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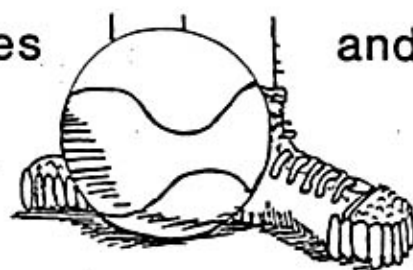
A highlight of 1982 for Australian folklore was the visit during December of Kenneth Goldstein, Professor of Folklore at the University of Pennsylvania. We are particularly gratified that Kenny's only public address during his visit was given at I.E.C.D., where he spoke on Folklore as an Academic Discipline to an interested and diverse audience. We hope that the Philadelphia connection will continue.

On the subject of academia, we feel a (slight) recantation is in order. Having previously bemoaned the lack of interest by Australian academics in children's folklore, we are now delighted to acknowledge some interesting events of recent and not-so-recent date. On April 28th, Hazel Hall spoke at the Music Department of Monash University on 'Intonation and Rhythm Patterns in Jump Rope Rhymes'; we hope to publish a report of her work shortly. Harley Baulch's dissertation on German and Australian children's jokes was submitted to the German Department at Monash in 1979, and is summarised in this Newsletter. In addition, John Marshall's contribution in this issue brings the perspective of an academically - trained American folklorist, now resident in N.S.W. John Marshall has recently received funding for different projects, from both the Australian Folk Trust, and the Australian National Library. Things are looking up...

Gwenda Davey
June Factor
(Editors)

REBOUND :

Replies and



correspondence

We have received a number of letters from readers about Australian children's games. Below, we publish some extracts from these letters.

TOODLEBUCK

I attended Flemington Training School from 1945-1951, and my sister from 1943-1949. I clearly remember Toodlebucks in the cherry bob season. As a matter of fact my sister had the prize Toodlebuck of all time, when she was in grade 5, that is in 1948. Our father was a press photographer with the old "Argus" and his specialty was photographing race-horses. He made my sister a very elaborate Toodlebuck on which he pasted photographs of horses racing at the time. I can remember there being plenty of other Toodlebucks but my sister's put all the others in the shade. However, 1948 is the last year we can remember there being any, but it is certainly a lot later than your date of 1930.

Tony Creed Melbourne Vic

ADULT RESPONSES

One game I remember very clearly for a special reason as you will see, was "The farmers in his den". Once more the children formed a circle with one person, the farmer, in the centre. Then the circle sang, "The farmers in his den, the farmers in his den, Heigh-Ho the Merry-O, the farmers in his den". Then we sang "The farmer wants a wife, the farmer wants a wife, Heigh-Ho the Merry-O, the farmer wants a wife". The farmer then chose a wife from the circle and she too stood in the centre of the ring. Next verse was "The wife wants a child, the wife wants a child, Heigh-Ho the Merry-O the wife want a child", and a child was chosen and stood in the centre. Next verse "The child wants a nurse, the child wants a nurse, Heigh-Ho the Merry-O the child wants a nurse", a nurse being chosen. Next verse "The nurse wants a dog, the nurse wants a dog, Heigh-Ho the Merry-O the nurse wants a dog", a dog being chosen. Last verse "We all pat the dog, we all pat the dog, Heigh-Ho the Merry-O we all pat the dog". At the start of the last verse the circle broke up and we all went after the dog and patted it unmercifully. Nobody liked being the dog. You can see this game offered opportunity for getting even with your enemies.

The reason I remember the game is that we were playing it one day when I was about 9, and one of the nuns passed just as we were singing "the wife wants a child". Over zealous for our purity this nun stopped the game, told us how bad we were and banned the game forever-more. Completely and utterly mystified as to what was bad in the wife wanting a child we all developed that terrible nebulous feeling of having committed some unknown evil. I have remembered that day for sixty years. Thanks be to the powers, that sort of thing no longer happens in this enlightened period.

Molly Palmer,
Metung, Vic.

"WHO"LL COME IN ME LUCKY BUNNY-HOLE?"

FUN AND GAMES IN THE OLD DAYS

(Published about 15 years ago in the "Sun")

The most popular school games at Northcote High, where I teach, are played by boys using tennis balls.

My friends in Second Form tell me that one of the best is "Up-ball" in which the ball is hit against the wall on the full and must be hit back without touching the ground, and another is a form of handball in which the ball is allowed to bounce only once before it hits the wall.

The boys are also keen on "King", in which the lad with the ball tries to hit one of the other boys who are playing. If he does, the boy who has been hit joins his "side" and the two go on trying to hit the other group.. So it goes on, with those who have been hit chasing those who have not. The last boy remaining, the one who has avoided being hit, is "King".

Watching these games brings to my mind memories of the 1920's, when we had to make our own fun, and the games we played in the little dirt-covered ground of our boys' primary school in an industrial suburb of Melbourne.



Drawing by Donald Oliver

One which has not changed much is football. It was just as popular then as now, but while the children of today have footballs galore, we were so hard up that the lad who was lucky enough to have one was the object of envy.

For want of anything better, we used to make rough-and-ready "footies" of tightly-wadded newspapers or old socks and kick them around.

Cherrybobs was another favourite game. Class mates would rush out of school at lunch time and scuttle around the playground until they found a good spot where they could scoop out a small, round hole. The next thing was to step out several paces and scratch a line in the dirt.



Drawing by Donald Oliver

Then up went the shout: "Who'll come in me lucky bunny-hole? Three and yer old girl back!"

