realm, and the roles of physical conventions are debated (Ackerman, 1994, 1995; Erickson, 1997; Fertig, Freeman, & Gelernter, 1996; Twidale & Nichols, 1996). Supporters of this new communication technology say the beauty of the Internet is that space no longer creates a barrier.

On the other hand, one interesting element of the lesbian cafe example is how physical objects are invoked in order to help create a social order. People naturally "gather" around the "fireplace." The sensibilities of the physical world play a large part in mediating how people interact in many of these online spaces. MOOs and MUDs are also spatially organized, they are room-based, which has consequently extended to buildings and cities and even to a complete copy of the Starship Enterprise. "Navigation" is the metaphor for "moving" through cyberspace, although along with the sea-faring language, there is a mixed bag of other images linked to space and movement—"superhighway," "surfing," "paths," and "sites."

In all of this talk and use of the Internet, there is also a literature that discusses how communication "bandwidth" is diminished. The "reduced cues" school of computer mediated communication has studied how communication via computer removes the tacit and intangible interactions in face-to-face communications. Some of these elements are re-encoded in other parts of the media (for example, looking at someone's e-mail address to note where they are from). There are many studies of the use of new electronic systems, or the needs of particular user communities of information resources and what happens when some of these resources or systems are implemented electronically (see Bishop & Star, 1996, for an overview). However, there is not much research or discussion on how spatial elements are lost in the computer environment. As Nardi and Barreau (1997) point out, the computer is limited in how well it deals with particular mixes of documents that are not a problem in real life. Yet, "reduced cues" in the spatial sense have not been picked up as a topic of research. People just don't know what the implications are of trying to create a sense of place online, especially in the sense of actually replacing physical spaces with virtual spaces.

If space is seen as embedding ideological distinctions about control, ownership, and belonging, the movement of work out of particular
locations should also be analyzed in these terms. Having a space to call one's own becomes a matter of survival, affirmation, and bonding for people who are often overlooked or pushed aside by society. It is not clear whether old hierarchical patterns will continue as work moves into an online environment, whether the experience of new groups will be ignored, or which groups will benefit from the use of technology. This is an important question that is exacerbated by the absence of physical space because the lack of representation may be even more indiscernible.

*Toward a Folklore of Information Work Space*

A folkloristic study of space includes such elements as studying how people delineate space, how they create boundaries, how the space that they occupy affects interaction as well as how interaction and individuals modify space. It includes how people organize their things, how people spatially orient themselves in terms of accessing things and accomplishing tasks, how people manage their environmental resources, and how people personalize their spaces. It is important to understand how folk groups organize themselves and their things in the environment because it reveals their values and the logic of their system of beliefs. Analysis of artifacts may reveal certain aspects of the culture of a folk group that would not be available to a researcher in any other way. Finally, with an eye toward the future, researchers should examine what, if any, of these practices carry over in an online environment, what new spatial practices and speech conventions are emerging, and how these will affect the folk groups and communities involved.

**Notes**

1 All such anecdotes are drawn from fieldwork I did in 1996 while studying the work practices and the use of information resources of physicists. That work was supported by the NSF/ARPA/NASA Digital Library Initiative under contract number NSF 93-141 DLI.

**References**


Technolore

“Structure versus Context: Understanding the Design and Use of Computer Tools in Social Settings,” Kevin Powell

“The Mythology of Information Overload,” Tonyia J. Tidline
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Structure versus Context: Understanding the Design and Use of Computer Tools in Social Settings

Kevin Powell

ABSTRACT
This article explores elements of folkloristics that are applicable to the understanding and construction of computer software systems and programs. This is done by first discussing a similar tension between structuralism and contextualism in the study of folkways and, second, by examining software pattern languages (Gamma, Helm, Johnson, & Vlissides, 1995) in comparison with Vladimir Propp’s (1968) narrative functions.

INTRODUCTION
A hammer is a good tool, well honed and continually adapted for millennia. In some ways it represents the ultimate in a tool but, in a very real sense, it demonstrates a tradeoff in how tools are used and adapted in context versus the broader use of a hammer as a general tool. The importance of the hammer is that it is broadly used outside its intended design and, even when it is being used inside its designed or designated realm, it still may not fit the tasks for which it is being used very well.

An example of this might be when it is needed in a tight corner at the intersection of two walls. It is possible to build a special hammer that would operate optimally in such a tight situation, but the economics of the situation do not justify this new tool (i.e., the tool is not general enough to sell large numbers, and the cost of the tool is not low enough to make its purchase viably incidental). Almost any artifact produced for broad consumption faces the dilemma of fit to task versus cost of development and maintenance. One of the ways to ameliorate this problem is to try to
understand the context of use more clearly when designing a tool. Folkloristics, with its investigation of both cross-situational structure and contextual understanding of folkways, suggests ways to consider electronic tools in a community context.

Based on the metaphor of software as a tool, this article focuses on an understanding of how software is used in context and the difficult nature of building such tools contextually in a world of limited resources.

FOLKLORE AND THE DESIGN OF COMPUTER ARTIFACTS

The hammer is a tool familiar to many folk groups and is a part of different folkways. Not surprisingly, computer software is equally embedded in current folkways. Furthermore, many systems have failed because they do not take into account the folkways in which they are to be embedded (Star & Ruhleder, 1996; Gasser, 1986). This lack of attention to the context of use becomes a major hindrance to the acceptance of these systems. In a sense, the designs of many systems are coming from a structuralist viewpoint—i.e., they are designed for broad categories of use and gloss over, or ignore, the context of the particular setting.

STRUCTURALISM/CONTEXTUALISM AND SOFTWARE DESIGN

A folklorist who limits his analysis to identification [of motifs/patterns] has stopped before asking any really important questions about his material. (Dundes, 1990, p. 52)

Alan Dundes starts his discussion of the study of folklore in literature and culture by trying to resolve the dichotomy of interpretation and identification. He does so by treating interpretation and identification as vitally complementary tools. When used together they give both the anthropological and textual folklorist a much more rigorous understanding of the materials they study. The anthropological folklorist can run the risk of misidentification of a folktale or element because of an unfamiliarity with the vast identified body of cross culturally analyzed materials which she may see as being unique to a context of activity or expression. Conversely, the textual folklorist errs when she identifies materials as being just another variant, losing all the vitality and particular meaning of the material in its original context of use. This argument applies equally to the design realm of software tools. Designers have fixated on the more readily quantifiable aspects of systems, largely ignoring the context of their use and the potential power of a tool properly fit into a set of tasks and folkways.

THE STRUCTURALISTS SPEAK

[W]hat gives the myth an operative value is that the specific pattern described is everlasting; it explains the present and the past as well as the future. (Lévi-Strauss, 1972, p. 173)
Whatever our ignorance of the language and culture of the people where it originated, a myth is still felt as a myth by any reader throughout the world. (Lévi-Strauss, 1972, p. 174)

The above quotes are meant to speak for an intellectual traditional structuralism that seeks to understand narrative forms in terms of an overarching set of structures. Lévi-Strauss and others take this analysis to its logical extreme, arguing that—like language as studied by linguists—narratives can be decomposed into elements that can be analyzed across vast gulfs of culture and geography. The power of abstracting away so many details to expose a core narrative is the production of an elemental currency that can be exchanged across many different arenas of discourse. This sort of analysis provides us with a framework that is more amenable to the designer of software due to its highly structural abstractions than are qualitative/situated methods of analysis. However, a purely structural approach is fundamentally unable to provide us with a full appreciation of narrative and setting. It fails in elucidating the narrative's full role and uses, especially the pragmatics of its day-to-day existence as a living cultural tool.

THE CONTEXTUALISTS SPEAK

We must recognize that the symbolic forms we call folklore have their primary existence in the action of people and their roots in social and cultural life. The texts we are accustomed to viewing as the raw materials of oral literature are merely the thin and partial record of deeply situated human behavior. My concern has been to go beyond a conception of oral literature as disembodied superorganic stuff and to view it contextually and ethnographically, in order to discover the individual, social, and cultural factors that give it shape and meaning in the conduct of social life. (Bauman, 1986, p. 2)

As Dundes (1990) points out, there has been a long, and sometimes bitter, dialogue between the contextualists and the structuralists. This dialogue is useful in that it also frames a discussion of how to understand the design of software systems across several different analytical perspectives. Bauman's quote emphasizes the situated nature of folklore and, by extension, folkways. Again, this framing has meaning beyond the scope of folklore and into the scope of software systems.¹

These points are especially salient in terms of software explicitly tailored for collaborative use. Software designed explicitly for use as a social tool needs to focus almost entirely on the underlying issues of context and use in order to be successful. Only recently has the mismatch between the design of software tools and their settings become an area of active research. This article suggests that the methodology of folkloristics may be useful in understanding how to design systems with respect to their settings.
SOFTWARE DESIGN PRACTICE

Designing computer software for a particular task, or a set of tasks, involves a long series of complex negotiations among a number of different factors and interests. Traditionally, computer-related disciplines have identified the primary factors to be performance, reliability, and cost. Rarely do we see factors such as usability and fit-to-task figuring into these negotiations. This emphasis on the former factors stems from the need to legitimize the practice of software design as a science; as such, quantifiability and reproducibility are pushed to the fore. In addition, the simultaneously more difficult and ambiguous nature of studying usability and work practice as related to a software system has strongly limited efforts to include analysis of social context in traditional software design.

Designing computer software is, by its nature, a highly structured activity; in turn, this mitigates against designing software that is easily adaptable to differing contexts. Alternatively stated: One of the central challenges faced by software designers is how to balance the highly structured nature of computer artifacts with the need to integrate them into different settings. Several different communities of scholars are working on this set of problems. Of these groups, the Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW) and Participatory Design (PD) communities are most directly addressing the question of building tools for use in particular settings. CSCW focuses on designing and understanding computer tools as used in and by groups. PD is interested in involving the users in the design of the system itself.

Both these communities approach the problem as a matter of correct design. Computer Supported Cooperative Work offers techniques for collaboration and, in certain limited cases, techniques for evaluating the effectiveness of the tools. Participatory Design is less concerned with the design elements and technology; rather, it emphasizes the need for the user's voice in the design of the software (Engeström, 1990). These two approaches often use ethnographic techniques to explore the meaning of a tool in its context of use. However, neither addresses how the design of these tools can be analyzed directly in terms of the structures of the artifacts themselves rather than in the fits/misfits with the users. One role folkloristics can play in the analysis of these artifacts is to examine them in terms of their structure and functions, just as traditional tales are analyzed and classified by their shared use of motifs and functions (Dundes, 1990; Propp, 1968). Folklorists also contribute to an understanding, or perhaps reconciliation with a continuum between structural understandings at one end and contextualized/situated knowledge at the other.

Designing for folk groups or communities is an extremely difficult problem; however, designers often face the challenge of designing for nontraditional communities as well. Electronic communities confound
this already difficult problem by introducing a number of mediating factors that further complicate the process of design. Electronic communities offer a number of challenges for researchers of folkloric processes. Such communities are set in what might be thought of as an abstract, or perhaps intangible, domain; ultimately they exist through the actions and in the imaginations of the participants. The everyday material lore of more conventional folk groups is not to be found in this electronic realm. It is difficult to find a central locus, or set of loci, of activity. The boundaries are defined and maintained only through the weak ties of e-mail, netnews, and other computer mediated communications tools (Pickering & King, 1992).

The traditional idea of community has been based on the notion of a co-located, regional, or area-bounded group (Cohen, 1985; Jones, 1995; Ried, 1995). This notion quickly breaks down when applied directly to electronic communities or other distributed folk groups. For the sake of discussion, this article adopts a fundamental notion of community—that of a collection of individuals who share some common interest. This notion, while highly simplistic, frames and limits the rich, but endless, dialogue on what constitutes a community or folk group. In turn, this leads to a useful reexamination of the notion of co-location, which can be effectively redefined as the notion of individuals together in some “space” bound not by physical location but by shared interests. In essence this is a redefinition of “community space” where the spaces are potentially virtual, textual, or in other forms.

In trying to understand software as a situated set of tools, we are faced with a number of daunting issues:

- the over-determined nature of software design: its inherently structural nature;
- the forces which have shaped the research interests in favor of quantification over qualification; and
- the difficulty of understanding the complexities of community and folkways to better fit the software produced for their needs.

**Programming Folkloristics**

It is important to distinguish between two forms of folklore that are active when software is produced. The first form is the familiar, more traditional, form of folklore, or folkways, consisting of the interactions between the programming team’s members and others. Programmers are embedded in many contexts of activities and, even if we limit our scope to just those folkways directly related to their work practices, we cannot fully address the role such practices play in shaping the ultimate product of their labors. The focus of this section, then, will be on a new approach to understanding the structure of programs. This approach bears some resemblance to the basic form of the structural analysis of text.
PROGRAMMING FOLKWAYS: "PATTERN LANGUAGES"

"Pattern language" is a term coined by Christopher Alexander (1977), an architectural researcher. His work centers on ways to express a language used to build and organize structures of all scales, ranging from single family homes to whole cities. A number of people researching software engineering have adopted the thrust of Alexander's work to construct pattern languages of reusable software designs. These designs can be considered to be roughly analogous to the basic "functional" units Propp (1968) discusses.

In the patterns derived by Gamma et al. (1994), we see that the exact meaning of the individual entries is not strictly important for this discussion (see Table 1). What needs to be emphasized about these entries is their relative sparcity and the lack of interconnection between the individual patterns themselves. For instance, the Singleton pattern represents a situation in which only one member of this entity is allowed to exist at any one time. This is a common occurrence when building objects which coordinate the actions of many other objects. However, no satisfactory structure has been found to tie this low-level pattern explicitly to a broader set of tale types or program types, if you will. By comparison, Propp's (1968) Morphology of the Folktale is a much better elucidated breakdown of how one understands a narrative (see Table 2).  

Table 1.
LISTING OF PATTERNS FOUND IN GAMMA ET AL. (1994).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creational Patterns</th>
<th>Structural Patterns</th>
<th>Behavioral Patterns</th>
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Table 2.
The Initial Situation: The First Nine of Twenty-Four Functions (Adapted from Propp, 1968).

The Initial Situation

1. Temporal-spatial determination ("in a certain kingdom").

2. Composition of the family:
   a. according to nomenclature and status;
   b. according to categories of dramatis personae (dispatcher, seeker, etc.)

3. Childlessness.

4-5. Prayer for the birth of a son:
4. Form of the prayer;
5. Motivation of the prayer.

6. Cause of pregnancy:
   a. intentional (a fish which is eaten);
   b. accidental (a swallowed pea, etc.);
   c. forced (girl is abducted by bear, etc.).

7. Form of miraculous birth:
   a. from a fish and from water;
   b. from a hearth;
   c. from an animal;
   d. otherwise.

8. Prophecies, forewarnings.

9. Well-being, prior to complication (zavýžka):
   a. fantastic;
   b. domestic;
   c. agrarian;
   d. in other forms.

Propp’s functions serve to structure and move a narrative along its path to completion. This analytical thrust is somewhat at odds with the approach of Alexander (1977) and Gamma et al. (1994), for their patterns serve primarily a structural role and, to a much lesser extent, can be recombined to form a full narrative. Additionally, Gamma’s patterns are also highly discrete and therefore even more difficult to combine to make a higher order meaning/narrative. Ultimately, Gamma’s identified patterns suggest that some higher order of structural analysis can be performed on programs. Furthermore, the structural analysis has, so far, been limited to very small units of structure and has proven difficult to extend into a higher order of understanding of a program’s meaning. By contrast, Propp’s functions have clear ordering and grouping properties. It is difficult to directly determine if such properties could be discovered in terms of software design. If this level of structure could be reliably
derived from source code, it would allow for a much deeper and more rigorous understanding of software systems.

**Programming as Narrative Construction**

Analyzing programs and software systems involves understanding the higher order or conceptual meaning of the program. This is often thought of as the intent of the programmer, or programmers, of that system. Programs are typically structured by a functional or object-oriented breakdown of the particular task being designed for. This analysis requires a basic understanding of the problem domain; then the designer iteratively divides the tasks required to model the problem domain into a set of methods that implement a particular domain's requirements.

This sort of iterative creative process is akin to the creative process that goes into telling a new tale. However, most tales are not created whole cloth from the teller’s mind. They are a dynamic evolving co-constructed narrative that uses themes and motifs honed over time (Bauman, 1977; Toelken, 1996). It is not surprising, then, that software construction is more akin to trying to tell a story without the benefit of a well-honed repertoire of themes, motifs, and tales from which to work. Like the early scholars studying folklore, scholars studying computer programming have yet to discover a method, or set of methods, to understand programs and their structures across different domains. This problem of a lack of cross-contextual analysis method suggests that looking at a program as a sort of narrative may help in understanding its broader meanings.

**Narrative and Language**

Construction of even such a simple tool as the hammer (which itself is a nonhomogeneous category) is considerably complicated by its various contexts of use. The construction of software is situated in a very complex confluence of the plasticity/manipulability of verbal art and the constraints of the physical material composing a hammer. This tension is often exacerbated by the common misconception of thinking of computer languages as real (or natural) languages.

The performance of a newly composed story involves the artful recombination of motifs and elements in new and innovative ways. More generally and just as importantly, any performance of a narrative involves an understanding of the audience hearing the story as well and the effects of the feedback they provide to the process itself (Bauman, 1978; Goodwin, 1982). Procedurally, this construction of narrative resembles the construction of software. In addition, both verbal art and software require an understanding of the motifs in a particular domain of discourse and activity. Of critical importance is the difference in the degree of plasticity in the "languages" used for the construction of these different narratives.
Computer languages, while having some degree of ambiguity in the interpretation of their meaning, usually are intended to be completely unambiguous. Ambiguity is considered to lead to any number of errors in the construction of software. Not surprisingly then, ambiguity is hunted down and eradicated in the language's grammar or in its interpretation. Many of the historical trends in language design can be seen moving toward elimination of ambiguity from any program's meaning. This reduction of ambiguity is pragmatically useful, because ambiguity in the meaning of a program almost certainly leads to the incorrect function of that program. So, unlike the storyteller's case, the basic form of the computer language used acts as a strong limiter on the "artfulness" that can be expressed directly in a program's text.\[^{8}\]

While computer languages are designed with grammars that minimize ambiguity, simultaneously they are a very careful mixture of maximum meaning in natural language terms while preserving the simplest, absolute unambiguous meaning in terms of the computer's interpretation of it. In practice, this means that the programmer can express the "natural" meaning of a particular task by using descriptive names and conventions when writing a program. This represents the most basic level in which the microstructural, or unambiguous instructional, meaning of the program is integrated with the human-conceptual meaning of the program's text. This is the starting point in which "artfulness" of expression is found in programming. It is in the further structuring of these smaller units of function/meaning that the overall conceptual meaning of the program is made. At this point, we have a rough equivalent of the motif or function as seen in the classical structuralist analysis of narratives. In summary, we have a number of narrative analogies:

- like folktales and their telling, programmers, in a very loose sense, tell "stories" in code;
- these stories are only really interpretable by other programmers who "speak" the same language and are in the same, or related, folk groups;
- as discussed earlier, a number of groups in the computer science community have been analyzing code to discover "patterns"; these patterns can be loosely thought of as equivalent to motifs or functions;
- understanding the practices of the folk groups and communities for which a software system is designed is vital for the success of that system. Without this understanding, which is equivalent to storytellers' understanding their audiences, the most likely outcome is failure or under-utilization of the system.

**Conclusion**

Folkloristics offers some hope that a method or methods can be found or borrowed that will enable software engineers to understand the fine
grained structure of both programs and systems. Furthermore, if successful, this form of analysis might provide the tools to reveal a new understanding of a broader typology of programs as well as aid in their construction. The greatest challenge lies in identifying and adapting the many techniques used by folklorists that would be applicable to software design. This process will require a deep understanding of both fields—unfortunately, a very rare combination. If such a process was undertaken, the potential benefits could be quite extensive. Given the state of the art in terms of pattern languages, a great deal more can be done to aid in the construction of good programs.

Even without a revolution in understanding and analyzing programs as specialized folklore or narrative, simply adopting some of the philosophy of folklorists would be helpful for designers of systems for use in social settings as social systems. Sensitizing designers to the notions of the situated nature of folkways and knowledge would enable them to design artifacts that were, at a minimum, less poorly mismatched to social settings and practices. A true mixture of design and social pragmatics would provide the designer with a new set of tools that can begin to answer questions that are currently impossible to grapple with in the default quantitative manner.

Suggestions for Building Software

As a beginning to this process of integrating folkloristics and software development, a few suggestions for building software are presented here. These suggestions are only starting points and introduce as many questions as they address. However, even rough guidelines are often better than none, and these are offered in that spirit:

- provide generic small tools, proto-tools (i.e., build a few types of hammers, not a nail gun);
- allow for the tailoring and recombination of these proto-tools. They are partially able to be tailored because of their simplicity, but they must also be able to be explicitly adapted through their underlying structures;
- fit these tools into a loosely knit overarching structure, a structure composed of a number of loosely coupled interrelated substructures; and
- examine other systems for motifs/functions in software systems.

Of these points, the last deserves special attention. Examining other software systems for patterns/motifs/functions may provide the most benefits to the average programmer. All of these guidelines collectively point the way toward a new method of structuring software after a model that attempts to integrate both the contextual and the structural.
NOTES
1 Alternatively, as a colleague suggested: Perhaps software systems must be included as a "record of deeply situated human behavior" that reflects contemporary folkways.
2 A large part of CSCW and PD analysis of tools is in terms of breakdowns in the use of a tool or set of tools. Very rarely do we see an analysis of the tools in terms of their structures in relationship with their context of use. In a simplified form this can be thought of as the difference between saying what is wrong with a system, and what is right with a system and what parts are responsible for this success.
3 There are a number of studies on e-mail which discuss usage patterns but do not directly deal with how this medium is used to create and maintain community (see Bizot et al., 1995; Kiesler et al., 1984; Siegel et al., 1986). They do provide a useful backdrop to frame how many have approached studying CMC (i.e., a tool-dominated approach with an overemphasis on the medium). Similar studies on usenet newsgroups (Baym, 1995a, 1995b) support this as well.
4 Gamma et al have done the most thorough job to date recognizing these broader structures. The patterns community is still working on how best to understand and determine the larger patterns that are present in many programs and systems.
5 Although Propp’s functions are perhaps no more easily combined to produce an artful narrative.
6 The pattern languages emerging in the software design realm are a first attempt at providing a repertoire of “motifs” for the programmer to work from.
7 The non-homogeneous category is meant to reinforce the myriad roles and meanings any artifact has in different contexts, i.e., it will be placed into a number of differing categories which are not necessarily inter-compatible.
8 This is not to say that natural languages are infinitely plastic. The basic grammatical structure of a language must limit the ambiguity of an utterance; otherwise meaningful communication would be nearly impossible. However the degree of flexibility seen in a natural language is so much greater than that of a computer language that even at the level of single utterances the flexibility may as well be infinite when viewed in contrast with computer languages.

REFERENCES


The Mythology of Information Overload

TONYIA J. TIDLINE

ABSTRACT
Library and information science work has often focused on the study of solutions to the effects of information overload. For this reason, and because the concept is frequently identified as a problem in popular culture, it is logical to assume that the existence and description of information overload has been documented through rigorous investigation. Such is not the case. This article looks at the functions of myth and brings together ideas about the information society, information, and information overload to conclude that information overload is a myth of modern culture. In this sense, myth is a "nonscientific" process that confirms the reality of an elusive phenomenon. The article also reports results of a pilot project intended to describe information overload experienced by a particular folk group composed of future library and information professionals. In addition to trying to enhance the description of information overload, the pilot project represents an attempt to test the idea of the folk group as a remedy for this condition.

INTRODUCTION
This project combines ideas from mythology, folklore, and library and information science in an effort to make sense of an aspect of modern culture that is frequently perceived as troublesome. Discussions of information overload, "data glut," or "information anxiety" are abundant in popular culture but do little to shed light on the origin of this problem. Library and information science work sidesteps the need to verify the
existence of information overload, seeking instead to mitigate its effects. The discipline has produced a vast literature that addresses user perceptions, information needs, and information-seeking behavior. Information management, information retrieval, and attendant notions such as relevance have also received much attention. Within both popular culture and library and information science research, information overload is usually described or defined by means of anecdote or by associated symptoms. However constituted, popular and scholarly attention confirms information overload as a recognized and resonant cultural concept that persists even without solid corroboration. Mythology and folkloristics are used here as analytic tools to suggest that information overload can be viewed as a myth of modern culture. Here myth does not mean something that is not true but an overarching prescriptive belief.

Studies of mythology and folklore recognize the importance of cultural context and alternative ways of knowing. Moreover, these areas of inquiry also acknowledge social processes involved in the origin and sustenance of enduring beliefs that promote shared understanding of, and response to, “superhuman” phenomena. This article first presents various interpretations of mythology and its relationship to folklore in order to build a composite frame of reference that demonstrates how myth operates today. Next, an examination of library and information science literature reveals an idea of the information society as a superhuman force to be reckoned with, defines what information is, and discusses how people use it. LIS literature, along with writing that circulates in popular culture, also shows how the concept of information overload functions as a modern-day myth that shapes comprehension and coping strategies in an era when information—whether as definitive of society, or as society’s chief economic product—has taken center stage.

Viewing information overload as myth validates its existence without requiring proof. However, the occasion of developing arguments to focus this view, along with the absence of systematic cohesive library and information science study of information overload, indicates a need for documentation. The final section of this article reports on a pilot project intended to provide evidence and description of information overload as experienced by a particular folk group.¹ The opinions of this group are of special interest because its members are studying to become library and information science professionals. Because folk group membership affords shared context and meaning consistent with functions of myth, the pilot project also attempts to learn if a folk group can be considered an information resource that serves to reduce the effects of information overload.

**Mythology and Folklore**

The language of myth, folklore, story, and fairytale is intertwined, and (except in technical folkloristic writing) these terms rarely seem clearly
differentiated. Sometimes the terms are used interchangeably, which has made it difficult to uncover one concise and coherent definition of mythology and its cultural implications for use in this project. In general, myth, folklore, and story provide cultural continuity and structure, encompass or inspire ritual, and serve instructional purposes. Mythology can be considered a somewhat broader or more universal form than the folktale and is often linked to the sacred or divine. However, the word myth is also used to mean the opposite of fact. This discussion includes various views of myth and its relationship to folkloristics in order to extract the nuance of meaning each offers for a description of the mythology of information overload.

The following discussion from a standard reference work, Funk & Wagnall's Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend (1950), articulates the traditional connection between myth and folklore and locates the distinction between the two at the intersection of divine intervention. Here myth is identified with certain "powers" and unexplained phenomena (p. 404). This source explicitly defines myth as:

> a story, presented as having actually occurred in a previous age, explaining the cosmological and supernatural traditions of a people, their gods, heroes, cultural traits, religious beliefs, etc. The purpose of myth is to explain... the myth must have a religious background in that its principal actor or actors are deities; the stories are thus systematized at least to the extent that they are related to a corpus of other stories in which the given god is a member of a pantheon. Where such interrelation does not occur, and where the gods or demi-gods do not appear, such stories are properly classified as folktale. The interchange between myth and folktale—attachment of a folktale to some member of a pantheon, or loss of the divine element in a popular retelling—is constantly occurring. Many folktales, as the Grimms noted, are obviously "broken-down" myths; many myths utilize motifs and themes common to folktales the world over. A myth remains properly a myth only as long as the divinity of its actor or actors is recognized; when the trickster becomes human rather than divine, when the hero is a man rather than a god, myth becomes legend, if explanatory or limited to some specific location, or folktale, if more generalized. (p. 778)

Thus, according to this classic source, while myth and folklore serve similar functions, myth does not exist without reference to a higher power.

Funk and Wagnall's and Thompson (1977) agree on the significance of the divine in myth. They also agree on the link between myth and folklore, but Thompson more clearly acknowledges the difficulty in distinguishing myth from other folkloristic structures. He states:

> of all the words used to distinguish the classes of prose narrative, myth is the most confusing. The difficulty is that it has been discussed too long and that it has been used in too many different senses. The history of such discussion is interesting but inconclusive. As
used in this book myth will be taken to mean a tale laid in a world supposed to have preceded the present order. It tells of sacred beings and of semi-divine heroes and of the origins of all things, usually through the agency of those sacred beings. Myths are intimately connected with religious beliefs and practices of the people. (p. 9)

Thompson invokes Boas’s (1940) “final words of wisdom” to reinforce similarity of myth and folklore. “The data show a continual flow of material from mythology to folk-tale and vice-versa, and that neither group can(p. 405).”

Thompson also discusses the function of mythic narrative and problems and questions attendant to its definition, indicating that humans have, and continue to use, myth to process experience. He highlights Boas’s observations about the origins of myth, stressing that mythologies did not begin with the simple observation of natural phenomena. Boas argues that the interplay of human imagination, emotion, and everyday occurrences is inherent in the process of myth. He also recognizes the importance of understanding how connections between past and present provide context for myth-making and states, “[w]e have no reason to believe that the myth-making processes of the last ten thousand years differed materially from modern myth-making processes” (Boas, 1940, p. 406). What is most interesting and useful for purposes of this discussion is that both Thompson and Boas advocate a notion of the historicity of myth and its longstanding ability to help relate supernatural forces to everyday existence.

Other scholars whose work is relevant to understanding myth, including Dorson (1972) and Levi-Strauss (1966), identify additional specific roles for myth in culture. Dorson says that—along with riddles, satirical songs, and tales—myth reinforces custom and taboo, releases aggression, and governs behavior by validating conduct. He also discusses the relationship of myth to a long-standing psychoanalytic tradition of dream interpretation, significant for discovery of subconscious links to the universal (p. 21). Dorson reviews various ways of looking at myth and folklore and introduces the work of Levi-Strauss and Propp in developing theories that assist in translating folklore genres into universal structural models and formulas (pp. 35-36).

Levi-Strauss (1966), for example, asserts that, like scientific thought, mythological thought structures human knowledge and experience. Science structures “concepts,” which are “transparent with respect to reality.” Mythological thought, on the other hand, structures “signs” which “allow and even require the interposing and incorporation of a certain amount of human culture into reality.” For Levi-Strauss, mythical thought is a form of “intellectual bricolage” that inventories, orders, and reinterprets the “remains of events” in order to construct meaning (pp. 19-22).

The notion of myth as structure is upheld by Roemer (1995) who claims that story connects and frames humanity by providing a system of
explanation. He observes that “like all structures, story integrates and relates” (p. 11). Roemer believes that people are not necessarily aware of this defining framework as they move through life. The framework is, however, connected to context and situation, which exist “before the figures appear in it.” According to Roemer, situation is “an attenuated crisis and crisis an exacerbated situation. In myth, fairy tale, and both comic and tragic drama, the figures are transfixed by a crisis.” He also notes that the situation may originate within the figures rather than outside them (pp. 12-13). Finally, Roemer realizes that our present experiences resonate with “ancient” mythical tales and that even “escapist fictions” may “confirm a ‘reality’ we continue to encounter even if we no longer have a way of accommodating it” (pp. 178-79). This last statement speaks to the power of myth to provide an emotional outlet that confirms experience without tangible or rational evidence.