This generous invitation meant that we were being invited to toss our valued cherrybobs into the little "bunny-hole" while standing behind the line and, if we did, the promoter would return the original cherrybob and three more.

These tempting offers were not always accepted because the chances were that you would lose "yer old girl" and get nothing at all back.

Mind you, there were times when you could win because, if there were a lot of holes in operation, some promoters would get desperate, increase the odds, and go bankrupt.

"Toodlemuck" was a game in which a circular piece of cardboard was divided into sections, with horses' names and suitable odds marked on it, and then spun around on a cotton reel. All bets were made in cherrybobs and a shrewd boy could end up with a fantastic number.

What did we do with them? Nothing. They simply lay around the house in ever-increasing quantities, to the dismay of our mothers. Then one day that mysterious grapevine which used to tell us when one game was "in" and another "out" passed on the message that cherrybobs were "out". And out they went; into the dustbin tumbled the cherished collections of many months.

We must have been sturdy children for many of our games were more suited to the Roman arena than the playground.

"Saddle-me nag" was one of these. A number of boys, the first of whom supported himself by holding on to a wall, used to crouch over to form a line of bent backs on to which other youngsters took running jumps.

It was a point of honour if you were a "nag", not to let your side down by caving in, so that the game developed into a grunting, groaning line of boys "saddled" by hefty youngsters piled on top of each other and hanging on as hard as they could.

There were gentler amusements, such as cards. The idea was to flick these against a wall, the winner being the one whose card ended up nearest to it. Great skill was needed for "stander", or making the card end up leaning against the wall.

Even in this harmless game you needed to have your wits about you for there were always horrible fellows capable of ringing in "placca backs". These were two identical cards with an insert of plasticine, with which their added weight simply hit the wall and stayed there.

Other popular games were "alleys"- in this we used "stonks", "agates", "emmas" and "reels" - and tops.

Many of the games had delightful names. There was one called "hoppo-bumpo", naturally enough a combination of hops and bumps, and "tip cat" in which a small piece of wood, sharpened at both ends, was struck with a stick so that it jumped into the air where it had to be hit again.

Then there was "Tally-ho toto!" For this, two teams of boys spread out in long lines facing each other across an open space, the larger the better. A boy in one of these lines carried a token agreed upon beforehand and his task was to reach a home base behind the defenders. These, not knowing who had the token, had to chase everybody, those who were caught being marched off solemnly to "prison".

The start of the game was the shouting of "Tally ho!" with the "toto" being added for no particular reason other than we liked the sound of it.

Perhaps these games may seem strange to the boys and girls of today but we really enjoyed them and remember them with pleasure.

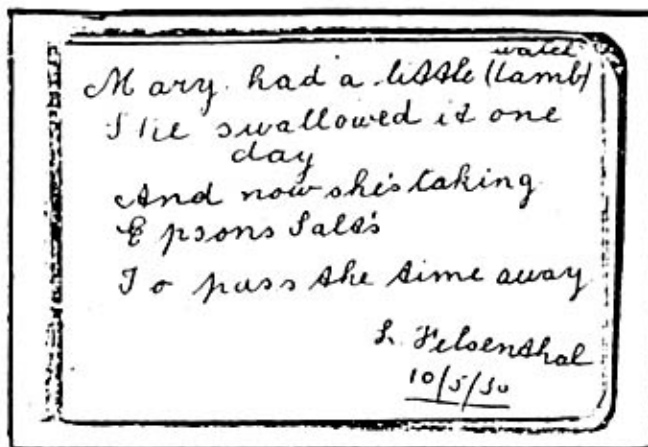
B.C. Dean, Melbourne, Vic.

RHYMES

Edel Wignell, from Burwood, Vic., has sent in the following children's rhymes.

Ladies and gentlemen, reptiles and Crocodiles, I come now before you to stand Right behind you, to tell you a story I Know nothing about.
Last night, at six o'clock this morning, an Empty house full of furniture caught fire. The people being out, rushed downstairs and Fell into a bucket of cold water, and were Badly scalded.
They now lie in the Hobart Sydney Hospital In the best of health, but are expected to Die at any moment.

(from my childhood at Wharparilla West Rural School, 1941-1949)



Extract from Autograph Album, circa 1930. On display in Children's Folklore Collection, I.E.C.D.

It was midnight on the ocean
And not a tramcar was in sight
The sun was shining brightly
For it had rained all day that night.

(from my childhood - as above, 1941-1949)

Grace Before Meals
Heavenly Pa
Ta.

(from my nieces, Jaki and Kirsty Fisher, Princes Hill Primary School, 1981)

Mary had a little lamb
She tied it to a heater,
And every time it wagged its tail
It burned its little seater.

(told to me by my father when I was a child. He attended Wharparilla West rural school - near Echuca - between 1910 & 1920)

Mary ate peaches, custard and jelly
Mary went home with a pain in her -----
Don't be mistaken and don't be mislead
Mary went home with a pain in her head.

(told me by my father - as above)

God save our biscuit tin,
Don't let the flies get in,
Spray with Mortein.

(from my nieces Jaki and Kirsty Fisher, who attended Princes Hill Primary School. Told to me, 1980)

Rats in the pantry,
Mouldy, old bread.
Meadowlea ...
The kids are all dead
You ought to be exterminated.
Wait until they taste it.
Ugh!

(Jaki and Kirsty Fisher,
Princes Hill Primary School, 1980)

America has Ronald Reagan
Bob Hope and Johnny Cash.
Australia has Mr Fraser
No hope, no cash.

(Jaki and Kirsty Fisher,
Princes Hill Primary School, 1980)

A FORGOTTEN PIONEER : Dorothy Howard

This article was first published in The Educational Magazine Vol.37, No.6, 1980, a quarter of a century after Dorothy Howard visited Australia. We have decided to reprint it in the A.C.F.N. in order that a wider audience may have an opportunity to learn something of Dorothy Howard's work in Australia.

When the first edition of Cinderella Dressed in Yella: Australian Children's Play-Rhymes was published in 1969, Ian Turner remarked in the Introduction:

...in the absence of folklore studies in Australian academic institutions, it seems unlikely that anyone will make and publish a systematic study of Australian games.

And then there is a footnote:

Dr Dorothy Howard of Frostburg State College, Maryland, U.S.A., spent a year in Australia in 1954-55 as a Fulbright scholar "collecting and studying Australian children's traditional play-ways". Dr Howard has published some valuable articles from her Australian studies.

Turner's tribute to the American scholar - albeit only in a footnote (he had seen no more than three of her articles) - was well deserved. Dorothy Howard was the first person to systematically collect, collate, transcribe, annotate, and publish a comprehensive sampling of Australian children's games. It seems that it required a "foreigner" to focus our attention on an important but neglected aspect of Australian cultural life. Another American

academic, Louise Rorabacher, performed a similar service to Australian literature by editing two short story collections. The first is concerned with the immigrant experience in Australia (Two Ways Meet, Cheshire 1963) and the second focuses on the Aboriginal people (Aliens in Their Land, Cheshire 1968).

Dorothy Howard in Australia

Dr Howard came to Australia under the auspices of the School of Education at the University of Melbourne. She received her doctorate from New York University in 1938 with a thesis entitled "Folk Rhymes and Jingles of American Children". Her visit to Australia was part of her post-doctoral research, and she set out to study "the traditional play customs of Anglo-Australian children".

Until Dr Howard began her Australian research, there had been no Australia-wide study of children's games and rhymes, nor of their riddles, jokes, parodies, oaths, nicknames, warcries, initiation rites, swap card collections, autograph albums, and so on - the list is very long, and attests to the remarkable variety and richness of children's folklore. In Britain, folklorists from Strutt and Chambers in the

early nineteenth century had conscientiously collected such material from children and from the memories of adults. In America, Bolton and Newell had similarly begun the attempt to sample the range of children's play in that vast continent. A number of European countries had a history of archival research and collection of children's folklore. But Australia, apart from occasional articles in newspapers and chapters in memoirs, was not represented in this worldwide effort to understand and record the lore and language of children.

What brought Dorothy Howard to Australia? In a paper she presented to the Victorian Institute of Educational Research in February 1955, she said:

Over the twenty-five year of my research in children's folklore I became increasingly interested in the subject of Australian children's play customs and increasingly aware of the absence of evidence that the subject had received any attention here. The great silence from "down under" finally aroused my academic curiosity to come and explore.

Her arrival was greeted with the same expressions of regret about the supposed demise of children's folklore in this country as confronted the Opies when they began their research in Britain in the 1950's:

Upon landing in Australia I was kindly cautioned that most Australian adults believe first, that their children have no folklore; second, that any traditional games ever known here came from the British Isles and are therefore not Australian; the third, that most of the old games which came from the British Isles are dead now.

The outcome, of course, confounded these predictions. Although her research was still incomplete, Dr Howard was able to assert quite confidently in February that:

Folk tradition still exists in the play ways of Australian children (evidently to a greater extent than many Australian adults have supposed). Variation exists from one locality to another - variation in terminology, rules, kinds of games, age at which certain games are played, seasonal popularity, and sex relation-

ships in games ... The most important question answered by the present collection and study is the first question put to me upon my arrival. "Do Australian children have any folklore?" The answer is that they do; and that there is an important phase of child life, which Australian adults, who are interested in children's growth and development, can profitably study and understand.

More specifically, she listed the material she had collected up till then, based on information from eleven- and twelve-year-old children (useful informants because "they are at the end of the childhood game age and have lived through the whole range of playground tradition"), correspondence from adults, and some interviews:

My findings, to date, (after having worked in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, and Tasmania) include over 700 game names; descriptions of about 400 games; 175 autograph album rhymes; 50 rope skipping rhymes; 40 counting out rhymes ...; the words for about 15 singing games (with music notation for 8); a few riddles, tongue-twisters, trick rhymes; hand, finger, and toe rhymes; rhymes for taunting, swearing an oath, bouncing ball; and nonsense rhymes. All this is folklore - transmitted from children to children without benefit of printed book or adult sponsor.

Universality of basic motifs

A quarter of a century later it is both fascinating and instructive to examine Dr Howard's findings, although the bulk of her research in Australia has not yet been published. (A list of her published articles is included in the references following this article.) Operating from belief in "the universality and great antiquity of basic motifs, types and ideas", she noted that "most traditional play customs in Australia migrated here from the British Isles". Most of the games she collected were similar, though not always identical, to the games of British and American children. Thus she recorded a variety of games under the heading of "knucklebones" or "jacks" - games which were known to Aristophanes and the ancient Egyptians. In Australia the children

played "Ups and Downs", "Clicks", "No Clicks", "Granny's False Teeth", "Snake in the Grass", and many other games that involved the throwing, catching, and picking up of five sheep knucklebones. According to Dr Howard:

...the city butcher who, twenty-five years ago, sold sheeps' knucklebones in sets of five, no longer caters to juvenile trade ... In the old days a child bought his bones for "tupeny", took them home to mother who boiled them clean, then dyed them with ink or with the juice of berries. A child today needs great patience and ingenuity to collect a set of real bones - he needs an amiable neighbourhood butcher or a co-operative uncle who owns sheep; and one by one he hoards the bones until he has a set of five. Meanwhile, or if no friendly butcher or helpful uncle is available, he must go to the neighbourhood shop and buy for two shillings nine pence a set of plastic bones coloured pink, white, green, red and yellow ... The children who have no (money or bones) revert to stones ...