In the Encyclopedia Mythica, Doyle (n.d.) offers several ideas about myth that have been combined in the following succinct definition:

a story of forgotten or vague origin basically religious or supernatural in nature, which seeks to explain or rationalize one or more aspects of the world or a society. . . . All myths are at some stage actually believed to be true by the peoples of the societies that used or originated the myth. . . . myths are often used to explain human institutions and practices as well, or to provide reinforcement of or a framework for an existing system of myths. Sometimes myths serve all of the above purposes. (unpaginated)

Although Doyle excludes references to deities stressed in preceding discussions, he brings the process and necessity of myth-making fully into the present in spirit and terminology. He acknowledges the capacity of myth to render “aspects of the world or a society” that are equivalent to “superhuman forces” understandable within the context of daily life. For the sake of argument in this article, economic, political, or social structures or processes, and the “institutions and practices” embedded in, or emanating from, them can be considered “superhuman.” All such creatures need to be explained and put into context, which propels creation of modern day myths. The origin of myths in modern culture may be hard to determine, but they endure because they afford emotional expression and are understood by many.

In Myths and Politics in Western Societies, Girling (1993) supplies a model for analysis of the function of modern day myths developed in response to social processes. He identifies and examines myths that governed economic, political, and cultural behavior in the United States, Germany, and Great Britain during the period surrounding World War II. Girling touches on elements of myth and organizes them in a fashion relevant for this project. He states:
Myths are emotionally charged beliefs that reflect how people experience formative periods in their history. Myths are symbolic representations of reality that, from a rational standpoint, contain incorrect assumptions, but they are nonetheless authentic deeply felt responses to critical social conditions.

Social conditions cannot be understood solely from conventional analysis of a rational mode of production and power structure. Fuller understanding should also take into account belief systems, including that fusion of concept and emotions by which economic, political, and ideological “drives” are represented in mythic cultural forms.

Modern myths provide a key to people’s attempts to come to terms with powerful economic and political forces.

Myths are not timeless creations, although the capacity to respond mythically to critical situations would be; myths are the product of specific historical conditions.

Formative periods of history result in evocation of myth in response to both positive and negative processes. New crises often produce new myths (Girling, 1993, pp. 2-3).

Girling shows how myths shaped the actions of those who believed in them. He identifies capitalism and democracy as influential myths in the United States, national pride as the myth that fueled fascism in Germany, and the “illusion of progress” as the mythic motivator of cultural expression in Great Britain. These myths were developed in response to what Girling terms “the crisis of modernity” (pp. 11-18). For Girling, the very notion of myth enables us to come to terms with the emotional sources of human behavior. He also stresses the importance of understanding myths in their historical context. Myths can serve to legitimize the existing order or be created to challenge that order. Newly created myths are no less emotionally charged than their predecessors. Girling finds that myths render the social world intelligible, although in a metaphysical and symbolic idiom. They may also represent “rallying signs by which a group renews its sense of identity and solidarity” (pp. 11-18).

Tension between sustaining and challenging the status quo identified by Girling corresponds to Toelken’s (1996) “twin laws of folklore.” The twin laws—conservatism and dynamism—are essential to the process of folklore. Conservatism results in retention and dissemination of information, beliefs, styles, and customs over time and space. “Myths (stories that relate or embody sacred or cosmic occurrences) are expressed in terms of a ‘time before time began’ and are supported by a whole range of religious beliefs that are conducive to a sense of ultimate truth. Although it can be demonstrated that myths do in fact change through time, the attempt on the part of the believer is to transmit them intact. The conservative dimension promotes retention and discourages change” (pp. 39-40).
Dynamism "comprises all those elements that function to alter features, contents, meanings, styles, performance, and usage as a particular traditional event takes place repeatedly through space and time" (p. 40).

Myths are found closer to the conservative end of Toelken's (1996) "continuum of folklore types" and their "function in most cultures is to provide dramatic experiential models of protected truths and laws which would otherwise be very abstract" (p. 40). Girling and Toelken permit an interpretation of myth as a process that blends ingredients found in other definitions. Myth explains, reflects history, and shapes current response. It supports shared understanding and emotional expression. Finally, it is a vital mechanism, repeatedly invoked in response to societal change. It is therefore possible to see how, even with the advent of the twenty-first century, myth structures human experience. The following discussions of the force and character of the information society, the nature of information, and the problem of overload suggest that information overload can be thought of as a myth developed in response to an overwhelming social process.

THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

Whether or not the information society is heir to post-industrial society is still a subject of debate. What is essential to most descriptions of the information society is that it involves the engagement of most people in "brain work" rather than physical work, and that this development is accompanied by various social, economic, and political changes (Cawkell, 1987, pp. 1-12). However such changes are described, it is clear that they are keenly felt in proportions that are significant for determining the mythic nature of information overload. Several aspects of the information society illustrate its force as a supernatural occurrence.

There seems to be uncertainty surrounding the origin of the phrase "information society" itself. Duff, Craig, and McNeill (1996), in "A Note on the Origins of the Information Society," report the results of a literature search and analysis that credits Michiko Igarashi of the Japanese journal Hoso Asahi for invention of this phrase in 1964. They base their claim primarily on a series of articles appearing in the journal in the mid-1960s, which linked the phrase "information society" to descriptions of post-industrial society. Although the authors credit the Japanese with originating the term, they acknowledge that, in the early 1960s, American economic analysts were also trying to envision a post-industrial society based on production of information. Duff, Craig, and McNeill (1996) cite American economist Fritz Machlup's (1962) The Production and Distribution of Knowledge in the United States as a primary source of ideas about the "information society" (p. 118).

Cawkell (1986) agrees that most people believe that Machlup initiated thinking about an information society. He also states that Machlup
referred to "'The Knowledge Industry,'" and "made rather sensational
assertions that 'Knowledge Production,' was growing more than twice as
fast as the average of other GNP components" (p. 87). Cawkell also refer-
cences Porat's work as inspiring notions of the information society. Porat
claimed that half of the U.S. labor force soon would be engaged in "infor-
mation processing occupations," which "really launched the Information
Society concept in earnest" (p. 87). In addition to Machlup and Porat,
Daniel Bell is also credited for seminal thinking about economic aspects
of the information society (Cawkell, 1987, p. 4).

The authors listed above were primarily concerned with changes in
the economy that they felt signified the advent of the information society.
Others have considered how social or political changes occur in conjunc-
tion with emergence of an "information economy." Puttnam (1996) asks
if it is "really true that information—and the way we produce it, process it,
and trade in it—constitutes the most significant distinguishing character-
istic of our times, or will we look back in 40 years... and find ourselves
describing the last decade of the Millennium in rather different terms (p.
1)?" Puttnam examines the effect of connectivity on how people live their
lives and the accompanying evaporation of "the more obvious divisions of
earlier industrial societies." These include separation of home and office
or work and leisure. He feels that, while the information society includes
a move to smaller pollution-free industry, some people are still not able to
participate fully and that the gap between the have and have-nots is ever
widening. Puttnam calls for thoughtful policy development to redefine
the role of education, traditional information services (such as those pro-
vided by libraries), and potential big business control of access to infor-
mation. He states, "if this is truly to be an Information Society, rather than
simply a marketplace full of information companies, then the process of
policy formulation and implementation must be a matter of public debate
conducted, as far as is practicable, in the interests of the many and not
just the few" (p. 4).

Like Puttnam, Cawkell (1986) acknowledges the potential for class
divisions in a society that emphasizes information production. He be-
lieves that "ordinary people" may well encounter computer-conveyed in-
formation in the workplace. However, the information society will not
truly have arrived until the private lives of ordinary American citizens and
the lives of their counterparts in other countries are a part of it (p. 91).
According to Cawkell, the information needs of ordinary people are pri-
marily about living, and access to this kind of information is free in forms
and forums that rival the cost and utility of being "plugged in." Moreover,
he claims that information providers "have not identified the information
needs of ordinary people, presumably believing that they do not consti-
tute a market" (p. 91). He also states that "ordinary people, even if they
have a home computer, are unlikely to use it for information retrieval"
Ordinary people, it seems, place more emphasis on the entertainment function of the home computer, according to Cawkell. Puttnam expresses similar sentiments:

"there is certainly ample evidence, for example, that the most distinguishing single feature that drives the present revolution in communications technologies is entertainment. The most effective information technologies, whatever their purpose or content, increasingly depend on the graphic skills, the story-telling techniques, the effects, the music, the marketing strategies; in fact, the whole compelling panoply of entertainment. Entertainment is not simply an adjunct, albeit a significant one, of our new Information Society; it is rapidly becoming the dominant force, "colonising" the whole world of information with devastating speed and power." (p. 2)

The foregoing perspectives suggest that a variety of information interests and needs exist in society.

Kochen (1987) proposes an alternative concept of the information society that incorporates ideas of increased choice and interest in information; mixes focus on economic, social, and political change; and speaks to conservative and dynamic processes in the transition from a pre- to post-industrial era. Kochen’s vision is based on certain characteristics of society deemed essential for “quality of life.” He calls these “invariants of social transformations” (p. 145), which are constant, even though their features may change. Kochen categorizes social invariants as: (1) welfare and survival (demographic); (2) wealth and economic security (economic); (3) affection, belongingness, or love (social); (4) enlightenment or informedness (informational); (5) skill (technological); (6) rectitude, morality, appreciation, or celebration (religious); (7) power (political); and (8) deference or prestige (cultural) (pp. 145-46). He claims invariants express “consensually held beliefs that reflect basic values” (p. 147). The public is more aware of invariants when society faces external challenges. For example, contradictory values held by other nations may be interpreted as a call to war. However, “in the absence of outside shocks, the invariants are not always in the public consciousness nor even that of its leaders. This is apparent when choices must be made” (p. 148). Additionally, introduction of new technologies—computers and their networks, for example—increases the number of choices available to society. Moreover, “increased interdependence and interaction of all kinds among the world’s new societal units may stimulate cultural diffusion and change and call into question traditional beliefs and values. The constant interplay between what is to remain invariant and what should adapt is characteristic of a dynamic information society” (p. 148).

While many descriptions of the information society and its effects exist, it is instructive to look at one description in detail to see how overwhelming the concept can be in modern culture much like Puttnam (1996),
Kochen (1987), and Schement and Curtis (1995) question the dimensions of the information society. They conclude that the U. S. economy might indeed be centered on the production and dissemination of information, but that these activities are supported by the continuation of industrial capitalism. Thus, for Schement and Curtis (1995), the "information society" is an "updated" version of the traditional economy. In the United States, the information society is currently delineated by "its reliance on information as an item of value and economic exchange. [A] new consciousness has accelerated the restructuring of society to explicitly promote the production and consumption of information. [A] complex cultural attitude that sees and treats information as a thing," is also a part of this realization (p. 10).

Schement and Curtis develop their position by exploring the historical context of information as a product. For example, they cite sixteenth-century copyright law as an early source of information commodification. Like Kochen, they explicitly include continuity and change (conservatism and dynamism again) in their discussion, which reinforces the appropriateness of applying mythology of information overload as a framework of analysis to understand how people cope in an age when information is the chief economic product:

> The key to understanding the information society depends on recognizing elements of both change and continuity. American industry... is now educator, banker, entertainer, data processor to the world, and for the same reasons as before—because of the profit motive and the industrial character of these activities. To view the information society as unique or historically unprecedented reinforces a myth, albeit a powerful one. We now see the U. S. producing and distributing information as its primary economic activity precisely because capitalism remains the motivator and industrialism remains the organizing principle. (p. 39)

Although the authors deny a pure notion of the information society as something new and different, they are aware that having information as the economy's chief product has produced certain social changes. Schement and Curtis identify the principal social event in operation as "increasing interconnectedness." They explain the operation and impact of interconnectedness on three levels and analyze it in a way that serves to ground the mythology of information overload.

Schement and Curtis claim that interconnectedness has produced change on micro, meso, and macro levels of human interaction. At the micro level, interconnectedness has increased the nature and number of personal social relationships. For example, people now have more secondary roles in relationships where they establish and maintain connections that are computer-mediated. Social and material technology, developed for gathering and processing information, as well as for applying
information to decision-making, has also generated increased interconnectedness at the meso level. This has resulted in new models of information management with more elaborate structures and processes to acquire and distribute information, but more streamlined decision-making processes for businesses. Finally, at the macro level, global interconnectedness is manifested in multinational corporations that have money and power equal to that of nations (p. 47).

Public and private spheres merge as people work at home by computer. Information is a "symbolic ephemeral good that poses a challenge to the American culture of display" (p. 105). Identity is distinguished through purchase of the "containers" of information. Ownership of VCRs, cellular phones, and computers, for example, is the means by which Americans enact conspicuous consumption in the information society. People have a "rich menu of media goods and services" and select from and manipulate elaborate media environments. All of the above are hallmarks of the information society identified by Schement and Curtis (1995, pp. 105-09).

Additionally, although different social classes experience differing environments of work and leisure and construct their media environments accordingly, there is one thing they share—a "torrent of potential messages spew into the filter of personal attention. The few messages that are actually attended to can still overwhelm the individual. Of those, fewer still are internalized. From the receiver's perspective, this is information overload, meaning that by far most messages are lost... the denser the media environment, the more lost messages" (Schement & Curtis, 1995, p. 123). This experience has also been linked to "information poverty" as another effect of the information society. Information poverty of this type can occur in any economic class. It refers to lack of skill and experience in using various kinds of information systems, receipt of too much or repetitious information, or "bias against using certain information channels" (Sweetland, 1993, pp. 8-9). Another dimension of information poverty is ignorance as a consequence of the inability to know everything or of getting incorrect information—both of which are more likely to occur in "the information society" (Diener, 1986, p. 23).

Although conceptions of an information society may differ, they nevertheless inspire complex descriptions of its effects. It is therefore reasonable to assume a view of the information society as an inexplicable overwhelming entity that must be managed somehow. Before taking a closer look at how it is possible to use a mythology for this purpose, we must examine information itself to learn what it is, what it does, and how it is used in a cultural sense.

**INFORMATION**

What information is, does, and how it is used in culture has been
considered in several interesting ways that can help shape a description of the mythology of information overload. For Buckland (1991), “information-as-thing” is “evidence” that exists in many forms, including traditional sources like data, books, or documents, and nontraditional sources like events and objects. As “thing,” information is situational—it is relevant or useful in context. This multifaceted definition of information lends itself easily to fashioning a mythology of information overload for several reasons. First, mythological process does not discriminate among types and modes of transmitting information. Material, ritual, story, and performance are considered equally important communicative forms for moving “evidence” through time and space. Second, mythological practice takes a long and broad view of time and space that allows information and its many manifestations to work together or be combined in innovative ways that demonstrate individual and collective expression. Third, because of its elastic perception of a time/space continuum, mythology is inclined to see information operating in contexts or situations that can be simultaneously relevant in the past, present, and future.

Buckland’s inclusive view of information is easy to reconcile with tenets of mythology. Other contributors to library and information science literature have also considered information in ways that lead to understanding it in process, which further supports developing a mythology of information overload. According to White (1994), information is “that which reduces uncertainty; it is symbolic data or expression stored outside the human body through artificial means; it inheres in statements or propositions that are meaningful, new, and relevant, true, and authoritative” (pp. 258-60). These phrases describing information are common throughout library and information science literature. However, White takes the definition of information further. For White, information is not static. It is the “medium of exchange between internal and external memory” (p. 258). Internal memory “is the province of cognitive psychology and its cognates (learning, representation, imaging, and imagining)” (p. 250). External memory exists in two forms—that of other people, which might be called social or collective memory, and that stored through human artifice in records.

White (1994) believes library and information science and information system professionals are concerned with records—which he defines as “externally stored, content-bearing memories.” He claims that information professionals “are irrevocably committed to understanding and improving this kind of external memory” (p. 252). White stipulates, however, that “[s]ocial memory—that is, other people regarded as stocks of knowledge, lore, and opinion—is of the utmost importance; it is the source to which most persons, including the very learned, turn most often when uncertainties arise, as countless studies in IS [information systems] and L & IS [library and information science] attest . . . for most persons, sources
of information other than people are not a main stock but a reserve stock to be used only when necessary (and often not then)” (p. 251).

White (1994) identifies information professionals as filters, but observes that a common strategy for avoiding “information overload” (which he does not define) is to avoid information professionals. This avoidance occurs: (1) because information professionals lack a social mandate to prescribe, and (2) because information professionals might be “neurologically different” from their potential customers (p. 280). From White’s discussion it can be inferred that “potential customers” of the information professional choose to mediate their own exchange between internal and external memory, preferring to manage information overload on their own. This might be because people have more immediate access to context that makes sense of information.

The “sense-making” approach to information enhances understanding of the interplay between White’s (1994) “main and reserve” stocks of information. Dervin (1983) has applied sense-making to look at how “the average citizen” constructs information needs and uses. Dervin states that “sense-making is defined as behavior, both internal (i.e. cognitive) and external (i.e. procedural) which allows the individual to construct and design his/her movement through time-space. Sense-making behavior, thus, is communicating behavior. Information seeking and use is central to sense-making (as it similarly is seen as central to all communicating) . . .”. Dervin sees information not as something that exists independent of, and external to, human beings but as a product of human awareness. Observations are mediated by human minds that guide selection of what to observe, how to observe, and how to interpret products of observation. Consequently, “information producing” is internally guided, subjective, and constrained.

Like Toelken (1996), Dervin feels that individuals are bound by time and space, which constrains what they can observe at any given moment. People may be bound by the past, but present observations are influenced by personal histories and by visions of the future as well. Observations made today may not be applicable tomorrow. Dervin (1983) characterizes the sense-making approach to information-seeking and use as a constructing activity rather than simply a transmitting activity (p. 3). The sense-making approach thus not only takes into account information in context but also information need and use that occurs through time and space. Like Toelken and Buckland, Dervin recognizes that “information” circumstance and process, internal and external perception, and context of use that establishes meaning are indispensable to that which is called information. One final point should be added to the mix of ideas about how information functions. External memory embodied in other people, and the need for context, suggests that ease of accessibility is an additional component of information “processing.”
The Principle of Least Effort supports this observation. Thomas Mann (1993) claims that "most researchers (even serious scholars) will tend to choose easily available information sources, even when they are of objectively low quality, in preference to pursuing higher-quality sources whose use would require a greater expenditure of effort" (p. 91). Mann devotes an entire chapter to this Principle of Least Effort and research that supports the principle in *Library Research Models: A Guide to Classification, Cataloging, and Computers*. He asserts that various library research models have failed to take the principle into account, and, as a result, the best sources for researchers' inquiries, or at least the most promising avenues of research, are obscured (p. 92). From Mann's discussion there is implied explanation for White's claim that people avoid information professionals in the interplay of internal and external memory. The principle also supports the idea that sense-making is achieved by seeking information from friends and colleagues.

**Information Overload**

Library and information science literature about information overload is relatively thin. From 1976 to 1996, the term appears only four times in the indexes of *Information Science Abstracts*. Fifteen citations in *Library Literature*’s online index led to few articles useful for defining and examining information overload. White's claim that library and information science professionals focus on external memory stored in records resonates throughout literature traced from the indexes referenced above. Information overload is equated with "the proliferation of available data and publications and ever-more-comprehensive and widespread automated means of access to them" (Biggs, 1989, p. 411). Moreover, research that purports to address the dilemma of information overload does not define or measure it in a fashion that supports its "taken for granted" cultural status. Solutions to information overload include renewed or revised input from the human intermediary (Biggs, 1989; Hopkins, 1995), or prioritizing operations performed in electronic environments (Losee, 1989). Studies suggesting solutions to overload are conducted in business settings and embrace decision-making theory and profit motives (Iselin, 1989; Losee, 1989).

One important study, sometimes referred to in the library and information science literature, examines information overload as an important socio-behavioral phenomenon. Miller (1978) summarizes relevant research on information overload (with references to concepts and names familiar to information professionals: information theory, Toffler, Gasset, and Vannevar Bush), discusses its form and effects, and shares results of his own experimental research to demonstrate the effects of overload on "modern man."

Miller's (1978) observations about the form and effects of "information input overload" on the individual include the following:
• when input increase continues, output eventually decreases and is accompanied by a state of confusion;
• habit and familiarity with how information is coded affects rate of carrying out tasks and of processing information;
• time factors and channel overlap affect information processing; and
• overloads of information may have some relationship to schizophrenic behavior, indicated by use of withdrawal or escape as coping mechanisms (pp. 147-67).

Miller (1978) found that many forms of information overload exist and that they are becoming more common and stressful. People differ in how they adapt to overload based on their particular circumstances. Furthermore, "[w]hatever modes of adjustment they select exert influences on the norms of social behavior in their cultures" (pp. 151-52).

Miller's (1978) experiments measured how people compensate for information input overload and measured adjustment processes of omission, error, queuing (falling behind), filtering, and abstracting. He suggests there are two types of filtering: omission filtering (the preferential processing of certain sorts of information), and error filtering (preferred or frequent use of a particular response or repetition of a single response to avoid losing an opportunity to respond). The experiments revealed that, when participants were "overload free," filtering was rare. Conditions of moderate overload elicited omission filtering as the preferred response. Under conditions of great overload, omission filtering diminished and error filtering increased (pp. 173-82).

Library and information science literature also refers to Klapp (1986), who suggests that boredom and anxiety are key responses to information overload. He explores the impact of information overload on human experience in a series of thoughtful essays infused with terms common to information theory (like noise, redundancy, and entropy). Klapp defines information overload as degradation of information. Degradation of information occurs when information is noiselike, irrelevant, and interferes with desired signals and when it is redundant, banal, or does not tell enough of interest (p. 2). Information overload is a result of boredom based on satiation. Satiation comes from: (1) too much stimuli; (2) habituation, which results in a loss of responsiveness due to loss of novelty; and (3) desensitization—a loss of sensitivity to increasingly strong stimuli (p. 36). Information overload also results from "bad redundancy" (repeated receipt of useless information) and noise. Techniques for coping with information overload embrace extremes of "selective exposure" and attempts to scan everything.

For Klapp, overload manifests itself in culture as a widening gap between social problems and their solutions where meaning lags behind increased amounts of information. "Meaning lag" is based on the "rapid
accumulation and diffusion of information beyond human capacity to process it." Klapp emphasizes the human need to ponder, wonder, and dream in order to put information into perspective and implies that such a holistic approach is a solution to meaning lag (pp. 105-15).

Meaning is also central to Wurman's (1990) description of information anxiety. He introduces the role of expectation in information processing and claims that "information anxiety is produced by the ever-widening gap between what we understand and what we think we should understand. Information anxiety is the black hole between data and knowledge. It happens when information doesn't tell us what we want or need to know" (p. 34). Moreover, Wurman identifies "several general situations are likely to induce information anxiety: not understanding information; feeling overwhelmed by the amount of information to be understood; not knowing if certain information exists; not knowing where to find information; and, perhaps the most frustrating, knowing exactly where to find the information, but not having the key to access it" (p. 44). Custom and context are implicated in Wurman's definition, because he includes pressure of expectations to "measure up." Wurman (1990) adds another new wrinkle to the definition of information overload by explicitly connecting information anxiety to concern about access to information. "We are dependent on those who design information, on the news editors and producers who decide what news we will receive, and by decision makers in the public and private sector who can restrict the flow of information" (p. 34).

In contrast with the opinions of Klapp and Wurman, Neill (1992) and Wilson (1976) suggest that information overload is not an actual problem because people respond with a variety of coping skills. Neill supports his assertion with evidence of the adjustment processes identified by Miller (1978). He specifies that decision-making in a world of infinite information choice follows models of bounded and intuitive rationality. These models recognize that decisions are made in constrained contexts and are based on past experience. Neill (1992) also emphasizes the importance of alternative information systems such as rumor, gossip, and story. Story is mentioned as particularly significant for providing an organizing framework in contemporary society (p. 116).

Wilson (1976) minimizes the importance of information overload. He claims the concept does not need to be clarified because it is a "phantom" and argues that information overload "does not exist for most people in most circumstances" (p. 59). Wilson feels that people tend to ignore what they don't need or that which is irrelevant. When threatened by potential overload, people cope by practicing avoidance or seek information that supports their customary decision choices and practices. (The latter observation is akin to Neill's discussion of bounded and intuitive rationality.) When information is needed, people take what is easy to get
(an argument parallel to Mann's discussion of the Principle of Least Effort). Wilson also points out that "mechanical-electronic communication systems are usually built with some specific information purpose in mind," which ignores the "multi-purpose structure of man" (p. 62). The multi-purpose essence of human beings incorporates the need to eat, sleep, and socialize, and dictates moving away from overload confusion and on to other business.

The foregoing analysis shows that beliefs about the nature of information overload are as diverse as are those about the information society. Some scholars reject the notion that information overload is a problem because people have found ways to cope. Others, however, claim its effects are far-reaching and potentially damaging. Those who work with information assume overload exists because of increased media and channels associated with a post-industrial era. Mythology affords a method to accommodate coexistence of these viewpoints.

THE MYTHOLOGY OF INFORMATION OVERLOAD

Myth and folklore studies furnish conceptual frameworks—ways of understanding the supernatural, notions of historicity and continuity, conduits for emotional expression, strategies for dealing with change or "crises of modernity"—to build some understanding of the mythology of information overload. Library and information science literature shows that information is variable in form, mitigates gaps between "internal and external memory," must make sense, and should be easy to get. Uncertainty about the origin, nature, and complexity of the information society, combined with its visible and invisible power, leads to thinking of it as a surrogate for the supernatural, a force that must be rendered intelligible for living day-to-day. The mythology of information overload, in light of the foregoing, can be described as a story of vague origin, developed in response to change from an industrial to an information-based economy. The story confirms the "perceived" reality of the information society, while simultaneously allowing room for expressing emotions like anxiety or boredom that arise from living in this society. The story also provides common understanding and serves as a justification for strategies such as filtering or avoidance in order to cope with a proliferation of information and information sources that seem beyond the individual's control. At the heart of the mythology of information overload is the need to make meaning and the need to adjust. Meaning maintains continuity and preserves connection and encompasses the first (conservative) law of folklore. Adjusting, or coping, by selectively engaging with the information environment incorporates the second (dynamic) law of folklore. Thus, the twin laws operate to allow people to remain sane in the information age. An account of one group's perception of information overload is offered as an attempt to link mythological process and life experience.
Study of a Folk Group

The project described below was conducted as a pilot effort to find out how information overload functions as a modern day myth that shapes comprehension and coping strategies. This project was also used as an opportunity to learn if a folk group could serve as an information “filter” to reduce the effects of information overload by virtue of providing context and relationship. Data for this project were collected through surveys of members of LIS 450FL, Folklore, from Fireplace to Cyberspace, offered by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois (GSLIS/UIUC) during Spring 1998. All class members were GSLIS students, although their areas of specialization and backgrounds were diverse. The total pool of potential respondents was ten of eleven students enrolled in the class (the researcher was excluded). Ten students completed surveys for a response rate of 100 percent.

Survey questions were developed to get a picture of class members’ definitions of information overload in work, school, and other aspects of daily living (or “lifeways”). Students were also asked about their perceptions of information overload with regard to the Folklore class in particular, and about their view of the class as a “community” or folk group. Questions about overload related to the class requirements and were designed to get opinions about the class as a community. The aim was to demonstrate a connection between the folkgroup as an alternative information resource that might reduce information overload deriving from class requirements. The survey was conducted near the end of the semester in the belief that the class would have developed a sense of community that would be reflected as identification as a folk group.

Questions were pre-tested in consultation with the instructor and a colleague with significant experience in survey questionnaire design and interview techniques. The survey was conducted by e-mail. Responses were analyzed to build a description of information overload and for evidence of the folk group as an information resource. Survey questions are included in the appendix.

Findings

It is clear that class members of LIS 450FL perceived “information overload” in the area of work. Several members noted an “overload overlap” emanating from research assistantship work and schoolwork, which could be expected for graduate students. Some noted this overlap as a by-product of “life in the information age.” Information overload was expressed in terms of having to deal with a variety of input channels such as e-mail, meetings, listservs, and in-basket paper piles. A few respondents also reported headaches and feelings of pressure or confusion as physical and emotional responses to information overload. Filtering was the chief
mechanism for dealing with overload in areas of research and schoolwork. Responses implied that what is filtered out is then ignored.

A majority of those responding felt that information overload extended to their leisure hours and described themselves as experiencing conflict or confusion about choosing what to do with scarce free time. Leisure seemed to be confounded with the demands of "lifeways" in respondents' descriptions of overload. For example, some respondents listed tasks that needed to be done during "time off" that were similar to those listed as lifeways. In the latter area, coordinating multiple activities was the primary source of information overload. Procrastination and avoidance were identified as methods for coping with lifeways overload. Only a few people felt that leisure time provides an escape from overload, but they stated this emphatically.

The class did not identify strongly as members of a folk group or feel that class membership served to diminish information overload. When asked about motivation for enrolling in the class, all but one respondent listed the instructor's reputation as a primary reason. "Subject matter" made a strong showing as the second factor for enrollment. Overall, respondents did not seem to feel a shared sense of community. While a majority felt some sense of community, their responses indicated a weak association with the idea of being part of a folk group. Additionally, respondents assumed that others felt little sense of community. Ironically, a few people responded that they felt "left out" of the class at large, which begs the question: What did they feel left out of? This indicates that perhaps a community did indeed exist marked by the observation that one feels excluded from it.

Group members felt that they developed a command of folklore concepts and vocabulary and an appreciation for multiple points of view as a result of participation in the class. Presentations of other class members were listed as the class activity most beneficial for understanding folklore concepts. Numerous and varied responses confirmed that students felt their class project was informed by things they learned in LIS 450FL. Respondents also indicated that this experience would influence their attitude in future work. While class projects were listed as the most informative assignments, these were also considered the chief source of information overload. Readings were also noted as a source of information overload—in other words, simply having the class as something else to do generated a feeling of overload. It was clear that the class was not viewed as an alternative information system or filter for information overload. This observation does not directly contradict ideas that the folk group can be an antidote for information overload. It is logical that class members would not perceive this particular "folk group" as an information filter if they report feeling no strong sense of community and perceived the class itself as a source of overload. Studies based on lessons learned from this pilot
project should first verify member identification as part of a folk group before asking if group affiliation reduces the effects of overload.

CONCLUSION

Mythologizing can indeed be considered a timeless process invoked to cope with modern dynamics that sometimes seem beyond individual power to affect. The "information society" has generated concerns and consequences shaped by the interplay of its titular elements—information and society. Information overload has become a convenient code phrase for many of these concerns and consequences. The abundance of solutions proffered for overload reduction emphasizes presumed cause and effect, precluding any need for systematic investigation of how people actually experience and cope with this modern-day problem. The coincidence of these conditions—respectful attention to something unproven—is an essential feature of the mythological process.

The findings of a pilot project confirmed the presence of information overload associated with "the information age." While it is true that the project revealed people coping with overload, it also confirmed the presence of negative effects cited in library and information science and other literature. The results of the project add descriptive detail to the story of information overload. This story—like most mythology—illuminates the continuing ability of human beings to adapt to altered circumstance.