In 1980, are there still children who collect and dye sheep knucklebones? Perhaps in Tasmania, where, "according to reports", children in 1954 were still, "because of their island position and their small rural population", involved in more traditional play ways than "their fellow Australians on the mainland".

Dr Howard also noted that contemporary (that is, in the 1950's) versions of the game of knucklebones were shorter, and were associated with less verbal ritual than the versions collected from older informants. She commented similarly on the apparent decrease in verbal ritual in other Australian children's games:

...verbal rituals appear to be decreasing, some games with lengthy verbal ritual are gone. In some cases the verbal accompaniment is shortened (as in "Oranges and Lemons"). Counting out rhymes to determine who will be "he" or "it" are not as numerous, as popular, nor as intricate; the counting-out rhymes still in use are short ones.



Photo: Dorothy Howard, 1954

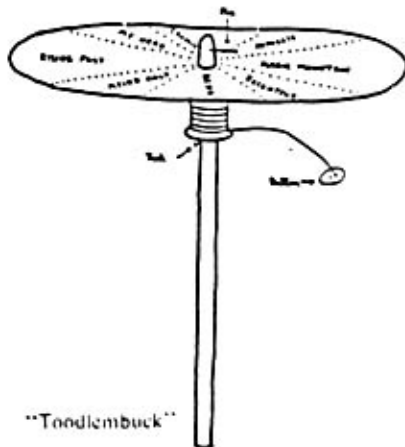
Australian variations

At the same time, she remarked on a number of Australian variations of games found in other English-speaking countries. There was the "Toodlemuck" or "Scone on Stick", a gambling device popular at Melbourne Cup time and apparently familiar to Australian children until the 1930's. (Does any reader recollect this game being played after 1930?) One of Dr Howard's informants described the device and the game as it was played when she was a child in the 1920's:

One wooden skewer from the butcher ... One cotton reel ... three tacks, one pin, an exercise cover (cardboard notebook cover). A piece of string with a button tied to the end to put between the fingers when pulling the string. Names of horses in Melbourne Cup of the year. Cherry stones used for betting. The owner of the Toodlemuck ran the game. He cried, "Who'll go on my Toodlemuck?" Those with cherry bobs picked their horses and gave so many stones to the Toodlemuck owner; and away we went. The owner wound the string around the cotton reel, pulled it, and we watched her spin. The winner took all.

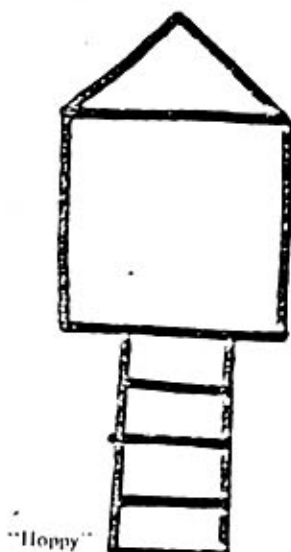
Although Dr Howard doesn't refer to this game's antecedents, it may have been an adaptation of a game known as "All in the Well", recorded by Lady Gomme as being played in Newcastle and other part of Northumberland in the nineteenth century.

According to Gomme it was "practised at the Newcastle Races and other places of amusement in the North" - so its gambling origins are British! There was also a pitching game called "Toodle-em-Buck" in New Zealand at about the same time. Sutton-Smith says that "the game was played to the cry of 'Roll up, tumble up, come and play the game of Toodle-em-Buck'."



Dr Howard also noted the name "Australian Dingo" for a version of British Bulldog or Red Rover, and a Hopscotch diagram from Queensland which resembled "a house built on high piles with many steps leading into it". The explanation for these local variants is one well known to folklorists:

The Queensland children have adapted the game to their local way of life and that adaptation is indigenous. The quality of being indigenous is not absolute but a matter of degree in children's traditional games. Tradition, though stable, is never static. Tradition changes slowly or rapidly but change it must.



Social changes influence folklore

And so the descriptions of games continue, illuminated by Dr Howard's considerable knowledge of children's play customs in other English-speaking communities. Twenty-five years ago she was pointing to the significance of social and economic changes in Australia, visible even then to a "tourist-collector" as she called herself: increasing urbanisation, "congestion of city play space", immigration. In her non-didactic fashion she urged "Australian adults who are interested in children's growth and development" not to ignore the influence of such changes on children and their lore and language. (Her visit to Australia predates the introduction of television here.) She recognised, as she wrote elsewhere (1968), that:

the persistent, stable elements in children's folklore, if probed, may reveal continuing needs of children for imaginative, expressive linguistic, and physical action in group situations where each child - on his own - comes to terms with his contemporary society ... The child's mind ... has ability to adapt to changing environments - whatever the change - and to continue to create an embryonic cosmos with cohesiveness which adults seek to understand.