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NOTES

1 Folk groups are clusters of people who have something in common that makes communication "meaningful or rewarding." Most people belong to more than one folk group, and group delineation is no simple task. Essentially, shared language and inherent group dynamics combine to make the folk group an important source of context that shapes and affects interaction of members. Language and communication in the folk group can take many forms, including both verbal and material (Toelken, 1996, pp. 37-58).

2 For the purpose of this article, myth is used in a broadly cultural, rather than a technically folkloristic sense.

3 This comment reflects observations made by Neill (1992). Additionally, the review of indexes was conducted in an attempt to "update" his search for evidence of information overload as a subject of concern for library and information science.

4 Of eighteen citations listed in the online index, fifteen led to English language articles available for review.

5 In the discussion that follows, such information is referred to as "lifeways" and represents activities like chores, errands, and household responsibilities that are essential to maintaining the "infrastructure" of day-to-day living.
APPENDIX
Survey Questions Submitted to Members of LIS 450FL, *Folklore, from Fireplace to Cyberspace*, Offered by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois

1. Please briefly define what “information overload” means to you with regard to:
   (a) work
   (b) schoolwork
   (c) leisure
   (d) lifeways (day-to-day aspects of dealing with things like ordering books on amazon.com or getting information about tax forms).

   (If it makes more sense to share an anecdote or example for any of the above, please do so.)

2. What drew you to take LIS 450FL?

3. Did you think of LIS 450FL as a community? Please briefly explain why or why not.

4. If you thought of LIS 450FL as a community, what aspect(s) was (were) most valuable?

5. What did you learn that informed your project for this class or for your work in other classes?

6. What class activities (presentations, discussions in or out of class, assignments, etc.) were most useful to you? Did any of these activities generate a feeling of information overload? Please explain briefly.

7. Do you feel you developed a vocabulary, worldview, community framework, or “story” about folklore that enriched your class work and your experience? Please explain briefly.

8. Do you feel you developed a vocabulary, worldview, community framework, or “story” about folklore that was shared by others in LIS 450FL? Please explain briefly.

9. Did the class readings provide you with folkloristic ideas, terminology, or methodology that will be useful for other work? Please elaborate if desired.

10. Did the study of folkloristics add to the types of “information overload” that you defined in question 1? If so, in what ways?

11. Did the study of folkloristics add to your material, verbal, and/or customary ways of thinking about or dealing with “information overload,” as defined in question 1? If so, in what ways?
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Storytelling in Oral and Print Traditions

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Swapping Tales and Stealing Stories: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Folklore in Children’s Literature

BETSY HEARNE

ABSTRACT
This article identifies some of the salient issues involved when folktales cross cultural boundaries aboard the vehicle of children’s books, a journey with many bumps in the road. Beyond the need to acknowledge the story’s source, especially if it is outside the adaptor’s own culture, is the larger question of who owns stories, specifically folktales, but also “story” in a broader sense as folktales serve as a bridge to legend, personal narrative, oral history, history, and fiction. I will examine a few examples of the literature that generate conflict between cultural responsibility and artistic freedom—variously represented by folklorists, critics, and writers—along with a sampling of the heated and heartfelt exchange about that literature in Internet discussions.

PERSONAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXTS
When I was young, I took a class bus trip from my home in Chattanooga, Tennessee, to Cherokee, North Carolina, and walked through a Cherokee village reconstructed and run by the tribe. That evening we gathered at an outdoor theater to wait until darkness fell and stars pierced the sky. The night grew cold. A wail rose from the darkness, launching a performance of “Unto These Hills,” which depicted the U. S. army’s destruction of Cherokee villages in the surrounding mountains followed by the devastating forced march of the remaining nation to Oklahoma. Although I was sitting with schoolmates, I felt completely alone with this tragedy, logy with tears and unable to speak afterward. It never occurred
to me that there was any difference between the children on that march and me except that they were dead and I was not, an accident of history that only increased my empathy since the vagaries of birth seemed so random. Such is the power of story to move one across temporal, cultural, ethnic, and geographic boundaries. At some level, the story became my story. It entered a new person who was supported by a mythological construct completely different from the teller’s, a person (to complicate matters) who became a storyteller.

This story about a story has both a personal and a sociopolitical context. In terms of personal context, the experience culminated a childhood punctuated by weekly family rituals of hunting for arrowheads along the shores of Lake Chickamauga and camping out while my father, born and raised in India but not Indian and certainly not American Indian, hunted and fished with a bow and arrow. While other kids played store, I played at grinding acorns between two large rocks. It took hours and provided a healing rite amidst the painful realities of 1950’s racial tensions between African Americans, then called Negroes, and whites, now called European-Americans. In the course of these realities, I was captivated by a third-grade assignment for each student to write a story about the shadowy painting on our schoolroom wall of a Native American, known as Indian then, paddling a canoe along a mysterious waterway. This assignment launched a writing life (unless you count “My Book of Peoms” [sic] written at age 4), and forty-five years later I incorporated it, along with an African-American story that I had heard even earlier, into an autobiographical novel as a metaphor for the journey made by a lonely white girl (Hearne, 1998a). The voice of the fiction writer says, that’s fine. The voice of the inner critic says, hold on. Although the third-grade episode actually happened, my subsequent use of it—the use of a Native American to project a white person’s dilemma—may not be fair. Although it is my story, it may not be my story to tell. Power imbalances between Anglos and Native Americans can overshadow personal meaning with political implications.

The personal context I have just explored reveals the complexity of a story embedded in one life at a cultural crossroads of European-American, Native-American, African-American, and Asian (the father from India) influences. The broader sociopolitical context is even more complicated and will be the focus of this investigation. However, one point with which I will launch the discussion is the impossibility of separating: (1) story from context, and (2) personal from sociopolitical context. Studies that do so, in an effort to be objective, lose sight of the inevitable confluence of interaction between individuals and their environments—a process increasingly recognized by anthropologists and folklorists collecting stories from a culture other than their own. In examining issues of cultural context for folklore in children’s books, my personal context will inevitably be
a silent subtext. This is a point we need to remember in thinking about all the personal/professional opinions expressed later in this discussion.

The angle of sociopolitical context I will explore here is the critical controversy in my folk group of children's literature specialists—of which I am a thirty-year veteran member—about who owns story, specifically folktales, but also story in a broader sense as folktales serve as a bridge to legend, personal narrative, oral history, and history. Whose story is history? Whose history is story? (We will, for the sake of parameter, set aside the gender implications of using the term history instead of herstory.) To focus on these questions, I will examine some examples of the literature that generate the conflict, some critical response to that literature in print, and a sampling of the heated and heartfelt exchange about that literature on Internet discussion groups.

**Attribution and Interpretation**

The background for this work began five years ago with two articles about source citation in picture book folktales, which at the time ranged from nonexistent to sporadic (Hearne, 1993a, 1993b). Since that time, writers, illustrators, publishers, and reviewers seem much more attuned to the importance of notes about story sources and cultural origins (see, for instance, Birch, 1996; Horning, 1997), just as in nonfiction for children we no longer welcome phrases such as “studies show” but demand which studies, with documentation. However, evasive new citation tactics for folktales have also developed right along with new expectations. Even when a note appears, as in the case of *The Windigo's Return: A North Woods Story* by David Wood (1996), it may not tell us much:

The Ojibwe term “Windigo” is still found throughout the Great North Woods, usually in place-names like Windigo Lake, Windigo Island, Windigo Road. But few people nowadays have any idea of what the name means. It was in the woods of northwestern Ontario many winters ago that I first heard a version of this delightful tale told by a white-haired Ojibwe (Anishinabe) woman. Since then my travels and readings have led me to many variations of the same basic theme, echoing through the ancient oral traditions of northern Native American cultures, from the East Coast to the Pacific Northwest.

Windigo tales often took place during the Winter Moons. This particular story employs a multi-seasonal approach (unpaginated).

So what does the name Windigo mean? Wood should be one of the few who knows if he’s telling us this story, and he should tell us. Does the monster in the story, the Windigo, have a mythical history? Where in the woods of northwestern Ontario? That’s a big place. Who was the “white-haired Ojibwe (Anishinabe) woman?” Did she have a name? If she didn’t want it used, might there have been a specifiable occasion for this telling? What readings have led to variations of this theme? Has it appeared in other collections? Which collections? Which cultures? Quite a few Native
American groups range from the East Coast to the Pacific Northwest. It is one thing to adapt a folktale from a printed source, which should, of course, be cited. It is another to collect a story from an oral source and not attribute it, which violates basic folklore and storytelling ethics. Although the person whose story has been collected will not receive the money or prestige of authorship, at least she or he will have been acknowledged as well as the story's origin.

Such vagueness is all the more striking in contrast to another version of the same story, The Legend of the Windigo: A Tale from Native North America by Gayle Ross (1996) published the same season. Her note is much more detailed and specific, naming both the persons and printed sources on which she drew in addition to giving some contextual background. One other point to which we shall return: Ross is Native American, though not of the tribe involved here; Wood is not. Here is Ross's (1996) note:

Though it is based on several stories told by tribes in the north, from the Tlingit of Northwest Canada to the Cree of the Eastern Woodlands, this version is essentially my own creation.

Many years ago, I stood next to a roaring campfire with a gathering of storytellers and folk musicians in northern Wisconsin. I had just told a story about a Cree trickster's run-in with a gang of angry hornets. My friend Bruce "Utah" Phillips said that he had heard about a story someplace involving a monster that the people burned, and the ashes turned into the plague we know as mosquitoes. I knew the monster Bruce was talking about had to be the Windigo, having heard many Windigo stories from my adopted brother, Chippewa-Cree storyteller Ron Evans. In a Cree tale about the destruction of the Windigo, the insects created from its ashes are biting blackflies.

Drawing on the memories of those stories, I began to weave this tale. A Tlingit variation called "How Mosquitoes Came to Be," retold from a 19-century English source, has appeared in American Indian Myths and Legends, edited by Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz, and Favorite Folktales from Around the World, edited by Jane Yolen. . . . Finally, the character of the young boy at the sweat lodge fire is my own creation, inspired by a real incident in my family. (unpaginated)

What a journey this story has made; how enriching to know a few places where it has traveled on its way to readers and listeners. And generally, despite examples of "non-source" notes, the quantity and quality of citations are improving. Judy Sierra (1996a), a folklorist who wrote Storytellers' Research Guide: Folktale, Myths, and Legends, knows how important are the footprints of a story, and she shows us in her carefully cited Nursery Tales from Around the World (Sierra, 1996b), explaining her rationale for retelling some tales and reprinting others, citing her exact sources (including a Pueblo version of The Tortoise and the Hare and a Cherokee pourquoi tale), indicating where she has needed and gotten permission and referring to the standard Aarne-Thompson tale types and Thompson motifs that can lead listeners to similar tales across cultures. Some, though
not all, of the notes also elaborate with bits of textual or contextual explanation: for instance: "In the original Norwegian text of [The Pancake], the characters also have rhyming names: kone krone (the woman), mand brand (the man), hone pone (the hen), ande vande (the duck), and gasse vasse (the goose)" (p. 105); or "Soda saleratus is the name of a chemical compound formerly used in baking breads and biscuits in the same way that baking soda is used today. The fireboard is the shelf above a fireplace, usually called the mantelpiece" (p. 107). Folklorist John Bierhorst's (1997) notes for The Dancing Fox are well, if briefly, contextualized ("Notice that the fox promises the woman not one but two husbands, an arrangement not unheard of in Inuit society and one that implies high status and material comforts for the woman" [p. 135]), as are Howard Norman's (1997) for The Girl Who Dreamed Only Geese and Other Tales of the Far North.

As more good source notes appear, however, the underlying issue of ownership comes to the fore, sometimes because information makes the question of ownership all too clear. Identifying the source of a story is only the beginning, it turns out. The next step is considering the broader implications of who tells stories and how they tell them. Indeed, the argument of who owns a story is almost as old and traditional as the stories on which the argument focuses.

One obvious root of the ownership problem is the fact that early "collectors"—folklorists, anthropologists, or writers—were usually men from a colonizing power with a history of oppressing the culture being studied (no one worries about Jon Scieszka’s [1989] offending Anglo-Americans with his version of The True Story of the Three Little Pigs by A. Wolf). Adding insult to injury is the further fact that the culture may be subject to continued social, economic, and political oppression, so that cultural "raiding" sets off historical suspicion if not rage. While some people have now begun to recognize—largely because of Native American protests—the ethical questions attendant to desecrating graves, selling holy objects to art collectors, and displaying ancestral bones in a museum, the spoken word is more elusive. Still, in some ways, story could be considered an artifact belonging to its culture of origin (Harrison [1992] actually explores this idea in “Ritual as Intellectual Property”).

Challenging this position is the fact that, without collectors, however controversial their methods, motivations, or presentations, much great culture would be lost. Without Joel Chandler Harris, for example, we would not have such a large canon of Brer Rabbit stories despite the fact that a few would survive for collection in the twentieth century. Without Henry Schoolcraft, we would have far less knowledge of Native American lore, although, again, some of that lore obviously continues and grows. Without the children's books based on work such as these mens', fewer people, young or old, would be aware of the rich heritage that
African-American and northern Native American cultures bring to U. S. culture. However, "collectors" versions of the tales were filtered through attitudes foreign to the tellers, a fact of which we are perhaps more aware now than then. Like folktales themselves, the study of folklore has changed constantly and traveled far.

It should be noted at this point that, just as folklore has a crossover audience of children and adults, folklorists such as Harold Courlander, John Bierhorst, and Howard Norman have "crossed over" by publishing the finest products of their research for children as well as adults. Courlander worked with Haitians, Cubans, several African groups, East Indians, southern African Americans, and southwestern American Indians, especially the Hopi (Courlander, 1970). Bierhorst has published extensive and meticulously documented collections of Native American lore from both the southern and northern parts of the continent. Norman has concentrated on northern Native American tales, especially Cree. All of these people are distinguished scholars as well as riveting storytellers who have won children's book awards along with recognition in the field of folklore.

However, many adaptors of folktales from cultures other than their own are artists or writers whose primary concern is not cultural authenticity but a no less noble dedication to aesthetic expression. Says Jane Yolen (1994) in her article "An Empress of Thieves": "We humans are made up of stories. Almost all those stories have already been cross-fertilized by other cultures, other tongues. A gifted storyteller can plumb a culture not her own. To arbitrarily set borders for our writers, boxing them in with rules, is to do literature the gravest disservice" (p. 705). Stories travel. They always have. Shakespeare's plays are rife with folklore (compare *King Lear*, for instance, to the Cinderella variant "Like Meat Loves Salt"). He did not cite his sources. On the other hand, he was primarily raiding sources close to his home culture.

Besides cultural and aesthetic interests, aspiration for money, power, and prestige joins the fight over story rights. These agendas are not mutually exclusive. We all have culture; we all tell stories; we all have to make a living. A 1998 picture book called *Magic Words* demonstrates the complexity of issues that only begin to emerge with a faithful acknowledgment of story origin. The politics of cultural appropriation are complex, and this collaboration by New York poet Edward Field and Italian artist Stefano Vitale (now also New York based) is challenging to consider.

Beautifully designed and illustrated with photographs of oil-painted stones and wood set against a background of crystalline snow, the nine narrative poems in *Magic Words* are based on Inuit myths collected by Knud Rasmussen in his 1920s travels from the Arctic to Alaska. Field (1998) delivers the stories in a clean style devoid of poetic pyrotechnics but nevertheless stamped with a distinctly current American idiom (and there-
fore attitude), as in this poem about a wise man cutting open the belly of “The Giant Bear” after being swallowed alive: “Everyone lived on bear meat for a long time. / That's the way it goes: / Monster one minute, food the next.” Although there is no background note on the art, Vitale’s illustrations apparently draw on traditional motifs and stylistic imagery of Inuit art, integrated with his own surrealistic interpretation, all translated in organic materials. The contrast of dark objects on snowy ground is arresting, and the figures themselves dominate starkly disciplined compositions. Field (1998), unlike Vitale, has set the textual scene with an extensive note regarding the source and inspiration of his poems:

This collection of poems came to be thanks to a remarkable Dane named Knud Rasmussen, who spent his life among the people often called Eskimos but who call themselves Inuit. . . . He spent many months with Inuit tribes, sharing their lives and writing in his journals everything the people told him about their world. . . . One well-known poet named Orpingalik explained to Rasmussen, in words that many a modern poet would agree with, that “songs are thoughts, sung out on the breath, when people are moved by great feelings, and ordinary speech is no longer enough.” . . . I drew on this material to create this selection of their legends, which deals with what the Inuit told Rasmussen about the universe and its creation: the sky, the stars, the weather, and the creatures with whom they share their land of snow and ice. Inspired by both the songs the poets sang for Rasmussen and the stories and legends ordinary people told him, I have tried to recapture Inuit voices in poems in our own language. I hope that the reader can imagine real people speaking—in this case the Inuit, in all their history and humanity. (unpaginated)

The tricky aspect is nuance of diction and tone in Field’s poetry. Remember that his is a poetic adaptation of an English translation of a Danish translation of an Inuit story. Although recounting the creation of earth and humans, sun and moon, thunder and lightning may seem purely a matter of craft, the choice of words can alter meaning significantly from non-European lore which is based on cultural assumptions different from the adaptor’s and readers’. Since Field has “tried to recapture Inuit voices in poems in our own language,” it might have been important to immerse himself in the culture of the people he is “projecting,” especially since many native peoples have come to resent being represented by outsiders who profit from their lore (Lenore Keeshig-Tobias [1998] puts it quite plainly: “Appropriation exploits and commercializes Native cultures, and is harmful to innocent people” [p. 71]). On the other hand, Rasmussen did immerse himself in Inuit culture for thirty years, from 1902 to 1932 (he was born in Greenland of Inuit ancestry on his mother’s side and traveled some 29,000 miles of arctic North America, mostly by dog sled), and Field’s giving a wider world access to these stories, even in basic outline, is valuable. Moreover, to assess the work for anything other than its aesthetic effect may be pitting artistic freedom against political censorship.
Demonstrating the long-standing nature of this dilemma of aesthetic versus cultural ownership is another picture book based on Rasmussen's work, *Beyond the High Hills: A Book of Eskimo Poems* published in 1961, thirty-seven years before Field's book came out. This book bears the name of neither author nor translator but only of the photographer who illustrated it. However, there is a very specific source note: "These poems were collected among the Iglulik Eskimos of the Hudson Bay region and the Musk Ox people of the Copper Country and appear in volumes 7 and 9 of Rasmussen's *Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921-1924.* The photographs by Father Guy Mary-Rousseliere, who is an Oblate priest doing mission work among the Eskimos, were taken in the same area" (Rasmussen, 1961, unpaginated). The advantage of this work is its direct visual and verbal representation of the originating culture, albeit several times removed. We see vivid photographs of the people, if not the persons, from whom this narrative came, and we hear it in a presumably direct translation. (This version is, of course, long out of print, but we do have some recent outstanding anthologies of other northern Native lore, including John Bierhorst's (1997) *The Dancing Fox: Arctic Folktales* and Howard Norman's (1997) *The Girl Who Dreamed Only Geese and Other Tales of the Far North,* both published in 1997 and the latter on the Aesop Accolade List sponsored by the Children's Folklore Section of the American Folklore Society.)

In both picture books, old and new, Rasmussen and the Inuit have been clearly identified. The issue here is no longer attribution but interpretation. Although one definition of folklore is its survival through time, cultures do change. The Inuit of today are different from the Inuit of eighty years ago. Interpreting their old lore without their input essentially freezes them in time as well as potentially misrepresenting them entirely. The very choice of materials can distort meaning through omission or imbalance, as can the choice of what to put in and what to leave out of the chosen materials. Says Keeshig-Tobias (1998): "Cultural insight, cultural nuance, cultural metaphor, cultural symbols, hidden subtext—give a book or film the ring of truth. Images coded with our meanings are the very things missing in most 'native' writings by non-Native authors. These are the very things that give stories their universal appeal, that allow true empathy and shared emotion" (p. 71).

**Permission and Cultural Assertion**

Discussing choices of and within Native American lore raises the issue of who will make those choices. Who will control the use of a culture’s lore which is often governed internally by social/ritual rules that are a profound part of its meaning and telling? Beyond attribution and interpretation looms yet another element—i.e., permission. Nancy Van Laan's (1997) *Shingebiss: An Ojibwe Legend,* thoughtfully written and brilliantly illustrated by Betsy Bowen, notes six sources ranging from Henry
Schoolcraft in 1856, to Benjamin Hathaway in 1882, to William Jones edited by Franz Boas in 1919, along with more recent texts (unpaginated). This picture book has generated a furor on the ChildLit listserv (child_lit@email.rutgers.edu) from which I have extracted a few quotes (with permission from each author) to show opposing viewpoints. These are most distinctly represented by Roger Sutton, editor of *The Horn Book Magazine*, and Debbie Reese, a reviewer for *The Horn Book Guide*, a doctoral student in early childhood education at the University of Illinois and specialist in images of Native Americans in children's books (Reese, 1998, pp. 636-43). The exchange took place on a thread called “Multiculturalism, yet again” and involved many posts. Part of Sutton's first post said:

We've just reviewed a new picture book by Nancy Van Laan, illustrated by Betsy Bowen, called *Shingebiss; An Ojibwe Legend* published by Houghton Mifflin. It's about a tough little diving-duck who outwits the fearsome Kabibona'kan, Winter Maker. I like the book a lot, but it has a strange source note. The note contains a list of books, but it does not provide a specific source for the story. It also says "Tobacco and gifts were taken to an elder in the Grand Portage Chippewa Band to ask for an understanding of this story." What does this mean? Did they buy some guy a drink and a Marlboro and say, "Hey, what do you think of our book?" The passive construction of the sentence is a little coy, and note that it does not say that an understanding was given, only that it was asked for. And what the heck is an understanding of a story anyway? . . . (Sutton, ChildLit, September 24, 1997)

In her first response, Debbie Reese criticized Sutton for showing cultural insensitivity and said, among other things: “As a Pueblo Indian, I am offended that Roger would see 'elder' and think 'some guy' and 'tobacco' and think 'Marlboro' and 'gifts' and think 'a drink'” (Reese, ChildLit, September 24, 1997). Sutton replied: “Debbie doesn't seem to recognize that I'm on her side. My point is that the source note in question is evasive, patronizing, and totally devoid of any information whatsoever. Some people might even call it insensitive” (Sutton, ChildLit, September 24, 1997). Later he apologized:

I'm sincerely sorry if anyone (this includes you, Debbie) was offended by my joke about buying a drink for some guy and giving him a cigarette. I did not mean to perpetuate a stereotype; I meant to expose one. While I do understand—if not always remember—that humor doesn't always travel well on email, I would like to say that irony is a Way of my people, on both the Irish and the homosexual sides. Booze, smoking, and guys are sacred to both traditions, and we think everything is funny, including ourselves. (Sutton, ChildLit, Sept. 25, 1997)

Reese replied privately:

I appreciate the apology. There was a time when I had a greater sense of humor about this sort of joke, but that was when I was back home at the Pueblo, surrounded by my family, relatives, etc. Though
tragedy strikes us, and social ills abound, we draw strength from each other, a strength that allows jokes like that to go unnoticed, or be deemed not worthy of concern, or even told amongst ourselves.

But now that I live far away from family, in a place where there are so few Native Americans (let alone PUEBLO Indians) around, in a place where people revere a sports symbol who does a gymnastics-like dance wearing feathers and buckskin, where such figures and caricatures inform and feed the very wrong conceptions of who Native People are, it just doesn't seem appropriate to joke in this way. (Reese, e-mail, September 29, 1997)

I am especially grateful to these two spokespersons for their honest, direct, and personal exposure of a deep cultural dilemma that is often avoided in formal informational exchanges. Both have broad understanding of their subjects, and both are willing to go online with what may be irreconcilable differences of opinion based on background, experience, and knowledge. Their disagreement demonstrates that, in moving from a tribal context to a popular print context, Shingebiss begged a question: Who owns it? The Chippewa? Which Chippewa? The unnamed elder? The re-creator? The reader? Which reader? Who’s to say, and in what tone of voice? The fact that one sentence in Van Laan’s source note triggered a thread with multiple posts over a period of many days demonstrates the way ownership of story taps into a social subtext of powerful dimensions both emotionally and intellectually. It also shows how a folk group united through common work goals can be strained by crossing boundaries of cultural and physical space.

Another point to be observed here is that listservs seem related more to oral than to print tradition in their spontaneity, group dynamic, and ephemeral nature. The members talk to each other with an informality quite different from letter writing. However, this kind of communication lacks the context of physical exchange, which is why humor does not translate well. Reese’s point about needing the context of a secure folk group to absorb self-directed humor may show that a spatially remote environment can be as insecure as a culturally remote environment. It also shows that humor is one of the most difficult elements to cross cultural boundaries. Paul Goble (1998), an artist who has taken Lakota (Sioux), Blackfeet, and Cheyenne folklore very seriously for three decades since he moved from England to the Black Hills and was adopted by the Lakota tribe, starts one of his many award-winning picture books with this tease: “Hi kids! I'M IKTOMI! That white guy, Paul Goble, is telling my stories again. Only Native Americans can tell Native American stories. So, let’s not have anything to do with them. Huh? You’re cool kids! You’re GREAT!!” (unpaginated).

As usual, he lists all the sources from which he adapted the tale, Iktomi and the Coyote (1998), the sixth in a series about a Plains Indian trickster. The ten sources include:


Darnell Davis Rides at the Door. (1979). *Napi Stories* (Blackfeet Heritage Program, Browning) (p. 33).


Moreover, Goble recounts the occasion when he first heard an Iktomi story nearly forty years ago from Edgar Red Cloud of the Lakota: “[I]n the shade of cottonwood trees at the powwow ground in Pine Ridge, South Dakota” (Goble, 1981, unpaginated). He also gives some background on the ambiguous role tricksters play in many Native American cultures. Equally important, Goble designs an aspect of traditional context—audience participation—into the varied typefaces as he specifically instructs readers: “When the text changes to gray italic, readers and listeners may want to make their own comments.” There are in fact four voices (four is a standard number in folktales from many Native American tribes) in the text. The narrator’s is in large black typeface: “Iktomi was walking along. . . .” The call for response appears in large gray italics: “Do you remember that every story about Iktomi starts like this?” Iktomi’s monologue within the story is also in large black typeface with quotation marks around it: “Hi, I’m Iktomi. You know me. Yesterday I was at the White House. The President needed my advice.” Iktomi’s asides are in small black typeface, often in the form of boasts, questions, or demonstrations: “My warbonnet and trailer (Eagle-friendly feathers made of dyed domestic goose).” These asides often reveal the true nature of Iktomi, especially his foolishness, as much as does the action of the story: “How did my ancestors tell stories if they had no books?” . . . “I’m a great hunter—it’s
in my ancestral blood. I wish I had brought my AK-47.” Goble has worked to incorporate a new context for “Iktomi Power” while retaining a traditional tone that combines derision with affection and respect.

Of course, Goble has published serious stories as well, including many legends (The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses won the 1978 Caldecott Medal, and The Legend of White Buffalo Woman [Goble, 1998] was on the 1998 Aesop Accolade List), myths (Star Boy, 1983, etc.), and history (The Death of Iron Horse, 1987, etc.). But his humor seems born of a secure knowledge about, and ease with, the culture on which he draws. How do we draw a line between humor that stereotypes a culture and humor that engages it? Debbie Reese suggests that some Native Americans who admired Goble’s serious work are now questioning his handling of the Iktomi tales (personal communication, November 23, 1998). Humor, as we’ve seen, is one of the touchiest cultural elements to translate across boundaries in print, online, or in person. Can only Native Americans laugh at other Native Americans? Or only members of a tribe laugh at other members of that tribe? If we can’t laugh at each other, how can we relate as individuals across the boundaries that segregate humanity? What we can’t laugh at, we tend to mythologize, and that’s a barrier to real communication and mutual acceptance.

Harold Courlander (1970/1996) tells a story of his “induction” into a group of Navajo regulars at an Arizona cafe. He had been steadily ignored as a white outsider except by the Hopi cleanup man, something of a trickster himself, who—when Courlander admired his belt buckle—insisted on giving it to him, especially after the Navajo stopped talking among themselves to “watch the performance.”

I said “No. I can’t take your belt.” He said, “When an Indian offers to give you something, you’ve got to accept it from the Indian, you can’t say ‘No I won’t accept it,’ that’s an insult!”

I said, “I don’t mean it as an insult, all I wanted was a little information, and now you want to give me your belt.” And he said, “Why won’t you accept this belt?” and he’s taking it and pulling it further out. And I said, “Well, I do have a reason.” He said, “What’s that?” and I said, “Because your pants will fall down.”

The Navajos broke out laughing. Polacaca sheepishly put the belt back in its loops. The Navajo said, “Come sit over here with us.” After that, whenever I came in for breakfast, the Navajo greeted me and made room for me at the counter.” (Jaffe, 1997, p. 132)

This story not only points up the importance of humor as an in-group/out-group issue (see Barre Toelken’s [1996, pp. 245-46] famous “Connotative Moose Nose” story for a full exploration of this dynamic) but also suggests that we remember how all groups break down into smaller groups, Navajo and Hopi being distinctly different and traditionally hostile subgroups of a minority group that whites often lump together as Native American. The folklorist got “in” with the Navajo by leaving the Hopi “out.”
The ingroup/outgroup issue has infinite permutations that affect permission as well as interpretation. Was it okay for the late Chief Lelooska (1997) to draw on Northwest Coast Indian tales in *Echoes of the Elders: The Stories and Paintings of Chief Lelooska* and winner of the 1998 Aesop Prize, Children’s Folklore Section, AFS) if he was Cherokee and only adopted into the Kwakiutl tribe? And if it is, shouldn’t we apply the same rule to Goble, white but adopted into the Lakota tribe? Is a person’s right of ownership affected by the percentage of Indian or white blood or by knowledge and experience of traditions? What about the myriad subgroups within each tribal group with their attendant differences and disagreements.

In one of his thoughtful posts to the ChildLit listserv, which in fact triggered the whole *Shingebiss* debate, Julius Lester addressed just this issue. Lester is a distinguished writer and career officer in the culture wars, having adapted four volumes of Uncle Remus stories into witty current vernacular (Lester, 1987, 1988, 1990, 1994). Just as he defended that trickster from attacks for not being a model rabbit (Lester, *New York Times*, Letters, June 14, 1987; Introduction to *The Last Tales of Uncle Remus*, 1994), he now defends other stories from political correction:

> It is ironic that in the push for cultural diversity, diversity within cultures is being denied. There is no such thing as THE African-American experience. I am 58 years old and the black experience I grew up with bears little resemblance to hip-hop and the black experience of urban youths. Just because I’m black it doesn’t mean that I like rap, or for that matter, even understand the words. I don’t. But if I want to understand the words of a rap “song,” who do I ask? My 17-year-old white stepdaughter who has no trouble understanding Tupac Shakur and any of the rest. Go figure. (Lester, ChildLit, Sept. 24, 1997)

Supporting Lester’s assertion about personal diversity are the frequently mixed reactions to a picture book within the cultural community. David Adler’s (1997) picture book *Chanukah in Chelm* made some Jewish readers angry because they felt it poked fun at the rabbi (whose Sabbath message is “That that is, is not/that is not./That that is not, is/not that that is./Is not that it? It is”) as well as the synagogue caretaker (“Mendel . . . looked under the table and over it. He even moved the table aside so he could look behind it. But he couldn’t find a table to place by the window”). David Adler, however, is an Orthodox Jew while the illustrator, an Irish-American artist named Kevin O’Malley, dedicated his remarkably irreverent pictures to “all my Jewish relatives”—the family into which he married. Go figure.

**AESTHETICS AND ETHICS**

Enter the realm of artistic freedom and individual difference. Janice Harrington, a noted African-American storyteller, makes no bones about
cultural qualifications for re-creating folklore: “Just because a person is one color or another doesn’t mean s/he qualifies as an expert. I’ve known plenty of folks of various shades—black, white, green, blue, or purple—who didn’t know their traditions but did know how to mess up a good story” (Harrington, personal communication, October 22, 1998). Being part of a cultural in-group doesn’t automatically make you the best conveyer of its lore. Umi Heo’s (1996) *The Green Frogs: A Korean Folktale* isn’t stellar just because she’s Korean but because she’s a skillful artist and storyteller. Baba Wagué Diakité’s (1997) *The Hunterman and the Crocodile: A West African Folktale* isn’t notable just because Diakité is West African but because he’s gifted and practiced at bearing those gifts.

And many things can go wrong for a combination of aesthetic and cultural reasons:

- Certainly a story can be literally confusing when taken out of context, as was Rafe Martin’s (1998) *The Brave Little Parrot*, which introduces Hindu mythology into a realistic setting without identifying it. Unnamed, Ganesha appears to be, inexplicably, an elephant with human feet floating in the sky.
- Certainly a story can be culturally confusing, as was Yukio Tsuchiya’s (1988) *The Faithful Elephants: A True Story of Animals, People, and War*, which turned out to be a legend and a complex one at that (Kawabata & Vandergrift, 1998, pp. 6-12).
- Certainly a story’s selection of details can be literally misleading, as in Robin Moore’s (1997) *Hercules*, which leaves out critical chunks of sex and violence so that Hera’s vengeful pursuit of the hero is never explained by her jealousy over Zeus’s dalliance with a mortal (is it okay to misrepresent the mythology of dead Greeks just because living Greeks don’t worship the same pantheon of gods today?).
- Certainly a story’s inaccurate detail can be culturally misleading, as in the reference to a “hogan” (Navajo) in a Mandan myth as retold by U.K. writer Geraldine McCaughrean (1998) in *The Bronze Cauldron: Myths and Legends of the World*.
- And certainly a culture can simply be omitted because of the complexity of dealing with all these problems, witness Eva Martin and László Gál’s (1987) *Tales of the Far North*: “The only indigenous folktales of Canada belong to the native Canadian Indian and Inuit peoples. Because these native peoples have such a unique and beautiful tradition of storytelling, no attempt has been made to adapt their stories for this collection. Too often English-speaking storytellers retell native tales only from their own perspective, imposing upon the tales their own vision of life” (p. 123).

True, and conscientiously stated, but now we have a beautiful volume of Canadian tales with no representation of an important cultural group.
So how do we deal with folktales crossing cultural and aesthetic borders in the “innocent” fields of children’s literature, which on closer examination sometimes resemble battlefields of social values? Is this a no-win situation?

The answer lies in the nature of stories themselves. Despite legal efforts and ethical pressures, the one thing a story cannot seem to be is owned. Stories are outlaw. They will elude U.S. copyright laws as well as tribal laws (the Tlingit, for instance, have had a complex system of story ownership from which stories strayed just as they have from the copyright domain). A note at the beginning of Chief Lelooska’s posthumously published *Echoes of the Elders: The Stories and Paintings of Chief Lelooska* (Normandin, 1997) is careful to explain his acquisition of the tales: “He recalled vividly something one of the elders had told him many years before when he was doing research on the old stories. ‘Don’t take these stories to the grave with you.’ The elder then entrusted into Lelooska’s care stories of the Kwakiutl so that they could be passed on to new generations” (unpaginated). Yet every reader can now retell them, with or without the same sense of cultural responsibility, from Lelooska’s printed version (for further consideration of indigenous peoples’ intellectual property rights, see Brush & Stabinsky, 1996). Folklorist Barre Toelken (1998) recounts the ethical dilemma facing him when his career-long collection of taped stories from Yellowman, who willingly told them, posed a threat to Yellowman’s widow and family in terms of their Navajo world view. Drawing on forty-three years of experience and on ethical manifestos such as Claire R. Farrer’s (1994) “Who Owns the Words? An Anthropological Perspective on Public Law 101-601,” Toelken ultimately decides he does not own the words and returns them for the family’s disposal.

Stories, of course, can be possessed. They will enter some person for a while and then leave (Norman, 1985, p. 19). They will live and die or perhaps reincarnate in another form. In short, stories are beyond our control, a sometimes daunting notion for scientific westerners. Although education for responsible custodianship is the ideal, the fact remains that such a voluntary effort will always produce sporadic results. And the implications are enormous, because story lives right next door to history and is first cousin to fiction. It is no accident that the same listserv which hosted the controversy about ownership of folktales later became a forum for debate about cultural representation in historical fiction, specifically the image of Native Americans in Alice Dalgliesh’s (1954) *The Courage of Sarah Noble*; history, in Susan Jeffers’s (1991) *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky*; and even fantasy, in Lynne Reid Banks’s (1998) *The Key to the Indian*, a sequel to two equally controversial books, *Indian in the Cupboard* (Banks, 1980) and *The Return of the Indian* (Banks, 1986).

Banks’s first two novels evoked strong criticism for cultural insensitivity, including savage and violent images of Native Americans, stereotyped
speech patterns, and a white boy's manipulating a tiny “Iroquois” figurine that comes to life (dressed in Plains Indian clothing with tipi). A ChildLit post (October 5, 1998) mentioned that Banks seemed to have responded to previous criticism by engaging a consultant to vet Native American aspects of the third in the fantasy series. Beverly Slapin (1998), an editor of Through Indian Eyes and a strong advocate of fair Native American representation in children's literature, contacted the consultant, Marge Bruchac and posted Bruchac's response. Bruchac expressed frustration that her name had been used but none of her advice followed, and that Banks had persisted in hide-bound attitudes and insisted on what amounted to her own creative rights (Slapin, ChildLit, October 6, 1998).

Although a close analysis of this exchange is outside our scope here, some of the issues involved in fiction are the same as those in folklore, among them cultural representation, the rights of the storyteller, and the effects of the story. Notice also how many cultural boundaries the listserv discussion crosses: Banks is British, Slapin is Jewish American, Bruchac is Native American, and Julius Lester, who had already expressed a strong viewpoint on the “creative rights” issue several months earlier, is African American. He makes a case for imaginative latitude:

But perhaps we need to distinguish between documentary accuracy and “poetic license.” Remember that term? We used to be more accepting of factual inaccuracy because of the larger artistic purpose. Today, however, such generosity seems to be on the wane because of issues of who has the *right* to portray whose culture, etc. That, however, is not a literary issue. It is a political one involving who has power (or is perceived to have power) and who has access to power. . . .

For all the things that may be “inaccurate” about the Jeffers Book [Brother Eagle, Sister Sky] it seems to have touched something within people that other books had not to the same degree. . . . [though] she “used” him [Chief Seattle] for her own purposes.

Ah, but isn’t that what we writers do, regardless? We “use”, exploit anything and anyone if we think doing so will strengthen what we are writing [here Lester tells the story of “using” his parents’ letters to write his first adult novel, Do Lord Remember Me; and of his mother’s response that “A lot of what you wrote in that book wasn’t true.”] I did not set out to write a book that would accurately reflect my parents as they were in life. I wanted them to be “real” in the context of the novel and the emotions of those who read the novel. . . .

Perhaps because we live in the “Information Age” we seem to be expecting fiction to be a source of information. When I want information, I go to the Britannica or the almanac. I expect fiction to nourish and enliven my spirit and if the writer and/or illustrator got some facts wrong, maybe even some big ones, O.K. . . . The classical pianist, Artur Rubinstein, was noted for playing wrong notes and yet, he is still considered one of the greatest pianists and interpreters of Chopin in particular. (Lester, ChildLit, April 17, 1998)

Slapin and Bruchac could very well argue that Julius Lester was using
a culture of his own rather than someone else's, and Lester could very well argue back that the storyteller's imaginative space must be unbounded (considerations of censorship, a perplex endemic to a society as heterogeneous as the United States, must wait for more spacious treatment). These opposing viewpoints from Slapin/Bruchac and Lester seem to summarize the polarities of approach to story, and each involves a credible argument. Moreover, as a student of these issues, I "read" my own experience into both positions. Bruchac's being misused as a consultant—to lend cultural credibility to a project over which she ultimately had no control—reminds me of a situation similar in effect if not substance: I once withdrew my name from being listed as consultant to a major video production because the corporation asked for my advice and then systematically spurned it in the interest of frenetically paced cartoons with little resemblance to the folktales on which they were based. Lester's post takes me back to the image of that Native American girl whom I "used" as she moved from a picture on the classroom wall to a novel half a century later. Every story is, to some extent, a memory swap. The swap may be explicit, as in exchanging stories verbally; or it may be implicit, as in the case of arguments over a story's meaning, to which each person brings different memories. This kind of swapping leads inevitably to games of cultural leapfrog.

I am reminded of a funny but haunting story, "How Death Came to Ireland" (Neely, 1938/1989/1998), a variant of the European Swan Maiden story "told by the late Frank Schumaker, Grand Tower, who learned it at either first or second hand from an Irish immigrant who had settled in that town and worked at the iron foundry that used to be there" (p. 125).

A French king traveling about to look for a wife sees three beautiful swans and decides to hunt them but is discouraged from doing so by a local monk: "They ain't swans. They're the girls who come to the lake every day to swim.' The old monk had lived a thousand years, and he knew all about them things" (p. 122). The king traps the swans in human form, marries one, tries to return for a visit to France, and is caught by the Devil, whom he in turn tricks into a box. The box gets thrown into the ocean and washed ashore on the Emerald Isle. "Two big Irishmen got sledge-hammers and broke the box open. Death flew out and killed every man of them. And he started to killin' people all over Ireland. That was why the Irishmen left Ireland and come to America" (p. 123). How's that for a neat explanation of the Irish-American immigrant experience borrowed from Europe? The Swan Maiden may have had nothing to do with Irish immigration to America, but now it does. The folktale suddenly becomes personal narrative, which shortly checks in somewhere between personal myth and fiction as we reshape it to fit our changing needs and turn it into family history. Is there a difference, ultimately, between folktale, personal narrative, family lore, and fiction in the way we use story as daily habit? We, otherwise known as the folk, use stories to explain our lives
not literally—any more than Coyote stories were/are considered literal explanations for humanity's incurable absurdity—but figuratively (Barre Toelken [1996, p. 128] provides us with an interesting example of literal versus figurative interpretation in a Coyote story). The flexible symbolism of folktales makes them culturally adaptable, and they become our own. When a story fits, we wear it. Is this thievery? Without that jumbo clothes swap, we'd be naked, but we still like to call our clothes our own.

The only way to reconcile the differences between conflicting needs of borrowing and owning stories is to try and realize the benefit of both. Every story has a story that enriches the telling of it and therefore enriches the teller. The knowledge of a story's history is not so much a burden as it is a matter of self-interest. Here, self-interest dictates a process of swapping rather than stealing, and swapping has certain ground rules. We can cheat to gain temporary advantage, but ultimately the more we bring to the swap, the richer we become. Long-range swapping depends on a relationship of mutual advantage. Moreover, good bargaining depends on knowledge of the wares, especially if they're antiques. The more knowledge we bring to a story and its history, the more we get as tellers and listeners. This kind of swap can help satisfy the requirements of both cultural responsibility and artistic freedom and, in doing so, can help ease (though never erase) tension between the ethics and aesthetics of folklore in children's literature. There are, of course, no easy answers. In some cases, a knowledge swap only entrenches conflicting positions. But with an awareness of a story's history comes at least the opportunity for better understanding of conflicts common to a diversified humanity.

CONCLUSION

In appropriating folktales, does children's literature swap with or steal from cultural lore? That's a question each of us needs to consider with every book we evaluate. Certainly without folklore there would be no children's literature. Children's books were born of folklore and nurtured by folkloric traditions. Caxton printed lore such as Aesop's fables which children recognized and took for their own. Chapbooks in search of content seized on folktales, and children seized on chapbooks. Charles Perrault reshaped and published the stories his son's nurse, probably illiterate, told. Educators such as Madame Le Prince de Beaumont buried tales like Beauty and the Beast, based on earlier lore, in their advice for young ladies. The Grimms anthologized folktales and altered them through seven editions with an increasing awareness of their appeal to children. Folklorist Andrew Lang recognized the power of series to attract a new market of children and followed up his discovery with eleven variously colored fairy tale books. Since 1900, picture books have drawn from folkloric conventions to shape original texts (Hearne, 1998b). European artists brought their folktales to the United States as refugees af-
ter World Wars I and II and fed a burgeoning new industry with picture books and illustrated collections. At first slowly, now quickly, Native American, African-American, and Asian American folktales have joined European lore in the world of children’s literature. It is a rich tradition, and the story of each story is worth telling.

Note

1 Picture books generally have 32 pages but the pages are unnumbered, as reflected in the “unpaginated” notation after the quotations throughout this article.

References


Juan Bobo: A Folkloric Information System

SARAI LASTRA

ABSTRACT
FROM 1916 THROUGH 1929, THE Journal of American Folklore (JAF) published nine volumes containing various forms of Puerto Rican folklore which had been collected during the years of 1914 to 1915 by J. Alden Mason, an American anthropologist working under the supervision of Franz Boas. Notable Puerto Rican scholars (Manrique Cabrera, 1982; Rivera de Alvarez, 1983) have endorsed Mason’s collection as being authentic and consider it today as the most complete example of the island’s folklore. Yet Louise D. Dennis (1922) reviewed the Décimas, which are ten-line poems, collected by Mason as not being “truly representative of a folk-art” because they were “developed by means of simile and metaphor not characteristic of folk-poetry” (p. 100). This article is about the relationship between a collector, some of the artifacts in the collection, the informants, and elements that construct and authenticate a folkloric information system.

SITUATING THE PUERTO RICAN CULTURE

And they firmly thought that I, with those ships and people, came from heaven and, in that mindset, they received me in every corner, after they lost their fear. And this did not happen because they were ignorant, they are of subtle intelligence, and men which sail all those seas, it is marvelous the way they tell us about everything, except that they had never seen people dressed like us nor ships like ours.

—Cristobal Colón, 1493

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Taino Indians saw Christopher Columbus as he arrived in Borinquen in 1493. But in 1898, when the U.S. troops arrived, the Tainos were absent from the welcoming celebrations. Spain's influence lingers, however. One hundred years have passed since the Hispanic-American war, and Spanish is still the island's main language. A preference toward certain kinds of food such as rice and beans, an ability to feel Latin musical beats, and family lore and political allegiances are considered, by many, as significant cultural identity markers. Unlike other Spanish-American ethnic groups migrating to the United States, Puerto Ricans do not process immigration papers since they are U.S. citizens. Literally speaking, the Atlantic Ocean is all that separates Puerto Rico from "America."

Although Spanish is the people's dominant language, English has been accepted by the government as one of its official languages. Latin music may reign on Caribbean airwaves, but English radio stations command their place, too. "Who do you feel is your Mother country, Spain or the United States?" is a question asked of some children in local schools. Many question the analogy by replying: "Well, if Spain is my mother, is the U.S.A. my father?" Jose Luis Gonzalez (1980) says the Puerto Rican cultural identity is a complicated matter, since the nation-state has been constructed on "four floors." Gonzalez's book, titled El Pais de Cuatro Pisos (The Country of Four Floors), describes the national identity as being composed of four others: Indians and blacks (floor one); European immigrants, specifically Spaniards (floor two); North Americans (floor three); and an urbanized racial mixture (floor four).

THE ORAL VOICES

I must add, however, that the inhabitants are very loyal to the King, and display an innocence and candor which I have neither seen nor heard of elsewhere in America. . . . In all the island, there are only two schools for children; outside of Puerto Rico [San Juan] and the villa of San Germán, few know how to read. They count time by epochs of government, hurricanes, visits of the Bishop, arrivals of ships, or funds from Mexico. (Alejandro O'Reilly, 1765, as cited in Bagenheim & Wagenheim, 1996, p. 31)

Following Gonzalez's metaphor, it is possible to argue that Puerto Rico's oral history is one that has been composed of unique, distinct and, in many cases, contradictory voices. A joke I heard when growing up in Puerto Rico was about a woman who had fallen in a river. As the townspeople ran to her husband yelling about the accident, the husband replied: "Let us look for her up-stream." "But, Sir, the river flows downward," the people replied. "Yes, I know. But my wife always goes against the flow." In a polyphonic society, nothing conveys contradictions better than its folklore.

When describing the essential quality of Puerto Rican folklore, scholars are usually at a loss for words since it is difficult to explain such cul-
tural richness, complexities, and tensions. For example, Tío Nazario de Figueroa (1967) says: "Puerto Ricans are great friends of dancing. The origin of their dances has been traced to the great Indian Areytos and the primitive rhythms of Congo and other regions of Africa... However, we don't want to imply that all dances are Afro-Indian since we also have Spanish and Arabian influences" (pp. 27-28).

Interestingly, Nazario de Figueroa's statement is footnoted with an editorial comment stating that Indian influences in Puerto Rican dances have not been verified, therefore, for possible origins, the reader should investigate the traditional dances from Spain. This narrative shows the difficulties encountered when trying to situate folklore based on blurred classifications. However, the blurred classifications are not consequences of attaching incorrect semantic labels, but the result of fluid margins because of the nature of this folklore community.

Nonetheless, it is possible to ascertain that Puerto Rican folkloric expressions, in one way or another, reflect influences or elements from Indian, black, and Spanish traditions (Manrique Cabrera, 1969, p. 408). Structurally, some of the popular oral modalities use complex lyrical forms such as: "decimas [which are] (10-stanza couplets) of the anonymous popular poets, who still improvise their chants and play the traditional instruments: the güiro, the cuatro, the tiple, and the guitar" (Babin, 1983, p. 320). In addition to the decimas, Rivera de Alvarez (1983) describes other types of oral expressions used in Puerto Rico, such as the romances and romancillos (short narratives or lyrical poems in octosyllable meters), coplas (ballads), cantos (songs), rimas infantiles (nursery rhymes), refranes (proverbs), adivinanzas (riddles), and cuentos (folktales) (pp. 59-91).

That the importance of oral history has been recognized in this culture can best be summed up by the words of Don Rafael Ramirez de Arellano (1926), a Puerto Rican educator-philosopher who collected samples of folklore eleven years after Mason completed his field project. Says Ramirez de Arellano: "the best preparation for the future is the complete and exact knowledge of the past" (p. 7).

**FROM SPEAKERS TO READERS**

We have profound consideration for your national ideas; you must treat our local ideas with a similar consideration.

—Luis Muñoz Rivera, 1916

A slight detour into some history on Puerto Rican children's literature is necessary for locating the position of printed folktales within the educational system. A chronicle of Puerto Rican children's literature has been given most notably by Ester Feliciano Mendoza (1969), Carmen Bravo Villasante (1966), and Flor Piñeiro de Rivera (1987). Most chroniclers agree that a desire to provide Puerto Rican children with relevant literature
emerged in 1882 when an educator, Eugenio Maria de Hostos, wrote "El Libro de Mis Hijos" (The Book for My Children). De Hostos’s short stories were recommended as valuable literature because children received "wise advice" while decoding the text. However, Feliciano Mendoza (1969) noted that the book should not be considered as initiating a children’s literature publishing trend because its intended audience was not children (p. 444).

It was not until 1898, when the United States assumed control over the island’s educational system and found books unavailable, that a new publishing trend was established. The directives from the federal educational officer were that if in three months locals could not produce suitable Spanish books for children, then all instruction would be switched to English. Feliciano Mendoza describes how Manuel Fernandez Juncos, a Spaniard living in Puerto Rico, “created the miracle” by translating the text of and composing Spanish songs for Sarah Louise Arnold and Charles B. Gilbert’s book *First Steps in English* into a Spanish version titled, *Los Primeros Pasos en Castellano*, within the required time. Afterward, Fernandez Juncos compiled “Antologia Puertorriqueña” (Puerto Rican Anthology), which he described as stories written for a young adult audience. Subsequently, he wrote “Semblanzas Puertorriqueñas” (Biographical Sketches of Puerto Ricans), stories which presented prominent locals in a “delightful way” (Feliciano Mendoza, 1969, pp. 445-46). Other local authors followed Fernandez Juncos’s lead, and Flor Piiieiro (1987, pp. 435) provides an extensive listing of children’s titles and book awards received during the past 100 years.

While local authors were producing various remarkable works for adults and children (for a comprehensive history and chronology, see Rivera de Alvarez, 1983, 1970; Manrique Cabrera, 1982; Martinez Masdeu y Melón, 1970), local educators were dealing with a legacy of a Spanish-English rivalry that was converging on the public schools. Negrón de Montilla (1975) details early controversies spanning the years of 1900 through 1930 and notes that most of the initial misunderstandings stemmed from the first six U.S. Commissioners of Education basing their policy decisions on the following 1899 war report:

That this education should be in English we are clearly of opinion. Porto Rico is now and is henceforth to be a part of the American possessions and its people are to be American. . . . At present only one out of every ten persons on the island can read and write. . . . Why, therefore should we attempt to teach the other nine Spanish instead of English. The question of good citizenship and education can be more easily settled through the public schools than by any other method. (U. S. War Department, Division of Customs and Insular Affairs, 1899, as cited in Negrón Montilla, 1975, p. 36)

Within such an environment of cultural tensions and resistance, English was enforced as the medium for local instruction in 1909. (It is
possible to present below some of the reactions from local educators since Wagenheim and Wagenheim [1996] have made available in English a collection of Puerto Rican historical writings covering 500 years.) Glimpses into the recollections of Cayetano Col y Cuchi, who was a member of the Puerto Rican House of Delegates, show the children's involvement in the struggle for preserving their Spanish heritage:

This [language] struggle culminated in 1909. That year an effort was made to abolish the teaching of Spanish in the public schools. Our schoolmasters were ordered to give their instruction exclusively in English. . . . We knew perfectly well that the soul of a people is incarnated in its language. We would have preferred being without a country, to losing our native tongue. Upon this issue, we joined battle, and spontaneously my friends and I threw ourselves into the thickest of the fight. That was quite natural. But it was the children—children of six, seven, and ten years of age—who really started the revolt. They were the first to rebel. The men at the head of the government were first apprised of the resistance to substituting English for Spanish by a pupils' strike. Children refused to attend their classes unless they might be instructed in the language of their fathers and their country. . . . A resort to brutal measures followed. Children were expelled from the schools. Those who did not attend English classes, or who refused to be taught in that language were turned into the streets. They could not continue their studies; their future was ruined. (as cited in Wagenheim & Wagenheim, 1996, pp. 144-45)

Unfortunately, the language struggle was far from over in 1909, when even darker clouds covered the island. The U.S. Congress was considering granting citizenship to all Puerto Ricans while restricting local voting rights only to literate natives or to local taxpayers. This was a matter of great concern to islanders because they were already voting on insular matters under Spanish rule. Muñoz Rivera, the resident commissioner in Washington, debated against adopting such a measure before the U.S. House of Representatives. Some of his speech is presented below since it also describes the island's literacy problems during the times:

By means of this [voting] restriction 165,000 citizens who vote at present and who have been voting since the Spanish days would be barred from the polls. . . . Here are the facts: There exist at present 250,000 registered electors. Seventy percent of the electoral population is illiterate. There will remain, then, 75,000 registered electors. Adding 10,000 illiterate taxpayers, there will be a total of 85,000 citizens within the electoral register and 165,000 outside of it. I can not figure out, hard as I have tried, how those 165,000 Porto Ricans are considered incapable of participating in elections of their representatives in the legislature and municipalities, while on the other hand they are judged perfectly capable of possessing with dignity American citizenship. (as cited in Wagenheim & Wagenheim, 1996, p. 133)
Among all these educational, political, and social uncertainties, J. Alden Mason arrived in 1914 with his mission to collect the lore of the Puerto Rican folk. The people, following a long-standing tradition of native hospitality coupled with a knack for spontaneous improvisation and a healthy dose of common sense, welcomed him. Mason's personal narratives validate this reception:

The year I studied in Puerto Rico, from 1914 to 1915, has been one of the most pleasant and memorable of my life. In great measure it was due to the kindness of many friends that I made, and to the help they gave me. Evidence of this is the large volume of material that I was able to collect. Most of my time, I spent in Utuado and Loiza, which are considered good centers of the Jibaro's [peasants] and Black's folklore, but I also collected small samples of folklore in San Gérman, Coamo and many other places. (Translated from the Spanish Preface in Adivinanzas: Folklore Puertorriqueño, 1960, pp. 9-11)

THE COLLECTION

Behind nearly every collection lies a tale of adventure and a testimony to the dedication of the collectors. (cited in Seeger & Spear, 1985, p. 3)

Table 1 summarizes the various folkloric genres collected by Mason in Puerto Rico. The material was gathered using three methods, which are listed below in ascending order of sub-collection size:

1. Mason's phonetic transcriptions of folktales, poems, riddles;
2. audio recordings of adult performers of ballads, folktales, poems; and
3. children's writings of folktales, which they collected from their illiterate parents

A basic assumption underlying this article is Bauman's (1977) argument that performance has an effect on the production and dissemination of folklore. Lord (1960) has shown that when a performer's audience is variable and unstable, then the performer or, using Lord's terminology, the "singer of tales," must also be considered a composer (p. 13). Rivera de Alvarez (1983, p. 91) says that, when modern entertainment media like television, movies, and radio were nonexistent in Puerto Rico, the most popular entertainment was storytelling using different types of oral expression. The impromptu locations for sharing folkloric stories could be in people's homes, velorios (funerals), peasant marketplaces, or nightly meetings in the batey (an Indian courtyard). From such customs emerge the now famous literary storytelling traditions called “Los Cuentos del Batey” (Stories from the Batey). Moreover, Rivera de Alvarez (1983) says that Puerto Rican folklore has roots in the epic performances of the Indian Areytos, where the oral expression was of "singing dances" that recorded the victories of war, customs and traditions, and historical memories of the communities (p. 11). In 1788, Fray Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra, a
Table 1.
**Summary of Mason's Collection on "Porto-Rican" Folklore**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oral Form</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Influences and Comparative Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folktales</td>
<td>&quot;Most abundant and best Spanish-American collection&quot; (Espinosa, 1916, p. 423); printed in <em>Journal of American Folklore</em>’s volumes 34, 35, 37.</td>
<td>&quot;Many of those folk-tales are evidently versions of the old European riddle-tales; but a large number are new creations with traditional elements confused and mingled&quot; (Espinosa, 1916, p. 424).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riddles</td>
<td>Second best collection of its kind in Spanish America; 800 riddles and 1,288 variants; Argentinean collection of Lehmann-Nitsche is first with 1,033 riddles (Espinosa, 1916, p. 423, 424).</td>
<td>More similar to the traditions of Spain than the Spanish collections from Argentina or Chile (Espinosa, 1916, p. 424).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Décimas</td>
<td>&quot;Some of the décimas and a few of the shorter aguinaldos show real inspiration, and many a Spanish poet has not written better poetry&quot; (Espinosa, 1918, p. 293); 245 decimas.</td>
<td>May come in octosyllabic or hexasyllabic meters, “Hexasyllabic décimas dealing with love and adventure and especially with biblical traditions, many being beautiful Christmas carols called ‘aguinaldos’ all so abundant in the popular tradition of Porto Rico, are not well known in New Mexico” (Espinosa, 1918, p. 290).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coplas</td>
<td>&quot;Octosyllabic quatrains in assonance&quot;; 600+ (1918, p. 290)</td>
<td>Copla has a rival in the decima. &quot;Everywhere [in Spanish America] the copla holds undisputed sway, with the single exception of Porto Rico&quot; (Espinosa, 1918, p. 290).</td>
</tr>
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Source: *Journal of American Folklore*, 1916; 1918.
chronicler of Puerto Rican history, described what could be loosely argued as customs exhibiting influences of Indian Areytos:

The favorite diversion of these isleños [islanders] is dancing: They organize a dance for no other reason than to pass the time. . . . When someone gives a dance, the news travels throughout the territory, and hundreds of persons come from everywhere, without being invited. Since the houses are small most guests stay outside. . . . To begin the dance, the guests stand at the foot of the stairs. . . . and sing a song honoring the owner of the house. . . . Those who grow tired go to sleep in the hammocks, or enter the inner room to rest. . . . Others retire to their homes, and return the next day, because these dances tend to last for a whole week. (cited in Wagenheim & Wagenheim, 1996, p. 35)

Clearly, a “singer of tales” would have ample opportunity to communicate stories on such occasions and, with Puerto Rican audiences “coming and going,” it could be suggested that these audiences were similar to the Yugoslavian audiences studied by Lord, where the “instability of the audience require[d] a marked degree of concentration on the part of the singer in order that he may sing at all” (p. 16). The demanding audiences provided an avenue for oral expressions to flourish in both countries. Moreover, Lord (1960) also found that folkloric singers could “belong to any group in society. The oral singer in Yugoslavia is not marked by a class distinction; he is not an oral poet because he is a farmer or a shopkeeper or a bey. He can belong to the ‘folk,’ the merchant class, or the aristocracy” (p. 20). This classification can also be applied to Puerto Rican folklore creators. Aurelio Espinosa (1918), who was responsible for editing and organizing Mason’s collection, commented on the influences and class distinctions of the oral poets who participated either directly or indirectly in the project:

The poetas or cantadores, as they are called, who compose or recite or sing them, are as a rule men of humble walks of life, who have no pretensions of any kind. I suspect, however, that in Porto Rico, and perhaps also in other countries, the décima is cultivated by more pretentious poets; and it is not unlikely that many compositions that have attracted our admiration and attention are the product of learned poets, who compose them for the people and abandoned them to their fate. A few of the décimas and so-called aguinaldos had the names of composers in the manuscript copies; but since much of the material was signed by the children of the schools, who collected a large part of the material, it was not thought wise to give the names of composers. (pp. 290-91)

It is possible to observe nuances in the verbal expressions and different grammatical styles of the performers because the Puerto Rican collection resides in printed text and audio format. Seeger and Spear (1985) explained that the audio component greatly benefited from cylinder recording technology that was invented in 1877 by Thomas Edison. Prior to
Edison’s invention, collectors had to rely either on informants repeating the oral expression several times or on human memory. After Edison’s recorder, for the first time, field workers were able to capture “objectively... [P]itch, rhythm, pronunciation, inflection, style and expression” and play back the recording to analyze the performance (Seeger & Spear, 1985, pp. 1-13). Since the technology was dependent on wax cylinders, it was fragile but highly adaptive to fieldwork by virtue of not requiring electricity. Consequently, many fieldworkers continued to use it “long after the cylinders had been replaced by flat discs” (p. 6). The recordings were conducted in the following way:

Cylinder recordings were made by literally inscribing sound waves into wax using a hard point fixed to the center of a flexible diaphragm at the end of a horn. It was done mechanically, without the use of electricity. Performers would talk, shout, or sing into the recording horn, which increased the force of the sound. The intensified sound waves would press on the diaphragm, and the hard point would cut more or less deeply into the wax. The spring driven recorder rotated the cylinder at between 80 and 200 times a minute. A tracking mechanism ensured that the stylus advanced steadily along the length of the cylinder—usually four or six inches—cutting approximately 100 grooves per inch... To play back the cylinder, a somewhat lighter head with a needle affixed to the center of the diaphragm rides on the grooves as the cylinder rotates. (Seeger & Spear, 1985, p. 5)

Mason was able to collect 174 cylinders (at 150 rpm) of funeral music, rumbas, singing games, folktales, tangos, décimas, coplas, aguinaldos, and love songs, to name a few. Most of this material was recorded by adult males from the towns of Utuado and Loiza. As Figure 1 shows, Utuado is a town in the mountains of Puerto Rico, whereas Loiza is a coastal town. There are other marked differences in the folklore traditions of these areas.