The situation today

Twenty-five years after Dorothy Howard came, saw, and recorded, we have advanced only marginally through the territory first mapped by this enterprising American. Apart from Cinderella Dressed in Yella (1978), and Shocking, Shocking, Shocking (1974), we still lack published collections of Australian children's folklore. Despite Turner's comment in 1969, no Australian university conducts courses in this field. At the Institute of Early Childhood Development we have begun an archival collection and research program, but our work is still in its infancy. We would welcome contributions to our collection - accounts of children's traditional play patterns from the past or the present; written or oral transcriptions of rhymes, chants, insults, and so on; old autograph albums, swap card collections, whipping tops, skipping ropes - any "artifacts" of children's traditional play. Teachers who would like to collect material for us

who simply want to browse through the archive, are invited to visit or write to us. In another twenty-five years, when we will have developed a fuller understanding of this fundamental aspect of child development and Australian culture, we will remember Dorothy Howard, the American pioneer of research into Australian children's folklore.

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Did you hear the one about....

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE LANGUAGE AND THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF THE JOKES OF NORTH-GERMAN AND AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL CHILDREN.

Harley Baulch, B.A. (Hons.) Thesis, Department of German, Monash University, 1979.

Summary and comments by G. Davey

In 1978 and 1979 Harley Baulch collected substantial numbers of jokes told by children in junior schools in Melbourne and in Northern Germany (Dusseldorf area). His aim was 'to analyse them for the use of language and specific linguistic devices, and for the content and themes commonly found within them' (p.2). The final samples analysed consisted of 295 German and 188 Australian children's jokes.

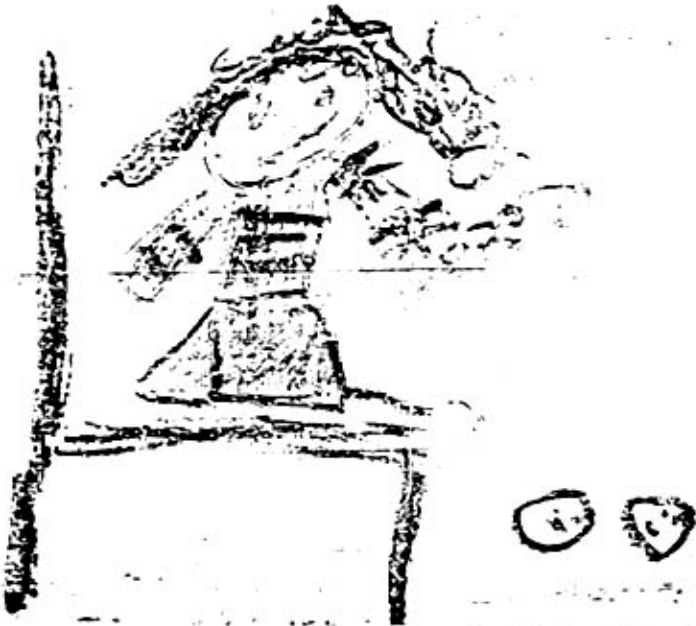
To the general reader, one of Harley Baulch's most interesting findings is perhaps the much wider use of stereotyped characters in these German children's jokes than is common in Australian children's humour. Dick und Doof are 'Fat and Skinny' or 'Laurel and Hardy' type characters, where the jokes contain a strong slapstick element, often involving 'lavatory humour':

Dick und Doof sitzen am Kölner Dom und Doof sagt, 'Ich muss mal!' Sagt der Dick, 'Mach doch runter!' Der Pastor sagt, 'Alles Gute kommt von oben!' Der halt hoch, und da kommt das Gute von oben!

Trans:

Fat and Skinny are seated in the Cathedral of Cologne, when Skinny says: 'I simply must (pee)!' Fat responds, 'Do it downwards!' The pastor/priest says 'All good things come from on high!' He raises (the chalice or arms in blessing), and lo, the Good comes from above! .

Tünnes und Schäl are similar to Dick and Doof, although their adventures are 'a little more varied' and they may 'simply do or say something nonsensical which reflects their stupidity or dumbness' (p.41).



Drawing of a funny story: Sarah, Gd 2.

'Fritschen' (and to a lesser extent his female counterpart Klein Erna is by far the most popular comic 'character' in the sample'. Fritschen's character is varied; sometimes he 'makes absurd linguistic mistakes ... whilst at other times he is simply an observer of others' mistakes. At times he thinks and acts quite stupidly, but at other times he is amazingly clever' (p.41).

'Häschen' (or 'little rabbit') has a number of specific characteristics and the jokes in which he is found are generally of one form. Häschen cannot talk properly, and has no grasp of the standard communicative competence rules' (p.42).

Da kommt Häschen in ein Plattengeschäft und fragt, 'Ha't du Platten?' 'Ja'. 'Musst du aufpumpen!'

Trans:

(The joke is a pun on the word Platt which means a gramophone record as well as a tyre.) Häschen enters a record shop and asks, 'Do you have Platten?' 'Yes'. 'Well, pump them up then!'

As well as the German characters mentioned above, both German and Australian children identified ethnic groups whose 'brainlessness' is used as a source of humour. German children identified the Ostfriesländer (East Friesians) and Australian children Irishmen. 'The two stereotypes are identical ... and feature not just in jokes but in riddles' (p.43):

Q. Warum nehmen die Ostfriesländer immer einen Stein und ein Streichholz mit ins Bett?

A. Mit dem Stein schmeissen sie die Kerze aus und mit dem Streichholz gucken sie immer nach, ob sie die Kerze ausgeschmissen haben.