![Figure 1. Locations of the Mason Collection.](image-url)
Utuado has always been a place where the people have been interested in preserving the Taino heritage. Today, Utuado houses the Indigenous Ceremonial Centre, which was built by Taino Indians 800 years ago, and this center is considered the most important archeological Taino site in the Antilles. The town’s official Taino name is “El Pueblo del Vivi, a name derived from an Indian chief. Translating from Toro Sugrañes (1995), Utuado was incorporated in 1739, which makes it the oldest town of the Central Mountain Range (Cordillera Central). In 1828, the total population was 4,413 islanders of which 200 were slaves with a housing composition of 28 homes and 49 bohios (huts), while the rural area had 208 homes and 300 bohios. By 1870, Utuado had installed a telegraph; in 1892, a hospital; and in 1896, an electric power plant was built; and by the end of the nineteenth century, there were 194 students attending Utuado’s public schools (Toro Sugrañes, 1995, pp. 395-97).

Loiza Aldea, on the other hand, is a coastal town “retaining one of the highest percentages of African descendants of all island towns” (http://www.toportorico.org/city/loiza.html). Toro Sugrañes notes that archeological studies have shown that Loiza was an important Taino territory. Loiza was incorporated in 1692, and by 1776 there were 1,146 inhabitants. In 1828, it had grown to a population of 4,198 which included 742 slaves. Because two of the largest rivers in Puerto Rico, Rios Grande de Lozia, run through the town’s jurisdiction, it was an important commercial place during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During the first half of the twentieth century, sugarcane production was its main economic industry. The people of Loiza Aldea have always been interested in preserving their African-inspired traditions, and town festivities have consistently reflected a strong emphasis on black traditions with a mixture of Christian and Taino Indian customs (the preceding paragraph is a translation from Toro Sugrañes, 1995, pp. 247-49).

**METHODOLOGY**

Mason’s survey project was directed by Franz Boas. Boas’s methodology has been criticized in recent years. Among other criticisms, McNeil (1988) argues that Boas showed a preference for text while ignoring theory, with collections usually being printed with little discussion of the context surrounding the collection. “He had no intellectual interest in informants except as repositories of oral traditions, a lack of concern derived from his orientation toward the past” (p. 57). However, as McNeil also explains, there was “nothing wrong with the collection” because the Boasian model insisted on accuracy of data and on “finding the best informants” (pp. 55-57). These two arguments can be used to describe and criticize Mason’s Puerto Rican collection: in general, it was printed with little theoretical discussion, exhibited a high accuracy of data, and
identified the best towns from which to collect representative samples of Puerto Rican folklore.

Dennis’s (1922) criticism of Mason’s collection did not focus on methodology but questioned the validity of the Décimas as representative samples of “true folk” verbal expressions. Her review of the Décimas addressed three major areas: the originality of the folkloristic expression, the authenticity of performer and performances, and the subject matter. The collection on the whole could not be an original one, Dennis (1922) argued, because it exhibited strong Spanish influences of style and language:

Other décimas are inspired by Spanish ballads. But the majority are distinctly of Porto Rican origin, and reflect Porto Rican thought and custom. Whether, however, these décimas come from the true folk, and not rather the lettered classes; and whether, therefore, they may be strictly classed as folk poetry,—is to be questioned. . . . Although there are several décimas in the collection which complain of Spain’s treatment of Porto Rico, there is not one which expresses dissatisfaction with the United States Government, nor one which expresses the wish for independence. (pp. 99-100)

In responding to Dennis, Aurelio Espinosa (1922) questioned her definition of what should constitute folk poetry and argued that he believed “folk-poetry has most of the elements of learned poetry, and often in a more refined degree” (p. 102). Mason unquestionably maintained that the folklore collected came from true Puerto Rican folk. His argument captures the essence of a Puerto Rican “singer of tales”:

The décima, despite the fact that it is a poetical vehicle of considerable artistic merit, comparing favorably in rigidity of form and general spirit with the English sonnet, appears to be the most popular form of poetical expression among the illiterate jibaros. At the velorios [funerals] and other social gatherings, according to my informants, it is the décima rather than the aguinaldo which is most sung. It was a source of great surprise to me to find these poems, many of them of not a little beauty, known and sung by illiterate moutain peasants. Quite a number of the décimas in the collection were written down by me in phonetic text from the dictation of jibaros in out-of-the-way country barrios. I believe that there are few adult jibaro men who have not memorized one or more décimas, which they sing, when called upon in turn, at social gatherings; and nearly every little country hamlet has its noted décima singer, who has dozens of them at his tongue’s end. . . . I feel, therefore, that the décimas in the published collection are fully representative of the poetry of the jibaro. The sources, however, are various quite naturally. Many, as Espinosa pointed out, are traditional Spanish. Others give internal evidence of jibaro authorship...but the great majority, irrespective of their authorship, had been memorized by jibaro singers, and incorporated into peasant folk-lore. . . . As for the others, only years of persistent research in Porto Rico could elucidate their authorship or locality of origin. (Mason, 1922, pp. 102-04)
Years of Puerto Rican scholarship have validated Mason’s collection. However, general arguments surrounding the methods of evaluating and validating fieldwork projects still provoke heated insider/outsider anthropological debates. Who has the authority to decide? Who are the true folk? Who gets asked and under what conditions? Who has the power to determine and enforce folkloric classifications? These questions are not easily answered, but Geertz (1983) has added insight into the methodological framework for investigating them and for inquiring into the complexities of what he calls “local knowledge.” As Mason argued, irrespective of the authorship issue, the Décimas represented an observable performance of folklore, or, using Geertz’s terminology, exhibited a sharing of a native’s point of view. Dennis’s arguments showed that her basis of folkloristic analysis circumscribed itself in the text, whereas Mason’s reply showed that his analysis placed an importance on performance as an observable event which authenticated the oral expression. Ultimately, Bauman’s (1977) performance-centered framework for exploring verbal expressions, with its emphasis on identifying “culture-specific constellations of communicative means that serve to key performance in particular communities” (p. 22), is most appropriate for shedding light on the debate surrounding the Mason collection. In order to focus more closely on the complexities of Puerto Rican folklore, a single group of tales, the Juan Bobo stories, will be examined throughout the remainder of this discussion. The underlying hypothesis concerns the importance of storytelling as an infrastructure that serves to create, transmit, and authenticate folklore. Using Geertz’s model of local knowledge together with Bauman’s performance-centered approach, this hypothesis will be investigated within a context of Puerto Rican children’s literature. However, before the collection is contextualized, a close look at the text is in order.

**Classification of Folktales**

When Dr. Mason returned from Porto Rico some six years ago with the abundant collection of folk-tales...the necessity of undertaking [a study on Spain’s folktales] seemed imperative. (Espinosa, 1921, p. 129)

The folktales collected by Mason are complex stories wherein sometimes Juan Bobo is a trickster and other times a fool. These folktales are constructed using a mixture of Christian religion; African, Spanish, and Indian traditions; folkloric politics; and popular beliefs. The main character is a trickster who might appear under the names of Juan Bobo (Dumb John), Juan Animala (Animal John), Juan Simple (Simple John), Juan Cuchilla (Cutting John), and so on. Marrero (1967) explicates his first name as a key feature for positioning the tales since Juan brings to the collective memory of Spanish Americans notable writers such as “Juan Ruiz de Alarcón,” legendary playboys such as “Don Juan Tenorio,” or fearless
characters such as "Juan sin Miedo" (p. 127). Marrero also notes that Juan Bobo is usually described as physically unattractive—she emphasizes that he is “feo, muy feo [ugly, very ugly],” though not “a cuco [an ogre]” (p. 129). *Bobo* simply means foolish.

Unlike other Caribbean tricksters such as Anansi, Juan Bobo does not transform himself from human to animal or vice-versa. His transformations are more in the mental realm—e.g., changing from an ill-reared numskull to a “wantonly cruel” trickster within the same story. With a notable first name and a foolish last name, together with undesirable physical talents, the folktales situate Juan *Bobo* (or Animala or Simple or Cuchilla) within a marginalized group and reflect the problem of Otherness. The audience is keyed (Bauman, 1977) by a teller opening the story with something like “*Once upon a time* there was a *woman* who had a *son*, but her son was a *fool.*” The italics indicate prompts that prepare the audience for what is to come.

**Migratory Tales**

The Juan Bobo tales migrated from Spain in an oral tradition originally influenced by the Spanish *picaresque* novels and Wise Fool tales (Espinosa, 1921; Manrique Cabrera, 1982). Appropriately, Childers (1977) has developed a motif-index titled “Tales from Picaresque Novels” which describes the genre’s influences:

[The picaresque novel] was a new genre of realistic fiction in which the rogue was the central character. It was usually a comic autobiography on an anti-hero who was a peripatetic character, moving about from job to job and from city to city. As the *pícaro* (rogue) went from master to master, he satirized their personal faults and their trades and professions. The rogue and his tricks and the manners he satirized were two principal identification marks of the genre. Although the rogue and his tricks constitute the main interest in the novels, the satirical comments on various trades and professions give a wealth of information on the social, political, and religious background of...Spain. (Childers, 1977, p. vi)

These literary influences reflected, in the pícaro’s personality and tricks, the satirical commentaries implicitly contrived throughout the plot, and the master/slave power relationships can be analyzed using Aarne-Thompson’s standard classification system of tale types and motifs. By definition, the “*Type-Index* deals with entire tales; the *Motif-Index*...deals with smaller elements of those tales. Thompson defines the motif as ‘the smallest element that persists in tradition’; in actual practice this element can be a character, a formula, a concept, an activity, or any one of the multitude of details found in folktales” (Clarkson & Cross, 1980, p. 8).

Although there have been some efforts to study some of these Spanish American folktales using a cross-classification scheme for tale types, it was not possible to locate a comprehensive motif-index that included the
Juan Bobo tales. The first undertaking to classify Spanish folktales according to the Aarne-Thompson tale types was conducted by Boggs (1930, p. 6). He analyzed a few tales from the Mason-Espinosa collection. Afterward, Hansen (1957), building on Boggs’s work, indexed the tale types for several folktales from Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and South America, with a few more of Mason’s Wise Fools tales described and even some motifs delineated. More recently, MacDonald (1982) has indexed several of the printed Juan Bobo tales available for children’s literature in English (for readers interested in Spanish folk literature, there is a motif-index created by Goldberg [1998] for “Medieval Folk Narratives” while Keller [1949] constructed one for “Spanish Exempla”).

As impressive as Mason’s collection is, it could be overlooked by potential motif-indexers because, to access it, one must know either the collector’s name or remember to look under the old name “Porto Rico” when handling an index such as the Journal of American Folklore Centennial Index. In my case, it was a “Recommender System”—that is, an anthropology professor from the University of Illinois, Arlene Torres—who pointed me toward the existence of Mason’s collection since my first pass using the centennial’s index did not lead me toward it.

With the interest of establishing some classification for the folktales, Tables 2 and 3 were assembled drawing primarily from the classifications provided by Boggs (1930), Hansen (1957), and MacDonald (1982). The data in these tables should be seen as an exploratory analysis, not as a definite classification of tale types and motifs, since only a sample of folktales was included in this pilot project. Specifically, the folktales sampled were chosen based on whether they were indexed by Boggs, Hansen, or MacDonald, or highlighted a particular native element, or portrayed some trickster characteristic that could shed light on why Juan Bobo is considered a culture hero today. For Table 3, the books selected were those located in Champaign-Urbana or, most productively, in the Center for Children’s Books at the University of Illinois. The printed versions of folktales were included as benchmarks for observing which tales have persisted in tradition and passed from oral into print formats.

By examining briefly the relationship between oral and printed versions of the Juan Bobo folktales, it may be possible to make some observations related to the infrastructure which validates and supports the dissemination of these folktales and to begin addressing some important questions. Which of the tales have been adapted for children’s literature? Which are the elements that have persisted in popular expression? Are the localities of the Juan Bobo tales important? Is it possible to identify an archetypal sequence of motifs that keeps recurring?

Although Table 2 is only a portion of Mason’s collection, the most apparent observation is the suitability of the Aarne-Thompson classification
As Table 2 shows, a famous tale wherein Juan Bobo “races” a three-legged kettle is type 1700 (motif J 1881.1.1.3), which means it falls within “The Stupid Man” tale type and “Three-legged pot sent to walk home” motif (Thompson, 1966, p. 159). Interestingly, Thompson (1966) explains that J motifs group tales of “Wisdom, Cleverness, Foolishness [where] the motivation is always mental,” whereas in K motifs “the primary importance is given to action” (vol. 1, pp. 20, 21). This broad distinction between J and K motifs may serve to describe Juan Bobo’s personality for, true to his trickster’s nature, he adopts multiple voices awash in contradictions and absurdities, with plots being senseless, difficult to follow, and many times leaving the audience with an open question as to who is really the fool.

scheme for organizing folktale types that were collected in the mountains and coasts of Puerto Rico during the early twentieth century. Most of the Juan Bobo tales from the Mason collection could, for example, be classified as “Jokes and Anecdotes,” which are types 1200-1999, and other remaining tales might fall within ranges used for classifying “Ordinary Folktales.” Ordinary Folktales would be classified between types 500-649 and could represent Juan Bobo using “Magic Objects” such as clubs to beat people or having “Supernatural Helpers.”

Table 2.
Folktales Types for Juan Bobo Tales Collected by J. Alden Mason

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type Description</th>
<th>Type Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1210 cow taken to the roof to graze</strong></td>
<td><strong>1700 races with 3-legged kettle (J 1881.1.1.3), JAF, 34</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1313 man who thought himself dead</strong></td>
<td><strong>1703 carries water in a basket, JAF, 34</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1534 fool kills another man and accuses policemen, JAF, 34</strong></td>
<td><strong>1703 loses needle in a basket, JAF, 34</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1535 rascal in tree shows cheese to man, later throws a rock and kills him, JAF, 34</strong></td>
<td><strong>1704 sells honey to bees; sticks pin into baby’s head, JAF, 34</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1537 Lady fixes poison for fool, He exchanges for husband’s drink who dies but later fool obtains hush money, JAF, 34</strong></td>
<td><strong>1704 disinters grandmother and puts her in sun to get warm; forces food down grandmother’s mouth with stick, JAF, 34</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1539 self-cooking pot, JAF, 34</strong></td>
<td><strong>1704 sends pig to mass, JAF, 34</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1553 sells one-legged chicken, JAF, 34</strong></td>
<td><strong>1704 sells honey to brother) JAF, 34</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1586 fool swats fly on mayor’s head, JAF, 34</strong></td>
<td><strong>1706 bathes grandmother in boiling water, JAF, 34</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1642 fool sells meat to rascal called “I” but later makes another man pay, JAF, 34</strong></td>
<td><strong>1706 boils first thing he finds (little brother) JAF, 34</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** means Aarne-Thompson folktale types and descriptions are from Hansen’s tale type index (1957).
Additionally, by identifying a name motif, it is possible to trace tales as they are being retold by Puerto Ricans, for the name Juan Bobo has emerged throughout the years as the apparent ruler among all trickster’s names. Manrique Cabrera says this name is preferred by locals because it signifies the mentality of a true jibaro:

The character of Juan Bobo, under all its forms and costumes, seems to show, prima facie, an evolution in the stories where he is the main character. The simple fool transforms himself into a person that pretends to be a numskull using his foolishness as a disguise. This evolutionary slanting seems to reflect the assimilation of a trait attributed to the jibaro’s psychic. It refers to what has been called “jaiberia,” an attitude which feigns dullness to throw off those who come near. It is a defensive weapon whose ultimate efficacy is worth investigating. (Translated from Manrique Cabrera, 1982, p. 62)

Considering tale types within an anthropological framework, Guerra...
LASTRA/FOLKLORIC SYSTEM  545

(1998), for example, presents a socio-political interpretation of Juan Bobo in which she explores the tales’ popularity as a way for locals to satirize the absurdities of life related to power, race, class, and gender politics. Her analysis classifies Juan Bobo into clusters of tales of revenge and reversal of fortune, folkloric politics, race, and gender problems, or morality-of-the-poor dilemmas. These categories are put to use in examining the nature of national identity and are not intended as discrete classifications. She says of Juan Bobo: “Behind the façade of this ‘jibaro manso’ lurks the mind of a Puerto Rican superhero whose wit, brilliance, thespian proclivities, and bravery in the face of danger make him the ideal seeker and defender of justice for those who experience little of it in their real lives” (p. 138).

For tales of revenge, for example, Guerra retells a story where Juan Bobo tricks his master out of all material possessions and thus effects what she calls a social inversion of classes. Juan Bobo is hired to cut the weeds of a local landlord but instead cuts down the banana bushes. “What have you done?” asks the master, and Juan Bobo replies, “Nothing! Do you worry about it?” But the landlord exclaims, “You are going to leave me penniless.” The next day Juan Bobo is given the task of cutting the grass but instead he cuts the goats’ legs. Again, the landlord exclaims, “For heaven’s sake, what have you done?” “Nada, Nada!” replies Juan Bobo. But when Juan Bobo is given the task of taking some pigs to their sty, on his way to the pen someone offers to buy the pigs and Juan Bobo quickly sells them, keeps the largest pig, but cuts off the tails of the ones he sold. He next proceeds to bury the pig and the tails in mud and runs to his master yelling, “Master, the pigs are stuck in the mud!” At the end of the story, the landlord has freed the large pig but remains penniless, unaware that Juan Bobo has tricked him out of his money (original tale in Mason, 1921; retelling in Guerra, 1998, pp. 138-39). This tale can also be identified as Aarne-Thompson’s tale type 1004 Hogs in the Mud and Stith Thompson’s motif K404.1 Tails in the Ground which, incidentally, Clarkson and Cross (1980) use to analyze a Mexican story about Pedro Urdemalas, who tricks a stranger into buying pig tails stuck in mud (pp. 293-97).

Table 3 presents several printed versions of folktales available in children’s literature. (It should be noted that a complete list of the Juan Bobo tales examined for this article appears in Appendix A.) This table gives a brief description of tales, identifies the author and illustrator, the tale type (adopted from the classification given by Hansen), and a source note. If, after reading a printed version, one should be interested in locating an earlier version of the tale, a source note should provide such an access point. Specifically, the codes employed in Table 3 have been adapted from a rating scale developed by Hearne (1993) for verifying cultural sources in children’s folktales. Hearne’s scale discriminates from a 5 (least documented) to a 1 (most documented) where S5 is a “nonexistent source
note” with author/illustrator taking credit for folktale; S4 is a “background-as-a-source-note,” where cultural observations are given with no source citation; S3 is “fine-print-source note,” where source citation appears buried within the Cataloging in Publication (CIP) information; S2 is a “well-made source note,” with source citation included with cultural notes; S1 is a “model source note” where source citation is contextualized with cultural lore.

Since, as Table 3 shows, only the version provided by Dorothy Sharp Carter and illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman provides a source citation (S2), which noted that the folktales had been originally collected by Ramirez de Arellano (1926), linking printed versions to original Juan Bobo tales seems laborious for readers, if not impossible. Obviously, for didactic reasons, the Juan Bobo character that mainly appears in children’s literature is the fool whose cardinal flaw is stupidity, while the rogue who satirizes society, swindles others, or has amorous adventures lives primarily in oral traditions or scholarly publications. It seems that children learning about Juan Bobo through the printed versions of folktales included in Table 3 could perhaps acquire an impression of his being basically a numskull while failing to meet his many-sided trickster qualities. The overall finding exhibited in Table 3—i.e., unavailability of source citation in children’s versions of the Juan Bobo tales—is an indication that for Puerto Rican children’s folktales it might be time to adopt Hearne’s (1993) advice “that we all start digging” (p. 25) for sources.

Moreover, authors of literary tales based on collections from oral traditions could provide source notes about geographic localities. It would be interesting to investigate, for instance, if oral versions of Juan Bobo tales collected in Northern coastal towns like Loiza Aldea stress trickster qualities (K motifs) whereas those collected in towns such as Utuado focus more on the numskull’s misunderstandings (J motifs). It might even aide in studying the process of how folk adapt tales to share local knowledge.

**REINVENTING FOLKLORE**

So far I have tried to give a brief history on the Puerto Rican culture, present a folklore collection, and analyze the structure of the folktales within the collection. The analysis has primarily focused on a “historic-geographic approach” (Barrick, 1988, p. 16) which emphasizes classifying the collected text using standard cataloging systems. Specifically, in the case of the Juan Bobo tales, the Aarne-Thompson classification system has made it possible to observe not only the original European influences of the tales but also their African heritage through Hansen’s use of the same scheme.

Since Muñoz Rivera (Wagenheim & Wagenheim, 1996, p. 133) documented the illiteracy rates during the turn of the century, it is possible to
ascertain that, at the time of Mason's visit to the island, the culture was primarily based on oral traditions (Wagenheim & Wagenheim, 1996, p. 133). As Mason (1922) commented, he was surprised that the oral expressions were, as Table 1 summarizes, of a sophisticated nature and of a substantial variety (pp. 102-04), yet he always maintained they were authentic. Years later, Mason explained that he probably would have collected even more samples of verbal lore, except that Franz Boas had arrived at the island with Herman K. Haeberlin and Robert T. Aiken and redirected the project toward collecting archeological artifacts (Mason, 1941, p. 210; 1960, p. 9).

Interestingly, Hutchins (1995) has argued that: "Culture is a process and the 'things' that appear on list-like definitions of culture are residua of the process" (p. 354). Given the prominence of oral expressions and in particular the Juan Bobo tales within the Puerto Rican culture, and given Hutchins's definition of culture, a question to address at this point is what cultural process are these folktales residua of? Guerra's (1998) analysis of the Juan Bobo tales as popular expressions for determining a national identity have highlighted some of the issues related to power, resistance, and master/slave relationships. But is it possible to make some assertions as to the underlying cognitive processes involved in the creation and dissemination of local knowledge through the Juan Bobo folktales? From the tale type and motif analysis, we know that the folktales are structured as Wise/Fool tales. Since Hutchins (1995) argues that the construction of culture is not defined by cultural products but rather by cultural processes, these tales reveal an aspect of local knowledge which the Puerto Ricans feel is important to develop, preserve, and transmit.

Geertz (1983) has argued that some aspects of local knowledge, especially common sense, can be interpreted as an information system composed of "a network of practical and moral conceptions woven about" each other (p. 81). Specifically, he argues that as a system, common sense is built on some assumptions and components, which he names "stylistic features" (p. 85). The three most applicable of his assumptions which could be adapted to the construction of Juan Bobo folktales are the following: Assumption 1: "the world is full of high-IQ morons" (Saul Bellow, as cited in Geertz, 1983, p. 76); Assumption 2: the common man [and woman] are "on top of things" (p. 80); Assumption 3: the people or things that are "unclassifiable" are disturbing (p. 83).

Geertz expands his common sense cultural model by laying out some functional requirements for the system. The first of his systems' components is "naturalness," which refers to what he says is "resultant" and "obvious" within a culture. It is measured with a standard of "of-courseness, [where] a sense of 'it figures' is cast over things" (pp. 85-87). The second component deals with "practicalness," which Geertz defines as being "obvious to the naked eye," where a person's behavior, for instance, will
certainly lead to failure. This is measured by having to tell someone to “be sensible...wise up” (pp. 87-88). The third feature focuses on what he calls “thinness,” by which he means “simpleness, literalness.” He argues that some cultural beliefs, “however strange,” must be taken literally (pp. 89-90). The fourth relates to “common sense wisdom [being] shamelessly and unapologetically ad hoc.” This feature relates to “immethodicalness” of “life” and its contradictions (pp. 90-91). The fifth component is “accessibleness,” which states that common sense is within the reach of “any person with faculties reasonably intact” (pp. 91-92). On the basis of the functional requirements, we can next apply Geertz’s common sense cultural system to the Juan Bobo tales in the interest of examining how the five “stylistic features” can be used as cultural categories for indexing the Juan Bobo folktales.

The famous tale of Juan Bobo and the Pig, according to Geertz’s cultural information system, could be classified as transmitting the local knowledge of “practicalness.” In this story, he dresses the pig in his mother’s best clothes and sends it to church, and he gets the spanking of his life when his mother comes home. However, one of the folktales in Mason’s collection could also be classified as “immethodical,” for, in this version, his mother kills him when she returns home and finds what her numskull son has done. Incidentally, most of the children’s folktales, not surprisingly, would be classified under “practicalness.”

In another story, which could be claimed to convey the “naturalness” quality of common sense, Juan Bobo is sent to town by his mother to sell a cow, but she instructs him, “Sell it to someone who doesn’t talk too much.” When Juan Bobo meets the first potential buyer, he asks him: “Would you like to buy my cow?” So the man responds, “How much are you asking for it?” And Juan Bobo replies, “I’m not selling it to you, you talk too much!” This scenario repeats itself with several other potential buyers until he enters a church and sees a religious statue representing a Catholic saint, and he asks, “Would you like to buy my cow?” Of course, the statue says nothing, so he sells the cow to the Catholic saint.

Now, Geertz says that another quality of common sense is “thinness” or “literalness,” which fits the story where Juan Bobo sells meat to the flies, that is, to the famous “las señoritas del manto prieto.” But he sells the meat to the flies on credit and when he returns to collect his money, the flies, most certainly, won’t pay. So he takes them to court and the King says with a mocking tone, “When you see one of those señoritas del manto prieto, immediately, kill them!” But, immediately, Juan Bobo sees one of them on the King’s head and, literally, swats his royal highness’s head. In some versions, he is sent to jail for this, while in others the King decides to pay him so he won’t hit the King again.

It is Geertz’s functional requirement of “accessibleness” that fits the
folktales’ strongest criticism and satirization of society. Access to wisdom, knowledge and common sense, or being an “insider” and acquiring “culture” is something society may never acknowledge Juan Bobo as having, no matter what he accomplishes or which obstacles he overcomes (Guerra, 1998, p. 142). He will, by implication of his name, never move out of the classification of being an “outsider,” being “lower” than others. For example, the stories begin by placing him in a category of fools, and (almost all) end with Juan Bobo still being called a fool, even though in some folktales he marries the king’s daughter or acquires some fortune. So Juan Bobo’s name seems to suggest that some things never change. People will forever be classifying other people into Self and Other folkloric groups, with total acceptance into certain dominant groups being forbidden to those who belong to particular races, genders, or classes because they are inherently and/or genetically “different” from the insider’s (or, here, colonizer’s) folk group. Guerra (1998) describes the folktales’ treatment of “Otherness” in this way:

Juan Bobo is frequently depicted as an outsider who is tolerated rather than accepted by his community; an Other who is himself “othered” by virtue of his difference. The appeal of Juan Bobo rested in the completeness of his Self-identification with the Other. While the rich expect, at best, to exploit his labor, no member of his cohort expects anything worthwhile to come of him. (p. 142)

Given the previous examples, I would conclude that Juan Bobo folktales are samples of lore that convey what Geertz has defined as “common sense as a cultural system” and would propose that, like the traditional tales, newer instances of Juan Bobo stories are being constructed using similar common sense premises and cultural modeling procedures. Furthermore, although the tales’ origins may have been the Spanish picaresque novels and the tales themselves culturally based in the Spanish language and traditions, the preliminary motif analysis shows a predominance of the K motif documenting a pervasive influence from the African heritage. These folkloristic influences, which are exhibited in the tales’ use of a trickster figure, Juan Bobo, as a “cultural hero,” authenticate Espinosa’s earlier comments that “[s]ome of the tales are probably of African origin, at least in part” (as cited in Mason, 1921, p. 143).

The production of local knowledge leads to tension between institutions of power and common folk, as revealed in oral tales versus printed versions. Thompson’s approach to literary tales made vital contributions in the area of documenting the interaction between oral stories and printed formats of folktales (Barrick, 1988).

The production cycle depicted in Figure 2 is shown as an attempt to summarize an important association that exists between these two formats, which Thompson (1977) has clearly described:
If I use the term "folktale" to include such literary narratives . . . it can be justified on practical grounds if on no other, for it is impossible to make a complete separation of the written and the oral traditions. Often, indeed, their interrelation is so close and so inextricable as to present one of the most baffling problems the folklore scholar encounters. They differ somewhat in their behavior, it is true, but they are alike in their disregard of originality of plot and of pride of authorship. . . . Nor is complete separation of these two kinds of narrative tradition by any means necessary for their understanding. The study of the oral tale. . . . will be valid so long as we realize that stories have frequently been taken down from the lips of unlettered tale-tellers and have entered the great literary collections. . . . Frequently a story is taken from the people, recorded in a literary document, carried across continents or preserved through centuries, and then retold to a humble entertainer who adds it to his repertory. (p. 5)

Even Aurelio Espinosa (1918), when describing the learned and unlearned influences of the Puerto Rican "singer of tales," acknowledged the association by saying he was unsure: "Whether some of that [sic] the décimas and longer Christmas carols [had been] printed in Porto Rico in the local newspapers, or privately" (p. 291).

CONCLUSION

I selected the Puerto Rican collection for this study because it is a part of my culture and I believe it serves as a way to inquire into aspects important in the creation, preservation, and transmission of local knowledge. One fundamental issue in anthropology is the interpretation of culture as applied to the concept of the "Other" (Geertz, 1973; Clifford, 1986). Prominent social scientists have noted that cultural analysis should
be reflexive, descriptive, sensitive, and above all respectful of those being studied. Yet, to accomplish a truthful interpretation of folklore is forever elusive because two people from the same folk group may witness the same event, concurrently, and arrive at different interpretations based on their own perceived practices and belief systems. Nonetheless, what is so difficult to study and describe regarding the inherent variability, differences, sameness, conflict, and tension forever embedded in human experience is ubiquitously shared by common folk through a network of storytelling. Thus, "otherness" and common sense may be difficult concepts to describe but, as Juan Bobo folktales show, easy to share through folklore.

With respect to the preservation of local knowledge and the Mason/Dennis authenticity controversy, the real question is not whether the Puerto Rican collection was or was not an authentic expression of folk wisdom—since the performance proved, as Mason always contended, that it was true folklore. Rather, the interesting question is how Mason, an outsider, a representative of the Anthropological Academy, a member of the colonizer's group—a country that was involved in deconstructing some cultural markers that had served islanders for 400 years as boundaries of a national identity—was able to collect such a valuable folkloric "knowledge base." As Cayetano Cuchi Col noted, when English was made the medium of instruction in the public schools, the locals said: "We would have preferred being without a country, to losing our native tongue" (cited in Wagenheim & Wagenheim, 1996, p. 144). It was in the middle of all this cultural and political tension that Mason arrived to do his fieldwork, which he accomplished successfully.

From the *Journal of American Folklore's* obituaries, we learn that, although Mason was an outstanding linguist, he also had a "speech problem." As Mary Butler (1969) pondered on his research successes, she concluded: "Perhaps his own speech problem helped turn his attention toward linguistics when he chose anthropology as his field" (p. 266). In retrospect, perhaps it was his experiences and first-hand knowledge of feeling "Othered" that helped contribute to his success as a folklore collector of oral history from Puerto Ricans.

As I’ve tried to demonstrate by making use of Gonzáles’ (1980) analogy, Puerto Rico is a "country with four floors." It is a transnational culture where language and racial differences exist even within the same families. Aurora Levins Morales (1997), a "Russian-Jewish-American-Puerto Rican" raised in Puerto Rico and the United States, shares her experiences in an essay titled "Immigrants":

My father was the First American Boy: the young genius, the honors student, the Ph.D. scientist . . . First generation. And what am I? The immigrant child of returned immigrants who repeated the journey in the second generation. Born on the island with firsthand love.
and stories of my parents' Old Country—New York; and behind those, the secondhand stories of my mother's father, of the hill town of his long-ago childhood. Layer upon layer of travel and leaving behind, an overlay of landscapes, so that I dream of all the beloved and hated places, and endlessly of trains and paths and roads and ships docking and leaving port and a multitude of borders and officials waiting for my little piece of paper. (pp. 36-37)

Esmeralda Santiago (1993) also shares her experiences of feeling the influences deconstructing traditional cultural markers:

"Papi? [Father]"
"Yes."

"If we eat all that American food they give us at the centro communal, will we become Americans?" He banged a nail hard into the wall then turned to me, and, with a broad smile on his face said, "Only if you like it better than our Puerto Rican food." (p. 74)

Even if traditional markers that have served in the past to establish cultural boundaries are deconstructed, old and new stories coexist and are transmitted through a folkloric network, serving as shifting boundaries that outline a cultural identity. The Puerto Rican economy, the literacy rates—currently, 90 percent (from http://www.eb.com)—and the social and cultural context are different today, yet the process of creating "Puerto Ricanness" seems based (as it was in the past) on a folkloric infrastructure that upholds and preserves its oral expressions.

**Future Research**

This article has presented initial findings from a pilot project conducted with Puerto Rican folktales published from an oral collection. The preliminary findings suggest a need for future work spanning questions in several areas, including the electronic classification of Spanish folktales, the analysis of the performance act of the Puerto Rican "singer of tales" that is preserved in 174 audio cylinders collected by Mason, and the significance of storytelling for contemporary children.

Specifically, the research on storytelling will focus on combining Bauman's (1977) performance framework (interpreting the speech act as a performance act) with findings from Miller et al. (1989, 1990, 1996) on the significance of storytelling while children are in the process of developing their "social construction of self" (1990, p. 293). Applying Miller's findings to Puerto Rican children's folktales, it will be interesting to observe whether those children who are given opportunities for participating in first-hand, active, authentic storytelling activities develop a more defined sense of identity—whether they are narrating in Spanish, English, or code-switching between the two—bearing in mind that in any language our stories define who we are.
NOTES

1 Translated by A. Lastra from original text located in Pané (1980, pp. 87-88).
4 Map created by Guillermo Santiago (1998), a bilingual high school student born and raised in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico.
5 Spanish was reinstituted as the medium of instruction in Puerto Rico by the Commissioner of Education, Mariano Villaronga, in 1948 (see Carrión, 1983, p. 335).

1704. Juan Bobo and the Pig. (collection). Juan Bobo loses the pig by sending it to mass but sells his mother’s duck to make up for the pig. Pura Belpré, 1965. Illus. by Tommie de Paola. English text. SC: S4


1704. Juan Bobo. (collection). Juan Bobo stays home taking care of house and pig while his rich mother goes to mass. The pig’s grunting surely means it wants to go to church, so Juan Bobo dresses it in his mother’s finest clothes and sends it to church. M.A. Jagendorf, 1957. Illus. by Shane Miller. English text. SC: S4


*SC means source code where S1 is a “model source note”; S2 is a “well made source note”; S3 is a “fine-print-source note”; S4 is a “background as source note”; S5 is a “nonexistent source note” (Source codes as described by Hearne, 1993).
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From Folktales to Fiction: Orphan Characters in Children's Literature

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ABSTRACT
ORPHAN HEROES AND HEROINES are familiar characters in children’s literature, particularly in the fiction of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. This type of protagonist has its roots in folktales. An analysis of fifty folktales from different cultures reveals that, while the details of orphan stories vary, there are some universal elements. A comparison of these patterns to a literary orphan story, The Secret Garden, demonstrates how the patterns found in orphan folktales were adapted and applied in children’s fiction.

INTRODUCTION

Once there was a child wandering about on the earth who was an orphan. He had neither father nor mother, and he was very sad. Nobody paid any attention to him, and nobody asked why he was sad. Though he was sad, the child did not know how to weep, for there were no tears yet in the world.

When the moon saw the orphan child going about, he felt compassion: since it was night, the moon came down from heaven, lay down on the earth in front of the child and said, "Weep, orphan child! but do not let your tears fall on the earth, from which people get their food, for that would make the earth unclean. Let your tears fall on me. I shall take them with me back to the sky."

The orphan child wept. Those were the first tears in the world, and they fell on the moon. The moon said: "I shall now give you the blessing that all people shall love you."

After the child had wept his heart out, the moon went back to the
sky. From that day on the orphan child was happy. Everyone gave him whatever delighted and gladdened him. To this day people can see on the moon’s face the stains of the orphan child’s tears, which were the first tears in the world.—The First Tears (Algeria: Kabyle)

Orphan characters in folktales and literature symbolize our isolation from one another and from society. They do not belong to even the most basic of groups, the family unit, and in some cultures this is enough to cut them off from society at large. In other cultures, orphans are regarded as special people who must be protected and cared for at all costs. In either case, orphans are clearly marked as being different from the rest of society. They are the eternal Other.

Orphans are a tangible reflection of the fear of abandonment that all humans experience. Orphans are outcasts, separated because they have no connection to the familial structure which helps define the individual. This outcast state is not caused by any actions of their own but because of their difference from the “normal” pattern established by society. Orphans are a reminder that the possibility of utter undesired solitude exists for any human being.

Orphans are at once pitiable and noble. They are a manifestation of loneliness, but they also represent the possibility for humans to reinvent themselves. Orphans begin with a clean slate because they do not have parents to influence them either for good or for evil. They embody the hope that whatever the present situation, it can change for the better. When orphans succeed against all odds, their success ultimately becomes ours. We can look to orphans and say, “You see, there is hope for all of us if even this orphan child can overcome obstacles and succeed.” Characters such as Dick Whittington and Yeh-Hsien (a Chinese Cinderella variant) go from rags to riches and so can we.

Orphan characters are prevalent in children’s literature, both in folktales and in fiction. What is the relationship between the two? Are there patterns in folktales which recur across different stories and cultures? If such patterns exist, do they also occur in literary treatments of orphans? This discussion will show that such patterns can be found in folktales and that they do have a parallel in literary orphan stories.

**Methodology**

For this study, I examined fifty folktales from different cultures (see Appendix A) to find similarities, differences, and patterns which contributed to the evolution of the literary orphan hero and heroine. I found most of the tales by using The Fairy Tale Index (Eastman, 1926, 1952; Ireland, 1985, 1989; Sprug, 1994), The Storyteller’s Sourcebook (MacDonald, 1982), and Thompson’s Motif-Index (L111.4-L111.4.4, “The Orphan Hero”). I found the remaining tales by searching through folktale collections for children.
I used several criteria for story selection. First, both parents of the orphan had to be dead (according to the American Heritage College Dictionary, 3d ed., an orphan can be a child who has lost only one parent). Second, the story had to be a folktale rather than a literary tale. Literary tales are stories created by a particular author. Examples of literary tales which include folkloric elements but which are not really folktales include the "fairy tales" of Hans Christian Andersen and Oscar Wilde. Folktales, by contrast, include "all forms of prose narrative, written or oral, which have come to be handed down through the years" (Thompson, 1946, p. 4). It is impossible to separate the written and oral traditions because they have become so interconnected (Thompson, 1946). While this crossover between literature and oral narrative makes it difficult to discern which is the "original" version, all of the stories in this study, as far as I have been able to determine, are folktales that originated as oral narrative.

Third, I limited the study to those stories which were available in English or English translation. I tried to cast a wide net across a variety of countries, ethnic groups, and cultures. In many cases, I had to take the stories at face value, as source notes were either very sketchy or nonexistent. Some collections, such as Raouf Mama's (1998) Why the Goat Smells Bad and Other Stories from Benin, had very detailed notes and explanations of changes that were made to the stories from their original form, while other collections, such as those of Ruth Manning-Sanders, had no notes at all beyond listing the country of origin.

A major drawback in this process is the unevenness of source notes in collections for children. Without clear notes, it is difficult to determine where or from whom the author obtained the story. Even more puzzling is the question of how authentic the tale is if it has been retold by someone other than a member of the culture from which it stems. Many of these stories were retold by authors with a European or American background. It is possible that the Western literary tradition of the orphan hero/heroine contributed to the interpretation of folktales with orphan characters. Because it was not possible to place each story in its cultural framework, I chose to do a structural study rather than a contextual one. For purposes of this study, there are enough stories with good source notes to be sure that many of these tales are "authentic," but it would make for an interesting further study to determine how much folktale collections for children have imposed a Eurocentric viewpoint when telling the tales of other cultures.

Orphans in Folktales

Folklorists, psychologists, literary scholars, and sociologists who study folktales agree that these stories represent more than simple entertainment for children. The meaning contained in folktales varies according
to who is reading, listening, or telling the story; the cultural context in which it is read or heard; and the sense that the individual teller tries to convey. For example, Darnton (1984) points out that the world which peasants in early modern France inhabited was so difficult that we can hardly imagine it now. Stepmothers and orphans were common and this, in part, explains why they are customary figures in folktales.

In *The European Folktale*, Lüthi (1982) states that the hero in a folktale operates in isolation. In many folktales, the hero is outcast from those around him because of social status, poverty, or a "deformity" such as that of the animal husband. This isolation is far from being unique to European tales but is reflected in tales from across many cultures. The orphan is the quintessential outcast, operates in isolation, and thus makes the perfect hero figure.

**Gender**

Twenty-nine of the stories contain male orphan characters, seventeen have female orphans, and four have at least one of each. The breakdown of the orphan character by gender has significance because the ways in which orphans overcome obstacles in the stories are sometimes related to gender. In seven of the stories, the orphan uses wits to overcome obstacles; none of the orphans in these stories is female. The female orphans tend to overcome obstacles by their virtuous behavior rather than their cleverness. Also, female characters are rewarded by marriage more frequently than by any other means. While it is out of the scope of this article to delve deeply into gender issues, Appendix B shows some of the plot elements as they relate to gender. Further study of the orphan character and gender issues is warranted in the future.

**Characters**

The orphan hero or heroine faces the same conflicts, assistance, and rewards as any other folktale hero. There is usually a journey or quest of some sort that includes obstacles that must be overcome in order for the protagonist to win his or her reward (Thompson, 1946). However, analysis of the orphan stories reveals some distinct patterns. Character types, mistreatment of the orphan character, the quest upon which the orphan sets out, the obstacles put in his or her path, the methods employed to overcome the obstacles, and the final reward for the orphan are all common elements in these tales.

In forty-six of the fifty stories used for this study, the orphan character is the protagonist. In the other four, the orphan plays a secondary, but pivotal, role. For example, in *The Obsession With Clothes*, the story centers on Basia Gittel, the distant relative and employer of the orphan character. She is the person who mistreats the orphan girl but is also the one through whom the orphan triumphs and gains the reward of a husband and
children. The pattern of the story does not vary despite the fact that the orphan character is a secondary one. The outcome for the orphan is the same as if she had been the main character; only the point of view differs.

HELPERS CHARACTERS AND OTHER CHARACTERS

Lüthi (1982) notes that no folktale hero or heroine is completely in charge of his or her own destiny but is assisted at precisely the right time by human or supernatural helpers. Every character has his or her function and, once that function is accomplished, the character usually disappears from the story line. The orphan interacts with other characters, some human, some animal, and some supernatural. They include siblings, godmothers, foster parents, step parents, employers, animal helpers, friends, grandparents, and spirits. Generally these characters exist for one of two purposes—either to help the orphan or to provide an obstacle for the orphan. There are no bystanders.

MISTREATMENT

The majority of the orphans in these tales are mistreated (Appendix B, Table 1). The mistreatment ranges from a simple tongue-lashing to physical abuse or the threat of death. It is not enough that the character be an orphan; his or her isolation must further be defined by hostility which, in many cases, stems from jealousy or from the fact that the orphan has something the other character wants. Some orphan boys are treated badly by their uncles (The Strongest Boy in the World and Coolnajoo, the Foolish One), and orphan heroines are often cruelly treated by their female relations (The Case Against the Wind; Yeh-Hsien; and The Prince and the Orphan). Other orphans are made to suffer by their neighbors (The Story of Bhikkhu Sok; Kautaluk; and The Girl in the Moon). One of the saddest openings of all the orphan tales in this study is found in the Cherokee tale The Orphan Boy and The Elk Dog. In addition to being orphaned, Long Arrow is deaf, and the only person in the world who loves him is his sister. When she is adopted by another tribe, he is completely ostracized by the other members of his group and eventually abandoned in the woods. Their abuse is mitigated when he manages to rejoin them (having miraculously regained his hearing on the journey) and is taken in by Good Running, an elder of the tribe, but the earlier image of his waking up and finding himself completely alone in the world is haunting even read alongside so many other stories of the abandoned and isolated.

QUESTS

The performance of difficult tasks or quests is frequent in folktales (Thompson, 1946). Thirty-three of the stories in this study include a journey for the main character or characters. The reasons for undertaking such quests include the need to find employment (Mannikin Spanalong),
a desire for riches (Dick Whittington; The Dragon; and Sliced in Two), the need to find a place in the world (The Orphan and the Leper; and John the Bear), to avenge wrongs done to siblings (Quick-Witted; and The Jurga), to prove oneself to the tribe (The Orphan Boy and the Elk Dog), and to escape danger (John and Mary and The Story of Bhikkhou Sok). Sometimes the wandering seems to stem from the simple fact that the protagonist is suddenly orphaned. After his parents die, Julio says: "Now that there is nothing to keep me here, I shall wander... I travel the trail of life in search of my destiny" (Aiken, 1980, p. 124).

The folktale hero must leave home in order to find that which is essential (Lüthi, 1982). This wandering is made easier for the orphan characters because they often do not have a home. What the orphans seek, in fact, is a place to belong and the right to be there. In a typical coming of age tale, the hero or heroine seeks to break away from the family or group, to stand alone in the world as an individual. In a coming of age tale with an orphan hero or heroine, the protagonist seeks a sense of belonging, of finding an appropriate place in the world, of coming home. In the folktale, this homecoming may be quite literal as the hero or heroine marries royalty and goes to live in a palace. The difference between the ending of the orphan story and other folktales is that the orphan is not leaving the parents' home to become independent but finding a home after coming from nothing.1

**Obstacles**

The orphans in these tales come up against many obstacles in the pursuit of their quest. In most cases, other characters are the impediments. Jealousy and greed are prime motivators for these characters-as-obstacle:

There lived once... a proud and wicked woman. She was rich enough to afford anything she wanted, and yet her heart was filled with envy of anyone who was rich, contented, good-looking or young. If she saw someone in a happy mood, or heard of a true friendship, this was enough to arouse her bitterness and anger; indeed she was annoyed each time a poor person dared to smile. (Novak, 1970, p. 44)

Often it is the stepmother/stepsister/stepbrother who imposes extreme hardship on the hero or heroine, usually in the form of hard work, beatings, and lack of food (Wend'Yamba, The Market of the Dead, The Orphan and the Leper, Yeh-Hsien, Khavroshechka, The Prince and the Orphan, The Magic Drum). Sometimes it is a blood relative who causes problems (The Strongest Boy in the World; Coolnajoo, the Foolish One; The Obsession With Clothes; and The Little Orphan). Cruelty is not limited to relatives; employers can also be cruel (Yukiko and the Little Black Cat; Quick-Witted; and The Jurga).

In other stories, the danger is supernatural: either an evil sorcerer or witch (Foni and Fotia; Julio; Quick-Witted; Old Verlooka; and John and Mary),
a monster (Qalutaligssuag), or a bad spirit (The Skull). Less often it is the orphan's loneliness or extreme poverty that causes problems (The Orphan and the Leper; Spindle, Shuttle, and Needle; The Strongest Boy in the World; and Dick Whittington). The character becomes so overwhelmed by his situation that he wants to give up, perhaps even commit suicide.

**Surmounting Obstacles**

Because orphans are without the natural protection of family, they must stand on their own to conquer their problems. As is common in folktales, assistance is always provided at the crucial moment and is often rendered by supernatural means in the form of magical human beings, talking animals, or enchanted inanimate objects. Lüthi (1982) notes that, in folktales, such magical assistance is accepted without remark by the hero or heroine. No expression of astonishment is made when animals begin to talk, sorcerers appear, or ordinary objects run amok. These are simply taken for granted in the world of the folktale.

Supernatural assistance comes in many guises. Magic animals provide assistance for many characters (Yeh-Hsien; Khavroshechka; The Poor Turkey Girl; King Zargand's Daughter; Kenzuko Sudden Wealthy; and Yukiko and the Little Black Cat). Supernatural helpers can also come in the form of spirits disguised as mortals (The Prince and the Orphan; King Zargand's Daughter; and Julio). The gods provide another means to help orphans (The Angekkok; Kautaluk; The Orphan Boy and the Elk Dogs; The First Tears; The Legend of The Chingolo Bird; and The Girl in the Moon). A very powerful supernatural ally is the spirit of the dead mother. When, In The Market of the Dead, the twin boys go to the underworld and tell their mother about their stepmother's cruelty, she gives them a poison palm nut which kills the stepmother after she eats it. Still other supernatural assistance takes inanimate form (Spindle, Shuttle and Needle; Mannikin Spanalong; and Old Verlooka).

Supernatural help is not the only way that orphans surmount barriers. Sometimes the orphan uses his wits to outsmart his opponents (The Dragon; Sliced In Two; Qalutaligssuag; Johnny and the Witch Maidens; Quick-Witted; Hans and His Master; and The Jurga). Some orphans prosper because of their virtue and kindness to others (The Prince and the Orphan; The Magic Drum; and Julio). Wend'Yamba is unfailingly good to his foster family even when they treat him badly. At the end of the story, he becomes a king:

> My countrymen, when our king died, you sent me out into the world, as is our custom, to comb even the smallest village in order to find a truly virtuous young man to be our next king. I found this young man. He is an orphan... His patience is equaled only by his kind heart, and his heart is that of a king. (Guirma, 1971, p. 67)

Other orphans are hardworking, industrious, or brave (Dick
Whittington; Mannikin Spanalang; and The Skull). In some cases this virtue is not explicitly stated but is observable as the orphan endures abuse without complaint (Yeh-Hsien; Khavroschechka; Little Berry; and The Wooden Bowl). Finally, some characters are assisted by means other than the supernatural, wits, or virtue. Bhikkhu Sok (The Story of Bhikkhu Sok) is rescued by various kindly people as he runs from the murderous villagers who killed his family, and Sehou in The Orphan and the Leper is encouraged by the faith of a leper. In order to punish Tosuke for his greed (Ooka and Tosuke's Tax), Ooka, the wise judge, orders him to open his home to orphans who have lost their orphanage in a storm. Basia Gittel's Obsession With Clothes leads her to wrongly punish her orphaned relative. When Basia is on her deathbed, she asks her husband to marry the orphan girl in order to atone for this abuse.

**Rewards**

Almost half of the orphan characters in this study, twenty-four out of fifty, are rewarded by marriage, wealth, and power. Thirteen of the twenty-two female characters marry while eleven of twenty-eight male characters prosper by marriage. In some cases, usually in non-European stories, success is achieved not through money or marriage but rather with a position of respect or honor. Bhikkhu Sok (The Story of Bhikkhu Sok), for example, becomes a Buddhist priest, Oolak becomes The Angekkok (Holy One) for his tribe, and Ma Liang uses The Magic Brush, which makes whatever he paints come to life, to better the lot of poor people.

Other orphans are “rewarded” by being saved from monsters (Qalutaligssuaq; Old Verlooka; and Johnny and the Witch Maidens). The orphans in Ooka and Tosuke's Tax get to move to a new house complete with a set of parents and eventually “Tosuke's taxless house was the happiest in all Japan” (Edmonds, 1994, p. 44).

Yukiko (Yukiko and the Little Black Cat) and the orphan girl in Mannikin Spanalang earn money and prosper without marriage. The character Wend'Yamba, in the book by the same name, and Sagbo in The Magic Drum both become powerful rulers on their own merits rather than through marriage. Long Arrow in The Orphan Boy and the Elk Dog earns his people's respect when he brings them the mythical Elk Dogs (horses) stolen from the gods. Sabadis, in The Strongest Boy in the World, is taken to a lodge at the end of the sky where he can live with the sister the spirits have given him and where he will never be lonely again.

In three of the fifty stories, the orphan is unsuccessful or lives in an unchanged situation at the end of the story. Poor Turkey Girl; Coolnajoo the Foolish One; and The Orphan Boy are all examples of stories in which the protagonist doesn't win out over the obstacles. In all three stories, the reasons for a lack of success lie in the nature of the protagonist. The Poor Turkey Girl is given a chance for happiness as long as she leaves the dance
at dawn in order to tend to her flock of turkeys who magically helped her. Her indifference to this request makes the turkeys abandon her, and at the end of the story she is left even more poverty stricken than before because now she has no livelihood at all. “If the poor be poor in heart and spirit as well as in appearance, how will they be anything but poor to the end of their days?” (Sierra, 1992, p. 127).

Coolnajoo, in Coolnajoo, the Foolish One, is angry because his uncles, who take advantage of him and make him do all the domestic work, believe he is foolish. To spite them, he behaves very foolishly indeed, but takes it too far and is almost destroyed before Glooscap intervenes and sends him and his uncles on their way with an admonition to behave less foolishly in the future.

In The Orphan Boy, Kileken, the orphan, is actually the planet Venus who comes down to earth to live with a lonely old man. During a severe drought, he is able to keep the old man’s herd of cattle strong and healthy by taking them to the stars where the land is green and lush. His only admonition is that the old man must never follow him to find out where he goes with the herd. The old man, enticed by a spiteful shadow, is unable to resist temptation, and Kileken returns to the sky, leaving the old man alone. While these three stories serve as cautionary tales warning of dire consequences for lack of gratitude, excessive foolishness, and too much curiosity, most orphan tales end with the orphan in better condition than at the beginning of the tale, less lonely, usually rich, and often in a position of power.

PUNISHMENT OF THOSE WHO OPPOSE ORPHANS

Those who oppose orphan heroes and heroines are usually punished, often by death. The death of evil-doers is generally accomplished in deus ex machina fashion, by flying rocks (Yeh-Hsiien), angry cats (Yukiko and the Little Black Cat), poisonous food (The Market of the Dead), and so forth. In the Armenian stories King Zargand’s Daughter and Quick-Witted, the evil-doers are killed by the hero, an unusual occurrence in orphan stories. Some tales have less dire consequences for those who abuse the orphan. The step-relations in The Prince and the Orphan and The Magic Drum are reviled by their respective communities. Some stories end with the orphan interceding on behalf of those who mistreated him. Wend’Yamba returns good for evil when he is made king and brings the foster family to live with him in the palace. His stepmother, finally moved by his goodness, reforms and becomes good herself. In The Orphan Boy and the Elk Dog, Long Arrow brings horses to his tribe so that his people may prosper despite the fact that they previously made him an outcast, and, when his fortune is made, Dick Whittington gives money to everyone in the household, even the cook who treated him badly.
Orphans in Children’s Literature

As orphan tales passed from the oral to the written tradition, literary conventions for this type of story developed. By the nineteenth century, the orphan heroine was an established character in English and American literature (Avery, 1994), but the genre was found in other countries as well. Classic novels such as Heidi, Pollyanna, The Little Princess, The Secret Garden, and Anne of Green Gables are all examples of this type of heroine. Male orphans also had their place in the literature as exemplified by the novels of Dickens (Oliver Twist; David Copperfield; and Great Expectations) and Horatio Alger (Ragged Dick), but female orphans predominated. These heroines were usually left with relatives who did not want them, a hard-hearted aunt being the favored foil, but by the end of the story the orphan heroines transformed the lives of those around them by the force of their spunky, but sweet, natures (Avery, 1994).


It is from the folkloric elements previously outlined that the standard story of the orphan developed: the outcast main character; the secondary characters who affect the orphan for both good and evil; the task or quest that the orphan must perform; the usually happy resolution with the orphan finding success through marriage, wealth, and position; and the punishment of those who mistreated the orphan. Each of these elements has a parallel in literary orphan stories. Tracing the orphan hero motif in folktales makes it clear that this literary genre had its roots much further back than the sentimental novels of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. To see how these folktale patterns asserted themselves in literary orphan tales, we can turn to a comparison with a well-known children’s novel.

Frances Hodgson Burnett’s classic The Secret Garden was first published in 1911 and has remained a beloved fixture of children’s literature ever since. It has been published many times over and has been the subject of numerous movie, television, and stage versions. The story of orphaned Mary Lennox is familiar to many readers, and it is a good representative example of the type of orphan story popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which makes it ideal for the purpose of comparison with the folktales in the study.
Characters

The central character in *The Secret Garden* is Mary Lennox. Mary's psychic isolation is mirrored in her actual physical isolation from her parents even while she lives with them. From the time of her birth she is "kept out of the way," taken care of by Indian servants. She develops into a tyrant, loved by no one, isolated physically and psychically because she is so unpleasant. She is, in essence, an untouchable. When her parents die, her isolation is made quite literal:

It was in that strange and sudden way that Mary found out that she had neither father nor mother left; that they had died and been carried away in the night, and that the few native servants who had not died also had left the house as quickly as they could get out of it, none of them even remembering that there was a Missie Sahib. That was why the place was so quiet. It was true that there was no one in the bungalow but herself and the little rustling snake. (p. 9)

The other character who could be considered an orphan is Colin Craven, Mary's cousin. Although he does not fit the definition imposed on the folktales in this study, he does fit the dictionary definition of an orphan. Colin's mother died at his birth, but his father is still alive. His father is seldom home and rarely visits the bedridden Colin. Colin parallels Mary in his physical isolation from everyone in the house. His fear of death and deformity causes self-inflicted separation from other people. His selfish spoiled nature further isolates him. Colin is also the Enchanted Prince, under a spell until he is freed by Mary and the helper figures in the story.

There is a third character in *The Secret Garden* who, although not an orphan, is just as isolated as Mary and Colin. Mr. Craven is devastated by his wife's death. He blames his son for causing her death and can barely stand to be in the same room with him. He is constantly away from home, seeking diversion by moving restlessly from place to place. He mirrors Colin in the role of Enchanted Prince. His anguish has made him just as much a prisoner as if he were locked away physically:

He had not been courageous; he had never tried to put any other thoughts in the place of the dark ones ... . A terrible sorrow had fallen upon him when he had been happy and he had let his soul fill itself with blackness and had refused obstinately to allow any rift of light to pierce through ... darkness so brooded over him that the sight of him was a wrong done to other people because it was as if he poisoned the air about him with gloom. (p. 356)

Part of the story of *The Secret Garden* is about his redemption as well as the healing of the two children.

A major difference between this story and folktales is the way the main characters are rendered in a three dimensional manner. Literature can capture not only action, but also the feelings of the characters. We
are privy to the psychic pain of both Mary and Colin and made aware of their fears, their gradual awakening to the world around them, and ultimately, the triumph of their physical and emotional healing.

HELPERS AND OTHER CHARACTERS

Just as folklore heroes and heroines were assisted in their quests, so Mary and Colin receive help from other characters in *The Secret Garden*. Chief among the helper figures is Dickon. In this story, he is clearly a human helper, but in a folktale he would more likely be a supernatural helper, probably a type of benign earth spirit. While he does not possess the outright magic that such a character would in a folktale, there is certainly something mystical about the way he interacts with nature and wild animals. "I believe Dickon knows some Magic, but perhaps he doesn't know he knows it. He charms animals and people" (Burnett, 1938, p. 299).

Other human helpers are Dickon's sister, Martha; Ben Weatherstaff, the old gardener; and Dickon's mother, Mrs. Sowerby. Martha, who works as a chambermaid for Mr. Craven, is the first person Mary meets after arriving at Misselthwaite Manor. Martha is an important conveyor of information. She tells Mary about the existence of the secret garden. She also tells Mary about Dickon and piques her interest in going outside. Later in the story, Martha facilitates Mary's initial secret meetings with Colin.

Ben Weatherstaff is a cantankerous plainspoken Yorkshireman. He is a reluctant helper figure, almost against his will. When Mary meets him, she is taken aback at his straightforward assessment of her:

"Tha' an' me are a good bit alike," he said. "We was wove out of th' same cloth. We're neither of us good lookin' an' we're both of us as sour as we look. We've got the same nasty tempers, both of us, I'll warrant."

This was plain speaking, and Mary Lennox had never heard the truth about herself in her life. . . . She had never thought much about her looks, but she wondered if she was as unattractive as Ben Weatherstaff and she also wondered if she looked as sour as he had looked before the robin came. She actually began to wonder also if she was "nasty tempered." She felt uncomfortable. (p. 51)

Mrs. Sowerby does not actually appear in person in the story until the penultimate chapter, but her presence is felt from the moment Mary first hears about her from Martha. Although an off-stage actor, Mrs. Sowerby provides the orphaned children with a live mother figure. She provides both figurative and literal sustenance by sending advice and food via Dickon. She also advises Mrs. Medlock (the housekeeper) and Mr. Craven about how better to take care of the children. She sends Mr. Craven a note that gives him the impetus to come home, thus providing the happy ending to the story. She is, albeit in a very practical manner, a Fairy Godmother figure.
The robin is the main animal helper in the story. He shows Mary where the secret garden is, and shows the way to the key and the door in the wall so she can get in. He is the first creature that befriends Mary and is clearly a magical being. Dickon's animals are also helpers, though in a less straightforward way. They help Colin, in particular, come out of his preoccupation with himself and care for something even more helpless than he is.