Trans:

Q. Why do East Friesians always take a stone and a match to bed?

A. They use the stone to knock the candle over and then use the match to see whether the candle has gone out.

Baulch goes on to note (p.44) that 'because of the popularity of Irish-jokes and Ostfriesland-Witze, anti-Irish-jokes and Ostfriesland Witz-Witze have in fact emerged recently:

Q. What's black and blue and floats upside down in Port Phillip Bay?

A. A person who's told one too many Irish-jokes.

and

Q. Warum stecken die Ostfriesländer den Kopf in den Teich?

A. Weil sie die blöden Ostfriesland-Witze nicht mehr horen wollen.

Trans:

Q. Why do East Friesians bury their heads in the pond?

A. Because they don't want to hear any more bloody East Friesian jokes.

Most of the jokes concerning the above characters and stereotypes are included by Baulch in the major theme of the conflict between the 'normal' and the 'abnormal'. Other major themes and motifs identified in these jokes concern Sex and Excretion, Linguistic humour itself and miscellaneous themes including 'things both inside and outside their personal experience (such as) school, teachers, parents, religion, the church and ... 'everyday' social obligations ...' (p.47).

Baulch also mentions a number of identical

jokes occurring in both Australia and Germany, mostly of a 'non-linguistic' nature. The following joke can be directly translated from English to German or vice versa, since deeply and tief have similar usage in both languages:

Q. Why do giants take tape-measures to bed with them?

A. Because they want to know how deeply they sleep.

A major section of the dissertation concerns the linguistic devices used in children's jokes, and Baulch both uses and challenges the work of Helmers (Sprache und Humor des Kindes. Klett: Stuttgart, 1971). As regards the use of language itself as a source of humorous potential, Baulch found such humour much more common among Australian than among German children, largely because of the greater popularity of riddles using linguistic devices among Australian children. Linguistic devices involve phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic factors.

Phonological factors. Baulch found that in his sample of children's jokes, the English-speaking children tended to use more play with the sounds of language than did the German children. Homophony, where words have the same or similar phonetic forms but different meanings, is common in Australian children's jokes:

Q. What do a farmer and a doctor have in common?

A. They both deal with acres/achers.

However, a small number of jokes which came only from German speakers involves phonetic similarity of words as a source of misunderstanding between characters:

Treffen sich zwei Fische im Meer: sagt der eine, 'Hi!', der andere, 'Wo ist denn da einer?'

In this joke, 'the second fish misinterprets the first's greeting, 'Hi?' as being a warning of the presence of a shark (Haifish or Hai) ...' (p.16).

Another type of phonological joke found only among English speakers involves play with the phonetic qualities of letter-names and hence, with the spelling of words:

Q. How do you make a witch itch?

A. Take away the 'w'.

Morphological factors. Once again, jokes involving the structure of language are more common among the English-speakers. One type uses segmentation of morphemes (e.g. splitting a word at a syllable division so that one or both parts sounds like another word(s):

Q. What is the hamburger's favorite day?

A. Friday (cf. Fry-day).

Also more common in English is changing the grammatical status of a morpheme (e.g. interpreting a noun as a verb):

Q. How do you make a Swiss-roll?

A. Push him down a mountain-side.

Baulch comments that 'unravelling all these factors reveals how ingeniously constructed such jokes are ...' (p.21).



Extract from Autograph Album, circa 1940. On display in Children's Folklore Collection, I.E.C.D.

Syntactic factors. Baulch comments that as noted in the examples above, 'playing with the grammatical status of particular morphemes ...also seems to play havoc with the entire structure of sentences' (p.22). Apart from these, 'the only other ones found in the corpus which could be said to 'exploit syntax' are those containing rhymes, of which there are a good number in both language groups. Significantly, many of the jokes using this device run along very similar thematic and structural lines, not only within one particular language group, but also across the language groups' (p.22). For example, a similar version exists in German for the following joke:

There were some people who wanted something to drink, and they saw a Coke machine, and one of the blokes put twenty cents in and got his drink, and said, 'This Coke tastes funny!' So he went round to the back of the machine and saw this Chinaman there, and he (i.e. the Chinaman) said

"Me bad Chinaman, me play joke:
Me put wee-wee in your Coke!"

Semantic factors. Three types of jokes with meanings of words are more common among Australian children.

(a) Polysemous words: 'Jokes employing this device rely for their effect on the fact that one (or more) word(s) in them has more than one meaning' (p.25). For example:

Q. Why are fish so smart?

A. Because they swim around in schools.

(b) Coining a new meaning to a word or phrase, for example:

Q. What sort of children would the Queen have if she had married an Aborigine?

A. Chocolate Royals.

(c) Literalization of a word or an idiom, for example:

Q. Why did the boy throw the clock out of the window?

A. He wanted to see time fly.



Gyroscope spinning top (1930's). On display in Children's Folklore Collection, I.E.C.D.

Only one type of semantic joke is told more frequently by the German children, namely ambiguous phrases, which are frequently used in an inappropriate context:

Fritzchen kommt nach Hause und sagt, 'Vati, heute hab'ich das beste Zeug aus der Klasse. Du kammst durchgucken!' 'Das wird ja schön.' 'Aber du musst dich beeilen - mein Freund will es wider zurückhaben!'

Trans:

Young Fritz comes home and says, 'Dad, I had the best assignment at school today. Have a look!' 'It certainly looks great!' 'But you have to hurry - my friend wants to have it back!'

Baulch also found that German children used more jokes concerning language-use (rather than language itself). Such jokes 'belong perhaps in the "grey area" between "linguistic" and "non-linguistic" jokes, and most of them offer some sort of comic commentary or critique on language usage,

society's taboos, and/or the inconsistencies between language and reality. Furthermore, they also constitute a large portion of the total corpus ...' (p.30). The three types of 'language-use' jokes more commonly used by German than Australian children involve situationally-conditioned misapplication or misinterpretation of an idiom or word, euphemisms and innuendos, and linguistic formulae as determiners of reality. An example of 'situationally conditioned misapplication' is as follows:

Fritzchen und Oma sind am Spielplatz. Ruft Fritzchen ganz laut, 'Oma, ich muss mal pinkeln!' Sagt die Oma, 'Wenn du das sagen musst, dann sollst du sagen, 'Ich muss mal singen'!' Schlafen sie achts, kommt Fritzchen und sagt, 'Oma, ich muss mal singen'. 'Muss das jetzt sein?' 'Ja.' 'Okay - ganz leise ins Ohr!'