Supernatural helpers exist in this text too. The spirit of Colin's dead mother is present in the story, a parallel to the spirits of dead mothers in such traditional stories as *Cinderella* and *The Juniper Tree*. In these folktales, the spirit of the dead mother lives in a tree. In *The Secret Garden*, the tree motif is turned on its head and, rather than being the living embodiment of the mother, is associated with her because it is the instrument of her death. At the beginning of the story, her presence is not strongly felt because both Colin and his father have shut her away from their minds. Colin has covered her portrait in his room, and Mr. Craven has run away from the places that remind him of her. As the story proceeds, her presence is more and more strongly felt. Colin feels able to look at her picture again because he likes to see her laughing down at him as he regains his health and strength. Finally, she is strong enough to break into Mr. Craven's dreams and tell him to meet her "in the garden."

Nature, as embodied by the moor (wild) and the garden (tamed), is another supernatural helper. Nature is the healer of both children. They move from sickness to health as they spend more and more time out of doors. Bodies and appearance are crucially important in this story, as they are in folktales, because they are an outward sign of the psychic healing process going on internally in the characters. Those characters, such as Dickon and Mrs. Sowerby, who are already psychically whole, are described as looking healthy, while at first Mary and Colin are thin and pale. As the children play outside, their bodies and souls are healed. This is most dramatically demonstrated when Colin learns to walk while in the garden, but Mary also responds to nature's healthfulness. At the beginning of the story, Mary has "a little thin face and a little thin body, thin light hair and a sour expression" (Burnett, 1938, p. 1). She also is described as having yellow skin because she has been a sickly child. By taking an interest first in the garden, then in Dickon and his animals, and finally in Colin and his problems, Mary becomes less and less self-centered and more and more outwardly oriented. It is done unconsciously and naturally; much of the time Mary doesn't notice that a change has occurred until after it has happened. As her personality transforms, so does her outward appearance until, by the end of the book, Mrs. Sowerby assures her that she will be a "blush rose," a true beauty like her mother.

**MISTREATMENT**

The mistreatment suffered by both Mary and Colin stems from their...
parents. In Mary's case the neglect is a result of deliberate selfishness. By the time Mary arrives at Misselthwaite Manor, her soul has died symbolically because of neglect, lack of love, and loneliness. The mourning clothes she wears for her parents are symbolic of this death. When she casts off her black clothing and puts on new clothes her first morning in Yorkshire, it marks the rebirth of her soul and the blossoming of her body and inner person into good health.

QUESTS

Mary and Colin both have several quests to fulfill. As in many of the folktales studied, Mary's quest begins with a journey. Hers is from India to Yorkshire and her quests are to find and renew the garden, to transform herself into a healthy, loving, and beloved child who is not isolated from the rest of the world, and to help Colin do the same. Colin's quest is similar in that he also needs to be transformed into a complete person, but he must rescue his father as well.

OBSTACLES

Just as folktale orphans encounter obstacles to the successful completion of their quest, so too do Mary and Colin. These obstacles are both external and internal. Mary's external obstacles include Mrs. Medlock, who tells her she is to keep to her rooms and not wander around the house. If Mary had obeyed this edict, she wouldn't have found Colin. Another obstacle is that the garden Mary wants to see is locked up and the key buried.

Colin's obstacles are more internal than external. His fear of deformity and the fear that he won't live to grow up so dominate his thoughts that they keep him bedridden and unwilling to interact with anyone other than his caretakers. His lack of physical health is also an obstacle. He cannot walk or even sit up without help, not because of any real physical problem but because the muscles are weak from lack of use. He has made his own home a prison. His external obstacles include Dr. Craven. While he is not actively promoting Colin's decline, the doctor does nothing to help Colin do the things that are healthy for him. Colin believes that the doctor wants him to die so he will inherit the manor, but there is no mention of that by Dr. Craven himself. Rather than an active obstacle, the doctor is a passive one, as are the other grownups. The servants, the nurse, the doctor, none of them, tries to lessen Colin's spoiled nature or see him as anything other than a tiresome duty.

SURMOUNTING OBSTACLES

The obstacles faced by Mary and Colin are overcome in two ways: first, with assistance from others, and second, by their own "virtue." As seen in the discussion of helpers, Mary and Colin are assisted by an
assortment of characters. The helper characters each advance the quest a bit further by providing key bits of information or by physical and emotional assistance. Dickon, Martha, Ben, and Mrs. Sowerby are all obviously helpers.

In the folktales studied, many of the characters overcome impediments by their virtuous nature. Mary and Colin are scarcely virtuous in the same way. They are both spoiled, selfish, and stubborn. These traits would ordinarily weigh on the minus side of the ledger but in this case are turned into assets. If Mary weren’t so stubborn, she would have behaved when Mrs. Medlock told her not to go exploring around the house. If she had been a “nice” child, she wouldn’t have become angry with Colin when he had a temper tantrum. By shouting at him, she startles him into voicing his greatest fear, that he has a lump on his back and proving him wrong about his illness:

“There’s not a single lump there!” she said at last. “There’s not a lump as big as a pin—except backbone lumps, and you can only feel them because you’re thin.... There’s not a lump as big as a pin! If you ever say there is again, I shall laugh!” (p. 223)

Mary’s lack of sympathy does more to convince Colin that he isn’t going to be a hunchback than any statement the doctor or nurse ever made.

By the same token, Colin’s Rajah-like imperiousness and assumption that everyone will do as he asks ensure that they can go to the garden every day without being disturbed. When Ben Weatherstaff calls him a cripple with crooked legs, he becomes so angry that he stands up and walks a few steps. His bad temper cures any reluctance he has about using his legs. When at the end of the story his father sees him running like any normal boy, it serves to heal his father as well.

**REWARDS**

As with any folktale, the good characters must gain a reward at the end of the story. Mary and Colin are not poor as are most orphans, so their reward is not a material one. Rather, they are physically and emotionally healed. They stand apart from everyone at the beginning of the story and, by the end, they stand together as a family. Mary has found a home with people who love her; Colin has found the love of his father and that of Mary, and Mr. Craven has regained his son, home, and happiness. While not explicitly stated in the story, it is even possible that this familial relationship will continue with Mary and Colin marrying when they are older, paralleling the happy folktale ending even more.

**PUNISHMENT OF THOSE WHO OPPOSE ORPHANS**

Unlike the folktales studied, those who mistreated the orphans are not punished. Mary’s parents die, it is true, but there is no indication that
their deaths come as some sort of divine retribution for what they have done to their daughter. In Colin’s case, the person who has wronged him the most, his father, is also suffering and in some degree is more to be pitied than censured. Far from being punished, he is rewarded by a renewed happiness in life with his son.

**Conclusion**

It has been said that there are no new stories, just retellings of old ones. A comparison of orphan tales from around the world has shown that, while the details of the stories are not the same, there are some common elements that can be extracted. The isolated orphan character; mistreatment of the orphan; human, animal, and supernatural helpers; quest; obstacles to fulfillment of the quest; punishment of those who wrong orphans; and, in the end, happy rewards are found in most of the orphan tales studied for this discussion. These same elements exist in literary tales about orphans as shown in the representative example of Burnett’s *The Secret Garden*.

It is because the orphan so deeply represents the feelings and pain of us all that the character continues to exist in children’s literature. And until the day when none of us feels the pain of isolation, orphans will continue to symbolize it for us. The use of elements from orphan folktales in literature is an indication of the depth with which this particular character resonates. Darnton’s picture of orphans running rampant in early modern France is very different from the America of 1998, but what orphan characters represent is just as real now as when the first orphan wept the first tear.

**Notes**

1. This idea stemmed from a conversation with Christine Jenkins at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois sometime in early 1998. We discussed coming-of-age stories and she postulated that orphans find a home instead of breaking away from one.
2. Janice Del Negro suggested the idea that Colin functions as an Enchanted Prince figure in a conversation about this project in Autumn 1998.
3. In the course of reviewing this article, the guest editor asked if I thought Mrs. Sowerby was the Fairy Godmother. My initial reaction was in the negative, but as I re-read the catalog of what she actually provided the children, I reasoned that she acted as much like a Fairy Godmother as the stock character we have come to think of in relation to *Cinderella*. Mrs. Sowerby is not overtly magical, but there is something otherworldly in the way she “observes” the children from a distance and in the stories about them told to her by others.
4. There are more than fifty orphans because some stories have more than one orphan as a character.
5. Some orphans succeed by more than one means. For instance, their virtue may lead to their being kind to a supernatural creature who will later reward them by helping them prosper.
6. These categories were created by the author and are not meant to correlate with similar categories found in the motif and tale type indexes.
APPENDIX A

Alphabetical Listing of Fifty Folk Tales

Ah Tcha the Sleeper, Chrisman, A. B. (CHINESE)

Alenoushka and Her Brother, Ransome, A. (RUSSIAN)
The Angekkok, Shelley, N. (INUIT)
Celery, Manning-Sanders, R. (MEDITERRANEAN)

Coolnajoo, the Foolish One, Hill, K. (WABANAKI)

Dick Whittington and His Cat, Reeves, J. (ENGLISH)
The Dragon, Sliced in Two, Spicer, D. G. (SWISS)
The First Tears, Jablow, A. & Withers, C. (ALGERIAN:
KABYLE)
Foni and Fotia, Manning-Sanders, R. (SUDANESE)
The Girl in the Moon, Deusch, B. & Yarmolinsky, A. (SIBERIAN:
YAKUT)

Hans and His Master, Manning-Sanders, R. (HUNGARIAN)

John and Mary, or the Girl with the Chopped Off Hands, Carriere,
J. M. (MISSOURI FRENCH)

John the Bear, Carriere, J. M. (MISSOURI FRENCH)

Johnny and the Witch-Maidens, Manning-Sanders, R. (BOTH:
MENIAN)

Julio, Aiken, R. (MEXICAN)
The Jurga, Belpre, P. (PUERTO RICAN)

Kautaluk, Metayer, M. (INUIT)
Khavroshechka, Carey, B. (RUSSIAN)

King Zargand’s Daughter, Sheoh-
melian, O. (ARMENIAN)

Kuzenko Suddenly Wealthy, Wyndham, L. (RUSSIAN)
The Legend of the Chingolo Bird, Courlander, H. (PARAGUAYAN)
The Little Orphan, Ekrem, S. (TURKISH)

Little Barry, Illyes, G. (HUNGARIAN)
The Magic Brush: A Han Folktales, Sadler, C. E. (CHINESE)

The Magic Drum, Mama, R. (FON:
BENIN)

Mannikin Spanalong, Manning-
Sanders, R. (GERMAN)
The Market of the Dead, Carter, A.
(FON: KINGDOM OF
DOHOMEY)

Mary-Ann and the Cauld Lad of Hylton, Finlay, W. (ENGLISH)

Merafa, Wheeler, G. C. (MONO:
ALU: SOLOMON ISLANDS)
The Obsession with Clothes, Peretz,
I. L. (JEWISH)

Old Verlooka, Manning-Sanders, R. (RUSSIAN)

Ooka and Tosuke’s Tax, Edmonds,
I. G. (JAPANESE)
The Orphan and the Leper, Mama,
R. (FON: BENIN)

Orphan Boy: A Massai Story,
Mollel, T. M. (MASSAI:
TANZANIA)

The Orphan Boy and the Elk Dog,
Yolen, J. (CHEROKEE)

Oudelette, Manning-Sanders, R.
(MEDITERRANEAN)

Poor Turkey Girl, Sierra, J. (ZUNI)
The Prince and the Orphan, Mama,
R. (FON: BENIN)
Qalutaligssuaq, Caswell, H.  
(INUIT)  
Quick-Witted, Hoogasian-Villa, S.  
(ARMENIAN)  
The Skull, Manning-Sanders, R.  
(TYROLESE)  
Spindle, Shuttle, and Needle, Lang, A. (GERMAN)  
The Stolen Jewel, Hitchcock, P.  
(NEPALI)  
The Story of Bhikkhu Sok, Carrison, M. P. (CAMBODIAN)  
The Story of Mordecai and Esther, Barash, A. (JEWISH)  
The Strongest Boy in the World, Hill, K. (WABANAKI)  
Wend'Yamba, Guirma, F. (UPPER VOLTAN)  
The Wooden Bowl, Hearn, L. (JAPANESE)  
Yeh-Hsien, Sierra, J. (CHINESE)  
Yukiko and the Little Black Cat, Novak, M. (JAPANESE)
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REFERENCES


A Change of Storyteller: Folktales in *Children and Books*, from Arbuthnot to Sutherland

JANICE M. DEL NEGRO

ABSTRACT

Part of a larger doctoral dissertation in progress, this article looks at the folktales chapter through nine editions of arguably the most influential children's literature textbook of the twentieth century, *Children and Books*. Variables compared and contrasted include the language, the general reorganizations, the specific chapters on folktales and chapters or sections on storytelling, the illustrations, the indexes, and the bibliographies.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most controversial developments in the field of children's literature is the critical maelstrom revolving around the idea of cultural authenticity in books for youth, especially in that staple of children's collections, the folktale. The changing criteria in evaluating traditional folktales published for youth in single volumes and anthologies include buzzwords such as cultural pluralism, multiculturalism, inclusivity, and authenticity. Is the retelling authentic to the culture of origin? Do the illustrations accurately reflect the culture of origin? And what difference does it make whether they do or not?

An overview of the changing criteria for the evaluation of traditional materials for youth reveals the social, political, and aesthetic issues that define what we want our children to read and know. Looking at the issues historically calls for a close study of standard bibliographic tools and canon resources such as *The Children's Book Catalog, The Elementary School Library*...
Catalog, and the ground-breaking best-selling children’s literature textbook, *Children and Books* authored by May Hill Arbuthnot in 1947 and subsequently revised by Zena Sutherland from 1972 onward.

This discussion focuses on the folktale chapter in *Children and Books* (henceforth referred to as *CAB*) over the course of nine editions from 1947 to 1997 (copyright years on the nine editions are 1947, 1957, 1964, 1972, 1977, 1981, 1986, 1991, and 1997), based on the hypothesis that an analysis of such an influential guide to children’s literature would be enlightening in terms of changes made over a fifty-year time span. In surveying the folktale chapter through *CAB’s* nine editions, I considered the general reorganizations, the specific chapters on folktales and chapters or sections on storytelling, the illustrations, the indexes, and the bibliographies.

My initial premise was that the discussion and controversy that has accompanied the burgeoning publication of folktales for youth in the last twenty years would be reflected in this standard work and indicated through changes in each edition. When does *CAB* start discussing the new question of cultural authenticity, representing the culture of origin accurately both in illustrations and text, and do the bibliographies supporting these sections reflect that question? Since *CAB* is a classic in its field, what stays in and what comes out, what is emphasized and what is de-emphasized, and what changes occur (and when) have great impact.

A short overview of *CAB* is followed here by a close look at the folktales and storytelling chapters in the first edition, tracing changes made in relevant sections through subsequent editions, with commentary about language, race, and gender issues. For the purposes of this article, *CAB’s* chapter titles are in bold italic; chapter headings are in bold; and subheadings are in bold, small caps.

**Overview**

May Hill Arbuthnot’s (1947) enormous endeavor (and there were fewer books to talk about in 1947) includes chapters on *The Child and His Books* and *Children’s Books: History and Trends* in which she discusses the history of publishing books for children, remarking on the didacticism and somber tone of the available material until “cheerfulness creeps in” with Charles Perrault’s fairytales (p. 17), beginning a tradition of folk and fairytales published for children that continues today. A major tribute to their appeal is their longevity, despite many educational philosophies that declared them worthless at best and damaging at worst.

Arbuthnot’s (1947) preface to the first edition describes the origin of what was to become a definitive work in the field of children’s literature: “*Children and Books* grew out of the tantalizing questions grownups are always asking: ‘what kind of books do children like?’ ‘How can we get our children to read more and better books?’” (p. iii). The purpose of *CAB* is
given in this first edition as “a text-book for children’s literature courses in teachers colleges and library training schools, but it is also a book for teachers in-service and for parents or for any adults who wonder about children’s reading; criteria are presented for each type of reading to help adults evaluate the different kinds of books and their value to children” (p. iii). This stated purpose remains constant until Zena Sutherland extensively revised the fourth edition.

Under the first author, May Hill Arbuthnot, the layout and design of *CAB* is consistent through the first two editions; chapter arrangement and titles remain constant, and content of the relevant chapters is essentially unchanged. The references and bibliographies are located at the end of the book, arranged by chapter; for the first-edition folktales chapter, *Old Magic*, the books are divided into adult references and collections of tales, the entries divided by cultural group.

In the second edition, the content of the relevant chapters is essentially unchanged from the first edition, with the exception of changes of photos and illustrations and minor additions of newly recommended titles. The bibliography of folktale collections has been expanded slightly, but bibliographies are still located at the end of the book.

The third edition has a spruced up design—heavier paper, a less busy layout, and, for the first time, an insert of color plates from children’s book illustrations, which continues, with different pictures, through the ninth edition. Arbuthnot’s (1962) preface to the third edition states that the “general approach and organization of earlier editions have not been changed” (p. ii) “but throughout the book, there have been a number of combinations, rearrangements, expansions and revisions of parts and chapters” (p. iii); “the bibliographies have been thoroughly revised and updated, and they have been placed, along with the Suggested Readings, Problems, and Projects, immediately after the relevant chapters.” With the addition and subtraction of recommended titles, the subject bibliographies remain conveniently at the conclusion of each chapter, with Adult References contained in the appendix, through the ninth edition.

When Zena Sutherland becomes editor with the fourth edition of *CAB* in 1972, she carries Arbuthnot’s blessing into the new edition: “Before her death in October 1969, May Hill Arbuthnot approved the reorganization and redevelopment carried out in this fourth edition of *Children and Books*” (p. ii). Sutherland (1972) broadens the stated purpose of *CAB* from previous editions, writing that “[CAB is] meant for all adults who are interested in bringing children and books together, but it is designed particularly for classes in children’s literature in English and Education departments and in library schools, in colleges and universities” (p. ii). This slightly broader purpose is constant through the ninth edition.

Sutherland’s (1972) addition of the special feature, “Viewpoints,” is a valuable and substantial contribution to the format of *CAB*: “Throughout
the discussions of books and authors in chapters 1-16, and separated from the text, are "Viewpoints," brief statements from books and articles, not necessarily representing the point of view in *Children and Books*, but suggesting to readers some issues and interests they may wish to explore" (p. ii). These "Viewpoints" connect children's literature in general and folktales in particular to other disciplines, and provide guideposts for further discussion, study, and research.

The physical layout of the fourth edition is friendlier with the use of color for borders and emphasis and more generous white space. Subsequent editions of *CAB* are redesigned for a cleaner look; the eighth edition has, along with the color plate inserts, in-text color illustrations and photos, changes maintained in the ninth edition.

An analysis of the folktale chapter of *CAB* over time must consider not only the changes made from edition to edition, but also the major changes occurring with the transfer from May Hill Arbuthnot as author to Zena Sutherland as author/editor with the publication of the fourth edition.

**FROM MISSIONARY LANGUAGE TO MANAGEMENT LANGUAGE**

Arbuthnot's (1947) language mirrors the accepted style of her day: it is somewhat fulsome and dramatic but always apparently heartfelt. Her view of traditional folk- and fairytales is clearly positive: "Children seek these tales, hungering perhaps for a world of universal truth, a world of pure justice, where the wicked never go unpunished and gentle hearts are always rewarded with love and good fortune" (p. 29). This use of what I will call missionary language, language that attempts to inspire and persuade the reader to the author's point of view, remains consistent until the fourth edition, when *CAB* 's language is infused with the practical professional vision of new author/editor Zena Sutherland.

Sutherland's language has a tone new to *CAB*; it is more utilitarian and objective (called management language for the purposes of this article), a change that will be prevalent throughout the fourth edition, well-fixed by the fifth, and standard throughout the remaining editions. A small example of this is the retitling of the folktale chapter from the romantic *Old Magic* to the more definitive *Folk Tales* with the fourth edition.

Up until the fourth edition, the writing in *CAB* is rife with unacknowledged biases of the time, using paternalistic, sometimes racist, language that would be intolerable today (text refers to the "heathenness of the Orient," for example, on pages 203, 233, and 255 in the first three editions, respectively). In the fourth edition, there is an important change in the nature of the language and style of writing; there is a new sensitivity evident in the language used to describe minority cultures and their contributions to history, literary and otherwise. Sutherland makes a clean sweep of the folktales chapter, doing away with first the racist then the
sexist connotations unconsciously inherent in the writing of the early editions.

Overall, by the fourth edition, the language is much less subjective. For example, in the third edition, a passage about folktale introductions says: “For children, brevity of introduction is an important part of the charm of these folktales. The excitement gets underway with a minimum of description. In comparison, the introductions to many modern stories are tiresomely wordy” (Arbuthnot, 1964, p. 277). In the fourth edition, the passage reads: “For children, brevity of introduction is an important part of the charm of these folktales. The excitement gets underway with a minimum of description” (Arbuthnot & Sutherland, 1972, p. 153). There are fewer gross generalizations after Sutherland’s editorial takeover of CAB, and certainly no offhand dismissal of entire genres of literature for youth.

ART

While the in-text recommendations of collections and single tales in the folktale chapter do not reflect the massive changes occurring in this sector of publishing for children (recommended examples remain surprisingly Euro-centric throughout the nine editions), the art used to illustrate various points in the text does begin to mirror the interest among field professionals in multicultural materials. The variety of illustrations from single and multiple tale volumes focusing on non-European cultures increases beginning with the fourth edition, which has illustrations from Verna Aardema’s (1966) collection of African tales, More Tales from the Story Hat, and Ennis Rees’s (1967) collection of African-American tales, Brer Rabbit and His Tricks; the fifth edition adds an illustration from Dorothy Sharp Carter’s Greedy Mariani and Other Tales from the Antilles (1974); the sixth edition adds illustrations from tales from the Middle Eastern and American Indian traditions. The seventh edition has an almost entirely new selection of art reflecting this shift in focus; the illustration used for the section on Cinderella variants is Ai-Ling Louie’s Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella Story from China (1982); the eighth edition (the first to use in-text color illustrations) and the ninth edition both continue to reflect the cultural diversity of the traditional folktales being published for children in the selection of included art.

THE RELEVANT CHAPTERS: FROM OLD MAGIC TO FOLK TALES

In the first edition of CAB, two chapters (52 pages, not including bibliographies) are devoted to folk- and fairy tales (Old Magic) and storytelling (Using Folk Tales with Children). The Old Magic chapter discusses the origin and dissemination of folktales under the heading How and why the folk tales originated, which includes the subheadings:

- REMNANTS OF MYTH AND RITUAL: a discussion of monogenesis or the Aryan myth theory, folktales as remnants of nature myths, and
folktales as remnants of other kinds of religious myth and ritual

- **Polygenesis**: the dissemination of similar plots and motifs
- **Origins in Dreams and Unconscious Emotions**: a discussion of psychoanalytic theories of folktales
- **Cement of Society**: which states that folktales "not only express but codify and reinforce the way people think, feel and behave" (1947, p. 203).

The section **Where folk tales originated** broadly discusses the diverse origins of traditional tales, and the section **Wide diffusion of the folk tales** discusses the similarities in plots and motifs found in a wide variety of cultures, giving possible reasons for their migration. Except for some minor editing, probably for space considerations, these sections are retained in their entirety throughout the nine editions of CAB, with a curious exception. There is a strange anomaly in the ninth edition. The discussion of monogenesis under the subheading **Theories of Folk-Tale Origin** omits the fact that monogenesis, or the "Aryan myth theory" (Sutherland, 1997, p. 167), has been refuted, possibly relying on vague generalizations about polygenesis to suffice; otherwise, there is no substantial change in content through the nine editions, and there is little indication of any investigation or knowledge of new theories of folkloric research or study.

**Collections and Collectors**

The first-edition section on **Collections and Collectors** provides a detailed look at the collectors and collections of four groups of national folktales—i.e., French fairytales and Charles Perrault, 1628-1703; German folktales and the Grimm Brothers; Norwegian popular tales and Asbjörnsen, Moe and Dasent; and English folktales and Joseph Jacobs. Arbuthnot (1947) states: "[T]here are four groups of folktales which include the children's favorites: the French, German, Norwegian, and English. These have so colored our thinking and entered our language that we call them classics" (p. 205). Even while indulging in some serious Eurocentrism, however, she also says: "Adults should know these collections well enough to select from them the great tales no child should miss. But they should also be familiar with the collections of similar tales now available from almost every other country from Finland to Peru. Not that all of these can and should be used with children, but any of them can provide an open sesame to a neighborhood" (p. 205).

There is an odd dissonance evident throughout the early editions of **CAB**—folktales are perceived and enthusiastically promoted as a bridge for making connections with, and promoting appreciation and understanding of, world cultures, even as the language used unconsciously reflects the biases of the time.
French Fairytales: Charles Perrault, 1628-1703

Arbuthnot (1947) gives Perrault full credit for sparking the beginning of written folk literature in Europe, and for the preservation and popularization (and possibly even improvement) of the French folktale, commenting on Perrault's "masterly sense of the dramatic, his skillful use of dialogue, and the swift movement of the plots. No storyteller can ever relate one of these dramatic tales without being grateful to the art and sagacity of Charles Perrault" (p. 207). With minimal changes, this section remains constant through CAB's two author/editors and nine editions.

German Folktales: Jacob Ludwig Carl Grimm, 1785-1863 and Wilhelm Carl Grimm, 1786-1859

The opening sentence of the first-edition section on the compilation and publishing history of tales collected and retold by the Brothers Grimm gives the contemporary view: "The Grimm Brothers may be said to have started the modern science of folklore. They had a scholarly respect for sources which kept them from tampering with the language or the plots as they wrote down the stories from the dictation of the people" (Arbuthnot, 1947, p. 207). The Brothers Grimm are seen as having "a passionate concern for sources" (Sutherland, 1997, p. 182) throughout all nine editions of CAB, despite the fact that the view of the Grimm Brothers as scrupulous about their sources and their collecting has been disproved by folklore scholarship such as John Ellis's (1983) One Fairy Tale Too Many: The Brothers Grimm and Their Tales and Jack Zipe's (1988) The Brother's Grimm: From Enchanted Forests to Modern World. Both titles are included in CAB's adult references, the former since the seventh edition (Sutherland, 1986, p. 678) and the latter since the eighth (Sutherland, 1991, p. 702), but their research is not reflected in the text.

Norwegian Popular Tales: Peter Christian Asbjornsen, 1812-1885, Jorgen E. Moe, 1813-1882, and Sir George Webbe Dasent, 1817-1896

"When people talk about the Scandinavian folk tales, they usually mean a particular book, East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon, the collection most people have known and loved, in one edition or another, all their lives" (Arbuthnot, 1947, p. 208). The section discusses the collection, publication, and translation of Asbjornsen and Moe's tales, and includes commentary from Gudrun Thorne-Thomsen ("a Norwegian woman who is one of the great exponents of the storytelling art" [Arbuthnot, 1947, p. 209]) regarding the efficacy of the translation. As with the entry on Perrault, this section remains constant through CAB's publishing history thus far.

English Folktales: Joseph Jacobs, 1854-1916

Joseph Jacobs compiled his well-known collections "for the immediate
enjoyment of English children" (Arbuthnot, 1947, p. 210), and Arbuthnot
considers that his greatest contribution to children’s literature is not as a
folklorist but as a selector and adaptor: “[W]hen you read the stories them-
selves, you know at once that here is a compiler who understood children.
Here is the leisurely storytelling style of an old nurse. Here is a sense of
drama and fun; ‘a few vulgarisms are left in the mouths of the vulgar’ very
properly. And finally, here is an unerring selection of the kind of stories
children love” (p. 211). Aside from minor additions of recommended titles,
this section remains constant through all nine editions.

Starting in the fourth edition, Collectors and Collecting becomes the
concluding section to the Folk Tales (called Old Magic in the previous three
editions) chapter. Most alterations to the text in this chapter over the
nine editions are cosmetic, with occasional changes in recommended titles,
and do not reflect any substantial changes in content, although by the
fifth edition reference to the four national groups—French, German,
Norwegian, and English (British)—as primary sources of “classic tales”
that are favorites of children has been eliminated, indicating an apparent
awareness of the Euro-centrism of previous editions. This makes one re-
lated seventh edition change an even more interesting choice. While the
reference to sources of “classic tales” has been eliminated since the fifth
edition, in the seventh edition (Sutherland, 1986) a new paragraph has
been added stating that:

[T]he tales best known in the United States come from the French,
Norse, German, and English traditions. Although stories from other
countries are becoming more available, the tales from these four
cultures form the basis for much of the folk literature heard and
read by children and adults. For that reason, the traditional tales
from these cultures are discussed in more detail here than are some
others. (p. 179)

This paragraph is retained through the ninth edition (Sutherland,
1997, p. 181), but it is a debatable question today given the availability of
many tales from other cultures in both picture books and collections, and
given that many children do not have the opportunity to hear the so-
called classic tales at all, except in bowdlerized popular movie and car-
toon variations.

The concluding sentence of the section on Collectors and Collec-
tions in the seventh edition broaches a related issue: “Although the coun-
try of origin may influence the choice of material, the keys to selecting
folktales to share with children are, of course, the quality of the tales and
the needs and interests of the children who will read or hear them”
(Sutherland, 1986, p. 187). This is the first concrete recognition of the
necessity for critical analysis of text and tales, and it is carried into the
ninth edition; unfortunately there is no indication of how to evaluate the
quality of the tales as noted.
PREDOMINANT TYPES OF FOLKTALES

In the first-edition *Old Magic* chapter, the section on Predominant types of folk tales includes:

- **Accumulative tales**
- **Talking beasts**
- **The drolls or humorous stories**
- **Realistic stories**
- **Religious tales**
- **Tales of magic**

Each subheading includes a definition of the type of tale, its most appropriate audience, and recommended examples that sometimes include excerpts from the various texts. In the second edition, a short definition of **Romance** tales is added between religious tales and tales of magic, but otherwise there are no more than cosmetic changes to this section throughout all nine editions.

Since “the tales of magic are the heart of the folktales” (Arbuthnot, 1947, p. 215), Arbuthnot separates them into their own section, **Fairies and other magic makers**, with subheadings under:

- **The little people**
- **Wise women, witches, and wizards**
- **Giants and ogres**
- **Fairy animals**
- **Magic objects**
- **Enchanted people**

Again Arbuthnot (1947) gives a description of the characteristics of the type of tale, its most appropriate audience, and recommended examples, including commentary on the inherent moral lessons to be learned from such tales: “These stories are not didactic, but one after another shows that courage and simple goodness work their own magic in this world, that evil must be conquered even if it carries us to the gates of death, and that grace and strength are bestowed upon those who strive mightily and keep an honest, kindly heart” (p. 219).

**“Our” Fairy Lore**

The overall tone in the first edition of *CAB* is extremely Euro-centric, and Euro-centric without conscious acknowledgment as Arbuthnot (1947) blithely states, “although the word fairy may come from the French, our fairy lore is predominantly Celtic” (p. 216). While this section is relocated in the fourth edition, it is still “our fairy lore” (Sutherland, 1972, p. 147), the assumption being that “our” fairy lore is European. The fourth-edition opening paragraph does de-emphasize the so-called classic nature and assumed superiority of the European tales, but non-European tales
are still being compared to the European tales to calibrate their worth, which is based primarily on their similarity to well-known European variants. The in-text examples are still very Euro-centric (i.e., Celtic, Norse, British, German, and French), although the bibliographies have been expanded to include references to other cultures.

After Sutherland’s fourth-edition sweep of *Predominant Kinds of Folk Tales* in 1972, the content remains relatively stable except for cosmetic changes throughout the remaining editions.

**Folktales in the United States**

The parameters for *Folk tales in the United States* are given in the first edition as follows: “Folklore in the United States falls into four large categories: tales from the American Negro, especially the collections known as the Uncle Remus stories; tales from the North American Indians; variants of the European stories; and native tall tales of the Paul Bunyan variety” (Arbuthnot, 1947, p. 219). More specific descriptions follow.

*American Negro Tales: Joel Chandler Harris, 1848-1908*

In the first edition, the discussion of American Negro tales centers on the collections of Joel Chandler Harris and the Uncle Remus tales: “In the character of Uncle Remus, a plantation Negro, Harris embodied the gentleness, the philosophy, the shrewd appraisal of character, and the rich imagination of all the Negro storytellers to whom he had listened” (Arbuthnot, 1947, p. 220).

Dialect is mentioned as a barrier to understanding; selections from the stories are included, and a similarity is noted to the talking beast tales of other cultures. As early as the second edition, Arbuthnot (1957) gives the first indication of objections to Chandler’s Uncle Remus tales. Uncle Remus is still “a plantation Negro” (p. 250) but Arbuthnot states that “objections to these stories are raised by modern American Negroes. In an article on “Uncle Remus for Today’s Children” (*Elementary English*, March 1953), Margaret Taylor Burroughs (1953) points out that the tales are full of offensive terms for Negroes. She objects to the intrusion of old “Uncle’s” personality and point of view. These sometimes add to the wit and wisdom of the stories but she cites some deplorable examples also” (Arbuthnot, 1957, p. 250). Arbuthnot (1957) maintains that, despite these drawbacks, the Harris collection “is source material of great value” (p. 251).

It is with the fourth edition, when Zena Sutherland takes over editing *CAB*, that *American Negro tales* is changed to *Black Folklore*, and Uncle Remus is more accurately referred to as “a plantation slave” (Sutherland, 1972, p. 171) not “a plantation Negro” as in the previous editions. In the fifth edition (Sutherland, 1978), there is a small but telling change. The early editions describe the appeal of the Uncle Remus tales, saying: “[T]here is a special flavor to the Uncle Remus stories which is all their
own. They show a homely philosophy of life, flashes of poetic imagination, a childlike love of mischief and fun, and a perfection of pattern and style that are not surpassed by any other beast tales in existence” (Arbuthnot, 1947, p. 22).

In the fourth edition, the phrase “a shrewd appraisal of human nature” has been added to the list of attributes (Sutherland, 1972, p. 171). In the fifth edition, the phrase “a childlike love of mischief and fun” (Arbuthnot, 1947, p. 22) has been changed to “a love of mischief” (Sutherland, 1978, p. 169) indicating a continuation of the sensitivity to language new editor Sutherland brought to CAB in edition four. In the eighth edition (1991), the heading Black Folklore is changed to African-American Folklore and, thirty-three years after the second edition, the reference to Margaret Taylor Burrough’s (1953) article “Uncle Remus for Today’s Children” is finally gone. Except for the addition of a small number of newly recommended titles, this section remains essentially unchanged from the fifth through the ninth (Sutherland, 1997) editions.

North American Indian Tales

While Arbuthnot (1947) apparently enjoyed and valued the Uncle Remus tales, she viewed North American Indian tales with something very close to disdain. In the first edition, she postulates that American children know the European tales better than the tales of American Indians because “most of our children are more closely related to Europeans in race, customs, and ways of thinking than they are to our native Indians. Another reason for the less frequent use of Indian stories is that they are, by and large, neither sufficiently dramatic nor well enough organized to command intense interest” (p. 221). Arbuthnot (1947) quotes Alexander Krappe from his book The Science of Folklore: “[T]he variants of old-world tales collected among the North American Indians give one the impression that their narrators were incapable even of preserving a good tale, to say nothing of inventing a new one” (p. 221).

This is a view which Arbuthnot recognizes as extreme but apparently agrees with nonetheless. Arbuthnot (1947) uses words like “monotonous” and “moralistic” when referring to North American Indian tales, and says that even the creation myths “lack the grandeur and cosmic sweep of other creation myths” (p. 221). This point of view is maintained until the taking over of CAB by Zena Sutherland in 1972. With the fourth edition, North American Indian tales is almost completely rewritten, eliminating the quote from Krappe (although his book is still cited in the chapter bibliography) and the tacit agreement with it; by the seventh edition, the Krappe book is no longer cited in bibliography, and, except for a small number of newly recommended titles, the section remains constant through the ninth edition.
Native Variants of European Tales

This section is concerned primarily with Richard Chase’s (1943) collection, _The Jack Tales_, which Arbuthnot (1947) calls “the most amusing and significant collection” (p. 221) of modified European folktales that exist in the United States. Along with their wit and charm, Arbuthnot comments on content and sources. With the added reference to Chase’s (1948) _Grandfather Tales_ in the fourth edition, this section remains constant throughout all nine editions of _CAR_ with no substantial alterations in content.

Tall Tales and Other Native Inventions

In the first edition, under the broad phrase “our native tall tales” (Arbuthnot, 1947, p. 223), Arbuthnot includes tales of Davy Crockett, Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill, Captain Stormalong, Mike Fink, and John Henry. Regarding sources, Arbuthnot (1947) says: “There are no complete or satisfying answers to the questions about where all these tales came from or who started them” (p. 223) but concludes that “no young citizen should miss reading about the soaring achievements of America’s early supermen” (p. 223). There is no indication of any awareness that many of these tales were literary inventions, or that there were any tall tale American heroines.

Although the first three editions list four categories of American folktale as cited previously, Sutherland’s (1972) fourth edition (in which _Folk tales in the United States_ moves to the concluding spot for the _Folk Tales_ chapter) differs: “Folklore in the United States falls into three large categories: (1) tales from black Americans, including the collections known as the Uncle Remus stories; (2) tales from the North American Indians; and (3) variants of the European stories” (p. 171).

In the fourth edition, the tall tale has disappeared from the folktales section completely and has been moved to the _Modern Fantasy_ chapter, where Sutherland (1972) notes: “Some of the older stories are classified as folktales, but many are probably best described as ‘fakelore’” (p. 245), footnoted to an article by folklorist Richard Dorson (1959) entitled “Twentieth Century Cosmic Demigods” from _American Folklore_. Although the basic content remains the same, this change of location indicates a recognition of the possibility of the tall tales being literary instead of folkloric constructs, but the change only lasts for this one edition. In the fifth edition, _TALL TALES_ is moved back to its previous position, retaining the “fakelore” designation and the Dorson reference, where it remains constant through the ninth edition. Whether the restoration of tall tales to the folktales chapter is for ease of location or just a nod to popular sentiment is unexplained.

Other National Groups of Folktales

In the introductory paragraphs to _Other national groups of folk tales_ in the first edition, Arbuthnot (1947) recommends using _The Children’s_
Catalog or Mary Huse Eastman's Index to Fairy Tales to access collections she does not mention, saying that her "discussion of a few of these national collections can perhaps give some idea of the richness and variety of folktales available today from all countries" (p. 223). The section subheadings are: Arabian Nights; Czechoslovakian Stories; Finnish Folk Tales; Russian Folk Tales; Spanish Stories.

In Arabian Nights, Arbuthnot (1947) mentions an early collection by Antoine Galland in 1704, discussing the translation from and to "Oriental languages" (p. 223) and the fact that "the stories were fortunate in falling into the hands of a skillful storyteller. These tales of the Orient were given a Gallic touch, so they lack nothing of drama or color" (p. 223). The assumption that these "tales of the Orient" required a European touch to make them palatable is another example of the unconscious Euro-centrism of the editorial world view; the quote remains through the ninth edition.

Short sections on Czechoslovakian Stories and Finnish Folk Tales are included in the first four editions, but by the fifth edition the specific sections on Czechoslovakian Stories and Finnish Folk Tales are gone, possibly to make additional room for an expanded section on African folktales added in the fourth edition. The fourth-edition section on African Folk Tales notes the proliferation of collections of African tales after 1960, including those by Harold Courlander, Wilfrid Hambly, Russell Davis, Brent Ashabranner, Verna Aardema, Humphrey Harman, Eleanor Heady, Joyce Cooper Arkhurst, and Frances Carpenter, among others; the place of folktales and storytelling within African culture is briefly and very broadly explained (Sutherland, 1972, p. 168).

In the section on Russian Folk Tales, A. M. Afanasiev is cited as the primary collector of Russian tales, which Arbuthnot (1947) declares are "for adult students of folklore, not for children. They are bloody and horrible but full of excitement and color" (p. 224). In the later Sutherland (1997) edition, the sentence is changed to read "They are violent, but full of excitement and color" (p. 187), another example of the continuing shift toward more straightforwardly descriptive language as opposed to subjective value judgments. With minor additions of new and recommended titles, the section remains relatively constant through the ninth edition.

Arbuthnot (1947) includes the following quote (constant through all nine editions) in Spanish Stories: "One American storyteller, Ruth Sawyer, thinks the Irish stories are matched only by the Spanish, and her own collection seems to bear out her opinion" (p. 224). This section remains oddly untouched and unexpanded through the ninth edition, despite the demand for and publication of new single and collected volumes of folktales from a wide variety of Latino cultures in the twenty-five years between 1972 and 1997.
An old idea of Arbuthnot’s that is retained from previous editions is given new emphasis by Sutherland (1972) by its prominent location as the closing sentence in the section on folktale VARIETY: “In the enjoyment of folktales, children can assimilate a sense of their own cultural identity and an appreciation of that of others” (p. 160). This quote is repeated in subsequent editions, and in the eighth edition there is a small but notable addition, which is maintained through the ninth edition: “In the enjoyment of folktales, children can assimilate a sense of their own cultural identity and an appreciation of others’, and can share in the cultural literacy that should be the heritage of every child” (Sutherland, 1991, p. 210, italics mine). This is an indication that the professional discussion regarding multiculturalism and related issues has not gone entirely unnoticed.

**Using Folktales with Children**

In the first edition, chapter 11, *Using Folk Tales with Children*, deals almost exclusively with the form and style of the traditional tale. Though condensed and moved into the Folk Tales chapter proper after the second edition, the content relating to the form and style of the folktale remains constant throughout all nine editions.

The first broad heading is Distinctive elements of European folk tales, under which umbrella Arbuthnot (1947) claims that “the form or pattern of the folktales is curiously satisfying both to children and adults” (p. 225). Under INTRODUCTION, DEVELOPMENT, and CONCLUSION, Arbuthnot describes the pattern of the traditional western European folktale, giving examples from well-known tales such as “Sleeping Beauty,” “Cinderella,” and “The Three Billy Goats Gruff.” She emphasizes “clear robust themes,” the element of contrast, and objective and understandable events, and compares strong folkloric themes with the weak themes of modern literature. The value of any traditional tale is judged by its similarity to western European folktales; Arbuthnot (1947) indicates that the lack of success of the Arabian, American Indian, and Russian tales is due to their inability to follow the successful pattern and structure of the “classic” European tale (p. 228).

The significance of folkloric threes, a standard and important motif in scholarly considerations of traditional European folktales such as Max Lüthi’s (1976) *Once upon a Time: On the Nature of Fairy Tales* and Alex Olrik’s (1992) *Principles for Oral Narrative Research*, is mistakenly, if quaintly, represented in this first edition, possibly an indication that folktales are being viewed primarily as storybooks as opposed to representations of a specific culture and its lore: “Perhaps there is no particular significance in the “three” except that the old storyteller, always properly audience conscious as a good storyteller should be, could see for himself that suspense can be endured just so long before people get impatient” (Arbuthnot, 1947, p.
The error in this quote is carried consistently throughout all subsequent editions.

**Means to an End**

The first-edition section *Why use the folk tales with modern children?* opens with a quote from W.H. Auden's review of the Pantheon edition of *Grimm’s Fairy Tales* for the *New York Times* (November 14, 1944): “For, among the few indispensable, common-property books upon which Western culture can be founded—that is, excluding the national genius of specific peoples as exemplified by Shakespeare and Dante—it is hardly too much to say that these tales rank next to the Bible in importance” (Arbuthnot, 1947, p. 231).

Any doubt as to where Arbuthnot’s allegiance lies is laid to rest here. She comes down firmly on the side of using folktales with children for a wide variety of reasons, including the promotion of **ETHICAL TRUTH** (“Indeed, so roundly and soundly do these old tales stand for morality that they leave an indelible impression of virtue invariably rewarded and evil unfailingly punished” [Arbuthnot, 1947, p. 232]), and the psychological **SATISFACTION OF NEEDS**.

In the section *Misuses of the folk tales*, Arbuthnot (1947) takes to task those adults who are “seized by an attack of earnestness and feel that fairy tales should be abolished entirely or related for some useful end” (p. 233). Methods of using folktales to hammer home a moral have been defeated “by their obvious absurdity and by children’s healthy resistance to them” (p. 234). Forced retelling by young children for language development and practice is considered a catastrophe for many children that ruins the tale for both narrator and audience. Those earnest adults should be aware that, although “there are some fairy stories right for every age, it is a mistake to force the stories on children who are too young for them” (p. 234).

This is in direct opposition to the philosophy espoused later when Sutherland takes over *CAB* with the fourth edition (and the *Misuses of the folk tales* section is eliminated). She takes a more utilitarian approach to storytelling as a creative means to an educational end.

Included under the heading of *Desirable uses of the folk tales* in Arbuthnot’s (1947) first edition is:

- **FOR ENTERTAINMENT:** “First and foremost, these old tales should be read just for fun.”
- **WITH RACIAL GROUPS:** “[T]he folktales may become a teacher’s open sesame to friendship in a neighborhood made up of a somewhat homogeneous racial group...folktales may lead straight into the homes of the children and develop a common bond between two or more racial groups.”
- **FOR ILLUSTRATION:** “As subjects for modeling or painting, the fairy tales are unsurpassed.”
• **FOR DRAMATIZATION:** “As a matter of fact, children will soon develop a sense of form and dramatic sequence. . . When the dramatic stories cry out to be played, let the children try them.”

• **WITH PUPPETS:** “Self-consciousness begins to trouble older children. . . . so for the upper grades, puppets or marionettes are likely to be more popular than straight dramatization.”

• **WITH SOCIAL STUDIES:** “Europe and Asia, South America and Africa, Mexico and China, even the different regions of our own country can be explored with folktales as well as with facts.”

• **FOR STORYTELLING BY OLDER CHILDREN:** “The fifth-grade Storytellers carried on this activity [telling to the primary grades] for a whole semester and not only enjoyed themselves, but grew appreciably in poise, language power, and ability to interest and hold an audience” (pp. 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240).

This section, which contains references to relating storytelling and folklore to the curriculum in the school setting, illustrated with a substantial number of practical examples, is eliminated in subsequent editions. Highly abbreviated information from *Desirable Uses of the Folk Tales* is relegated to the **Notes on Chapters 5-15** section in the fourth edition; subsequent editions include suggestions for using folk literature in the **Connecting Children to Literature** section. References to making connections between cultures are moved to the **Folk Tales** chapter, where reading folktales, not storytelling, is mentioned briefly as a way to promote cultural literacy.

**Storytelling and Gender**

The first-edition section, **Personal equipment for storytelling**, opens with the following quote by Arbuthnot (1947):

> The successful storyteller must have two types of equipment for his art. First, he must possess those outward and visible evidences of fitness for the task—good voice, clear diction, adequate vocabulary, and a pleasant appearance. Second, he must achieve a certain elusive inner and spiritual grace made up of complete sincerity, delight in his tale, self-forgetfulness, and a respect for his audience and the storytelling art. (p. 242)

The use of the male pronoun throughout the section, while grammatically correct, is oddly juxtaposed with references to the feminine in the subheading **Appearance**, in which Arbuthnot (1947) states:

> Your particular style of beauty or plainness is of no consequence to successful storytelling. . . . Your clothes should be the kind your audience forgets the moment the tale begins; so don’t wear a hat. Somehow, feminine hats are insistent things that cannot be forgotten; and they are completely foreign to the timeless and homey qualities of the folktales. (p. 243)
While gender inclusion is not something that appears to worry Arbuthnot overmuch in the first three editions (personal pronouns are male, while comments about appearance stick to the feminine), in the third edition a sentence under the subheading \textit{Agreeable Voice}, about more men than women using unctuous tones when talking to children (Arbuthnot, 1964, p. 380) has been eliminated, and a fairly substantial three paragraphs on projection, tone, and breath control has been added.

The third edition \textit{Appearance} subsection, however, opens with the same sentence as in the previous editions (“Your particular style of beauty or plainness is of no consequence to successful storytelling, but certain other elements of appearance are” [1964, p. 382]). The text is unchanged, until we get to the hat, which has been replaced by an admonition not to fiddle with jewelry or wear clanking bracelets (Arbuthnot, 1964, p. 382).

In the third edition a new section, \textit{Selecting a story to tell} has been added, which stresses the necessary match between story and teller. Apparently Arbuthnot (1964) was fond of hats because, although the hat is gone from the \textit{Appearance} section, it reappears: “Selecting a story to tell is almost as complex a matter as the selection of a hat for a woman. The story, like the hat, must be becoming. It must do something for the teller, and the teller must do something for the story” (p. 383). The section on \textit{Selecting a story to tell} is basically the same in the fourth edition, but new author/editor Sutherland has wisely done away with the quote comparing the selection of a story to the selection of a hat.

Another new section in the third edition, \textit{Adapting a story for telling}, addresses adapting folktales for telling by eliminating occasional “adult frankness” (Arbuthnot, 1964, p. 385) and spends a good deal of space on sample texts for adapting classical myths and legends (Robin Hood, King Arthur) for telling (pp. 385-389). By the fourth edition, the section on \textit{Adapting a story for telling} is gone as are the sample texts for myths and legends; they do not reappear in subsequent editions.

In the first edition, \textit{Three storytellers with contrasting styles} is an intriguing section in which Arbuthnot describes the styles of three well-known and respected storytellers: Marie Shedlock, Ruth Sawyer, and Gudrun Thorne-Thomsen. Arbuthnot (1947) gives each storyteller her moment in the sun, although Gudrun Thorne-Thomsen gets twice as much space as the other two put together, including a rather over the top description contained through the first three editions: “Mrs. Thomsen was small and plain with the beautiful plainness of fine silver. Her brow was high and serene, her features delicate and mobile, and her eyes Northern blue, clear and honest” (p. 249).

By the third edition \textit{Three Storytellers With Contrasting Styles} has been changed to \textit{Four Storytellers With Contrasting Styles} in order to include Jack tale collector Richard Chase, about whom Arbuthnot (1964) gushes: “His is distinctly a masculine performance and there has yet to be
found a woman who can do these stories with the same gusto” (p. 393). Gender equity has yet to find its way into Arbuthnot’s CAB, but it does begin to make an appearance with the Sutherland editions.

Sadly, the section on Four Storytellers With Contrasting Styles is eliminated from CAB beginning with the fourth edition. This is an unfortunate excisernent, as it is one of the few descriptions of historically important storytellers in the library field, and an example of how the contributions of important female professionals are lost, mislaid, and overlooked. They do not reappear in subsequent editions.

Reading Aloud and the Death of Storytelling

When to read and when to tell stories is a clearcut issue for Arbuthnot (1947): “It would be reassuring to say that it is always just as well to read stories aloud as it is to tell them, but unfortunately it is not true” (p. 240). Arbuthnot discusses the positive reasons for storytelling, including the rapport with the listeners, the intimacy of the approach that connects young children to literature, the development of a keener appreciation for words, amusement, satisfaction, and pleasure. She succinctly explains the whens, wheres, and whyfores under the subheadings Why Tell Stories and Read the Picture Stories, Tell the Folk Tales. This stance is maintained through the second edition, but by the third edition it appears Arbuthnot felt the need to take a stronger stand.

Arbuthnot strikes a blow for recognition of the importance of storytelling in the third edition of CAB. An opening section dramatically entitled Is Storytelling Dead? briefly discusses the rushed life of grade school teachers and parents who no longer tell stories to children, and rallies around the kindergarten teachers, librarians, social workers, museum personnel, and even radio and television personalities that still tell stories. The section ends thus: “Still, some teachers will protest, ‘But why tell stories in this day of many books?’” (Arbuthnot, 1964, p. 377), which acts as a segue into the section on When to Read Stories and When to Tell Them.

The introductory paragraphs to When to Read Stories and When to Tell Them contain much of the same information as is in the previous two editions, but here there is an attempt to synthesize the two techniques of reading aloud and telling stories. Important new information on how storytelling connects children to books and positively affects reading readiness is included:

- “storytelling or reading aloud are important baits to books”;
- “through listening, children develop their powers of aural comprehension”;
- “a word that has been heard and understood is more easily recognized when a child encounters it in print”;

When to Read Stories and When to Tell Them
• “children’s ears are becoming accustomed to the tune and cadence of good English”; and
• “they hear and enjoy types of literature they might never read for themselves” (Arbuthnot, 1964, pp. 378, 379).

This is the beginning of an attempt to formally connect storytelling to the curriculum and to children’s reading skills in practical, educationally recognized ways, and it represents a shift in focus exemplified by the new third-edition chapter entitled Storytelling and Reading Aloud. (Although the location of this information has shifted in the third edition, most of this material was contained in the chapter entitled Using Folk Tales with children in the first and second editions.)

In the first edition, Arbuthnot (1947) closes Using Folk Tales with Children with a brief exhortation to storytell instead of read aloud but, no matter what choice the caregiver makes, to be certain to share the riches of folktales with children. By the third edition (1964) the concluding Reading Aloud entry has been expanded, with more emphasis on techniques for successful reading aloud to groups and additional information on the importance of reading aloud in the family (p. 395).

In the fourth edition, Sutherland (1972) begins to dismantle Arbuthnot’s passionate arguments for the benefits of storytelling. The Is Storytelling Dead? section is eliminated, as is the section on Personal Equipment for Storytelling; only severely abbreviated information is retained in a newly titled section How To Tell Stories. Sub-sections on Agreeable Voice, Choice of Words, Making Vocabulary Clear, Appearance, Living the Story, and Sharing the Story are also gone, although the assumption that tellers will be women with clanking bracelets and necklaces is still there (p. 654), as is the reference to “Your particular style of beauty or plainness” being of no consequence to successful storytelling (p. 654).

The individual chapter on Storytelling and Reading Aloud has been eliminated from the fourth edition; information on storytelling as a programming tool has been moved to Part Six, Bringing Children and Books Together: Techniques for using Books with Children, in a subsection entitled Storytelling and Reading Aloud (Sutherland, 1972, pp. 650-58). Storytelling and reading aloud are grouped together under the Value of an Oral Presentation of Literature; there is much more emphasis on reading aloud as opposed to traditional library or classroom storytelling, and the language is much less adulatory than in previous editions. In the acknowledgments, Sutherland thanks Raymond Lubway for his “examples of techniques in using books with children” (Sutherland, 1972, p. ii), indicating that the responsibility for this particular section has been delegated; in subsequent editions this section is guest edited by Dianne Monson.
STORYTELLING AND READING ALOUD: A COMPARISON (Sutherland, 1972, pp. 652-65) comes down only slightly on the side of storytelling as more advantageous through the fact that “the teacher with a head full of stories to tell never has the need to carry books with her” when temporarily detained with a class. Storytelling is now seen as filler (p. 653) and a means to an end, and not necessarily as an end in itself.

By the fifth edition, the How To Tell Stories section from the fourth edition is gone, replaced by Selecting a Story to Tell and Learning and Telling A Story subsections, which contain even more abbreviated information from previous editions in more academic language; the assumption that tellers will be women with clanking bracelets and chains is gone, as are the paragraphs on projection, tone, and breath control. Evidence of additional editing and reorganization of content is apparent—information has been moved from one subsection to another, and examples have been deleted, but no concrete content changes have been made after the initial excisement in the fourth edition. Storytelling is seen primarily as a means to an end in terms of its usefulness as a classroom tool related to methods of teaching reading and promoting other in-class skills. Storytelling and Reading Aloud are now in the chapter entitled Encouraging Response to Literature; they have been separated, with reading aloud (Sutherland, 1978, pp. 524-28) preceding storytelling and getting about twice as much space (pp. 528-30). Storytelling and Reading Aloud: A Comparison (p. 652) is eliminated as a section in the fifth edition; a brief entry on storytelling is still included in chapter 16, Introducing Children to Literature, under the section Folk Literature (pp. 564-66).

The focus in the fifth edition (and one that is maintained through the ninth edition) is much more on the classroom connection being made between children and literature and children and reading, as opposed to the connection between children, story, and storyteller. The sections on Storytelling and Reading Aloud to Children conclude with Observing Responses, which includes suggestions for evaluating the measurable outcomes of storytelling, and emphasizes a clinical approach to storytelling as a means to a specific educational end.

The information on storytelling contained in the fourth through ninth editions of CAB is an extreme abbreviation of the Arbuthnot editions. The need to connect storytelling to the curriculum and to children’s reading readiness needs in practical, educationally recognized ways is much more emphatic than in pre-1972 editions. The approach to storytelling is extremely limited, reflected in statements like “The storyteller’s concerns are much like those of the oral reader, with the most apparent difference being that the storyteller does not use a book in presenting material to children” (1978, p. 528). Except for minor editorial changes, the placement and content of these sections remains constant through the ninth edition.
Given the resurgence of the popularity of storytelling in the 1980s and 1990s, coupled with the American storytelling revival, the near total excisement of the sections on storytelling merit comment. First, the more utilitarian approach of the later editions sees storytelling as only one of the many tools used by teachers and librarians to connect children to books, literature, story, and literacy. Second, it is entirely possible that, given the fact that this is a literature textbook and not a programming manual, the focus is, by necessity, more on the books than on the techniques for promoting them.

CONCLUSION

Taking the long view of the CAB chapter on folktales, it is important to remember that not only is this one small section of a very large work but that, as a genre, folktales for youth have become a specialized area that has weathered multiple shifts in attitude over the last fifty years.

I finished my text comparison of the Old Magic/Folk Tales chapters in the nine editions of Children and Books with the strong realization that what is most interesting is what isn’t there. I was certain when I began that the controversy over the evaluation of folk literature for youth would be reflected in the Folk Tales chapters of the more recent editions of Children and Books; it is not. Although the push for cultural inclusivity is sporadically addressed in the later editions’ Issues sections and briefly in the sections on Trends in Publishing, its relationship to the plethora of new folktale titles is not addressed, nor are the criteria for evaluating this type of material ever explicitly stated. A look at the ninth edition index shows that criteria for evaluation of alphabet books, animal stories, beginning readers, biography, concept books, counting books, fantasy, historical fiction, illustrations, informational books, literary activity programs, Mother Goose editions, mystery and adventure stories, myths, picture books, poetry, realistic fiction, science experiment books, series books, sports stories, and wordless books are included but no criteria for evaluating folktales as literature are given.

Paths for further research are numerous. The bibliographies from edition to edition require closer scrutiny in terms of available titles published, and what titles were added and deleted. (The ninth edition preface states that all the chapter bibliographies have been updated, but that is not apparent from the bibliography for the Folk Tales chapter; many of the titles are dated, with a disappointingly low addition of new recommendations from the plethora of high quality titles available since 1980.)

The Children and Books chapter on folktales needs to be compared to folktale chapters in other recognized, established texts for the study of children’s literature including Charlotte Huck’s (1987) Children’s Literature in the Elementary School, Donna Norton’s (1983) Through the Eyes of A
Child, and John Stewig’s (1988) Children and Books. A literature survey of topics related to cultural pluralism and authenticity issues would give some idea as to what were critical issues of the day during the period before the publication of each edition, and whether or not they would be worth addressing in light of edition revisions. CAB discussions of theories regarding the origin and dissemination of folktales need to be examined in light of new scholarship; the folktales chapter discussing form focuses almost exclusively on the form and style of the western European folktale, and this, too, needs to be addressed. New methodology for evaluating revisions of standard texts such as CAB and similar titles is necessary in order to avoid perpetuating errors in new editions.

Considering the healthy number of folktale retellings published yearly and the controversy surrounding them, the need for guiding criteria for evaluating traditional folktales for youth seems evident. A discussion of what comprises those criteria and how current awareness of the aesthetics of style and presentation, folklore scholarship, ethics, and pragmatic usefulness can be synthesized with issues of artistic freedom is in order. The development of a history of publishing for youth in this area, with an overview of the social, economic, and academic forces influencing current publishing trends in the genre, would greatly assist in the construction of new evaluative criteria, as well as provide a missing piece in the history and criticism of literature for youth.

There is a shift in the focus and the language used to express that focus with the change of editorship in 1972. Both stylistic approaches depend upon the unique vision of each editor; both have merit. Where Arbuthnot’s language was somewhat flowery and inspirational (missionary language), Sutherland’s language was less inspirational but eminently practical (management language) when referring to children’s literature in general and folktales and storytelling in particular. Perhaps this was a reaction to the perceived need for children’s services practitioners, as well as children’s literature scholars, to be seen as more professional—in other words, just because we work with children and children’s literature does not mean we are child-like.

Not only does Sutherland’s objective management language have a substantially different tone from the passionate flair of Arbuthnot’s missionary language, but her contribution to the moving of children’s literature away from the nursery and into the wider academic arena is significant. It was Sutherland’s awareness of the need to alter CAB’s focus and style that enables CAB to continue as the influential work it is today. Sutherland’s editorship brought CAB from the past to the present; without her vision and determination, CAB would be obsolete and interesting only as an example of the zeitgeist of times gone by. Sutherland did CAB a monumental service—she eliminated racist terms and attitudes that were probably unintentional but still present in the first three editions. Coupled
with the elimination of obvious gender biases, the impact of these philosophical and stylistic changes cannot be overestimated.

NOTE
This study was initiated by a conversation with Professor Christine Jenkins of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Jenkins, recipient of a research grant to create a database for examining the children’s book canon established by decades of editions of *The Children’s Catalog*, suggested this project as the beginning of an investigation into the changing criteria for evaluating traditional folktales for youth.

REFERENCES
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