Trans:

Young Fritz and grandma are at the playground. Young Fritz calls in a loud voice, 'Grandma, I have to pee!' Grandma responds, 'If you have to say it, say at least, 'I must sing'!' Around sleeping time, at eight, young Fritz comes and says, 'Grandma, I must sing!' 'Must it be now?' 'Yes.' 'Okay - very softly in my ear!'



Baulch comments that examination of the jokes classified as language or language-use jokes indicates that 'on the one hand the English-speaking children seem to prefer the application of linguistic devices as a source of humour, whilst on the other hand the German children seem to prefer linguistic errors ... as a source of humour' (p.36). The Australian sample appear to use linguistic devices mainly as a type of intellectual and imaginative exercise in itself, whereas the German use of linguistic jokes is mainly to highlight distinctions between normal and abnormal behaviour with regard to the stereotyped characters common in their jokes.

As regards the possible cultural implications of his study Baulch comments that 'the results of this study cast serious doubt upon ... attempt(s) to construct a universal theory of the joke and humour, because if it is true that the joke of two evenly closely related cultures like that of German and Australia (Anglo-Saxon) contrast as sharply as the results of this study suggest, then one is left wondering what other contrasts are possible between cultures that are in themselves in much greater contrast to one another' (p.51).

In the Conclusion to his dissertation, Harley Baulch acknowledges that 'the results of this study are understood as being highly tentative; but it is believed that they contain important implications for research into a number of different areas including the theory of humour, the role of humour and language in the development of children, and the social attitudes to a language held by its speakers' (p.52). I would strongly agree.

Gwenda Davey

Thanks for assistance with translations:
Arto Avakian, Howard Nicholas, Toni Trewnack and family.

Chinese Rocking Doll, made of clay and paper.
Book sent from China, and on display in Children's Folklore
Collection, I.E.C.D.

FOLKLORE FIELDWORK WITH SCHOOL CHILDREN

Children's folklore as an academic and community activity is much more widespread in America than in Australia. In this article, John Marshall describes his method of working with children in this field.

From August 1981, through June, 1982, I served as Folklorist in Education with the Florida Folklife Program in Florida, U.S.A. My position was funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, Folk Arts Component, and allowed me to become part of the staff of the largest sector folklore program in the U.S.A.

My job required that I conduct fieldwork and document the many and varied forms of folklore in Florida; supply guidance and support to schools incorporating folklore studies into existing curricula; initiate and organize workshops, educational seminars and presentations to community and professional groups; develop folklore-in-education material for teachers; and introduce folk artists to teachers and students in classroom situations. A major part of my work involved collecting folklore from students in the ten classes, both secondary and primary, in which I worked.

I used the collection of folklore from students as a means of showing them the myriad forms of folklore which affect their lives and which not only link them to their predecessors and their culture but also which bind them with their peers and family group. Much of the material collected was oral or custom oriented but we also held "show and tell" sessions and took field trips associated with material forms of folklore. Each "item" collected was recorded on tape and photographed. The students were asked the following types of questions in relation to each oral or customary folklore item contributed:

Where and when did you learn this?
From whom was this learned?
How was this learned?
In what context was this learned?
In what context is this usually said/-performed?
Why do you think you remember and use this?
What is your full name, age and address?
What can you tell us about the person from whom you learned this?
Can you trace the transmission of this item?
Does this in any way affect your behaviour or thinking?

For each item of material culture collected the students were asked to find out the following information:

How was this made?
What tools, materials and processes were used in making this?
For what was this used?
How and where was this used?
What can you tell us about the person/-persons who made this?
Do you know someone who can demonstrate how to make or use this?

Most of the collection of folklore from students took place in a rural area in northern Florida which is notable for its sparseness of population, poverty and rich cultural heritage from its Black and Anglo-European people. The many folklore forms I collected from students included folk speech and slang; jump-rope rhymes; counting out rhymes; proverbs; riddles; hand-clapping games; games; folk beliefs; weather beliefs; folk remedies and cures; beliefs about good and bad luck; songs; recipes; agricultural practices; folk poetry and verse; legends and folk tales; jokes; family customs; festivals; dance; gestures; folk art and craft; folk architecture; fence types and construction techniques; and domestic crafts and skills.

The following is a list of some of the folk beliefs collected from students in grades four, six, eight, ten, eleven and twelve in Hamilton and Columbia in north Florida, U.S.A., between August 1981 and June 1982.

When your baby dies at birth, whoever delivered the baby will die too.

If you walk over a broom it is bad luck, but if you walk over the broom backwards (retrace your steps) then lift the broom up, walk under it, lay it back on the floor, then you will avoid having bad luck.

Don't sweep outside at night. If you do you are sweeping someone out of your family.

If you wash clothes on New Year's Eve, you will have bad luck.

If you rock a rocking chair while no one is in it, you will have bad luck.

If a broom sweeps over your feet you will have bad luck.

When a dog howls at night, it is a sign of death.

When a spider climbs down from the ceiling, a stranger is coming to visit.

If you get a thorn in you, when you pull it out, rub it in your hair and this will keep the wound from hurting.

Never sweep under the bed of a sick person, for it will take them longer to get well.

If a pregnant woman combs your hair it will fall out.

It is bad luck to point down on a person's grave.

Singing in bed is bad luck.

If you walk in your socks, you're walking someone out of your family.

If you put your hat on your bed, it will cause bad luck.

If you dream someone in your family dies, someone in your family will get married.

If you dream someone in your family gets married, someone in your family will die.

When hoeing a garden, if you chop down the first plant in each row, you'll have a good crop.

If a pregnant woman looks at a dead person, something will be wrong with her child.

Don't start a new job on a Friday.

Beliefs associated with the weather

(Remember Northern Hemisphere)

If you want your hair to grow faster, cut it on the increasing moon.

For it to grow more slowly, cut it on the decreasing moon.

Thunder in the winter, if noise travels north, look out for wet summer, if it travels south, it is going to be dry.

Ring around the moon means rain. If there are stars in the ring that is how many days before the next rain.

When two cats touch noses three times within a short time, it will not rain for a week.

When four squirrels jump consecutively from the same limb, the sun will shine for over two weeks.

If bones which have been healed after being broken begin to hurt, it will rain.

It will rain within three days if the horns of the moon point down.

If there are big drops of rain, the rain will be short, if the drops are small, the rain will last.

When you hear two or more frogs croaking together, it is going to rain.

To tell how far away a thunderstorm is, count the seconds between lightning flashes and divide by five. The answer is in miles.



Bamboo Dragon. Book sent from China, and on display in Children's Folklore Collection, I.E.C.D.

If the sun sets behind a cloud, it will rain in three days.
When butterflies gather in bunches in the air, winter is coming soon.
When the wind is out of the east, fishing is the least.
When the wind is out of the west, fishing is the best.
If it rains on the twelfth day after Christmas, there will be a flood in the spring.
It will be a bad winter if screech owls sound like women crying.
It will be a bad winter if onions grow in many layers.
When a fire worm is slightly red, it will be a mild winter.
When it is smut black it will be a very cold winter.
If bamboo leaves are turned so you can see the white part, it will rain.
If a turtle bites you on the toe, it won't let go until it thunders.
If it rains during a funeral, the dead person is going to heaven.



American Knucklebones. On display in Children's Folklore Collection, I.E.C.D.

The collection of this type of material serves several purposes. Students can see the relationship between humans and their natural environment in a new light. Students can be taught to appreciate the strength of tradition in their lives, and will see the ways in which traditional beliefs function in communities. The following is an example of an approach teachers might employ to introduce their students to the role of folk beliefs (those beliefs affecting behaviour and/or thinking which circulate via traditional methods in communities and within cultural groups) in their lives.

Collecting Folk Beliefs in the Local Area

1. Objectives

- To define and identify various forms of folk belief in the area. These may include omens, weatherlore, home remedies and cures, beliefs and superstitions.
- To discern the role and importance of these beliefs in the community. To what extent are community behaviour and attitudes modified by these beliefs? Are the effects of these beliefs personal, family or community related?

- To identify the role played by folk beliefs in the lives of students.
- To recognise the universality of folk belief through a cross-cultural analysis.

2. Activities (in order)

- (a) Research the various forms of folk beliefs.
- (b) Note that many folk beliefs centre on birth, marriage and death. Ask the class to relate any beliefs that they may know concerning these phases of life.
- (c) Have the students make a list of folk beliefs they are familiar with. Arrange the list in a logical pattern - e.g., domestic or household, school, sporting, animals, relationships, weather, folk cures. Discuss the extent to which these modify the students' behaviour and attitudes.

- (d) Compile a catalogue of these beliefs. Ensure that there is a sound basis for the order in which the catalogue is arranged. Place information in the catalogue which will be beneficial to future researchers - e.g., belief, contributor, where learned, extent of behaviour modification, number in class having similar beliefs with age and sex. Note variances in exact phrasing of belief.
- (e) Prepare the students for fieldwork experience. Ensure that they have a sound knowledge of the types of folk beliefs and their importance in modifying behaviour. Students should be able to discuss the reasons for the beliefs without feeling ashamed or ignorant.
- (f) Have the students interview local residents concerning folk beliefs. The teacher's role in setting up these interviews is most important. Try to aim for a cross section of the community. Do not neglect the younger people and the outsiders. Try to compile a profile of the community's beliefs and the extent to which behaviour is modified by these beliefs.
- (g) Analyse the material gathered and compare it with students' beliefs as part of the catalogue. Integrate the new material with the card catalogue system. Aim for a comprehensive, yet easy to use reference system of community beliefs.
- (h) Compare the community beliefs with those found in other folklore reference material.

There will be an exhibition of children's folkloric material collected by Dorothy Howard in Australia and Mexico at the Institute of Early Childhood Development from Wednesday July 6th. The exhibition will be opened at 5.30 pm on 6th July and June Factor will talk about Dorothy Howard's contribution to the study of children's folklore in Australia.

Wine and Cheese. All Welcome.

COMING ATTRACTIONS:
IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Review of Barbara Tobin's monograph *Eenie-meenie-des-o-leenie: the folklore of the children of Alps Road Elementary School*. Barbara Tobin is at the Western Australian Institute of Technology, and collected the material for *Eenie-Meenie* in Athens, Georgia, U.S.A.

Report on Phyl Lobl's *Lullaby and Dandling Songs* project. Phyl Lobl is a singer, song-writer and music teacher resident in Sydney.

Teachers interested in integrating folklore with established curricula may be interested in reading "Folklife in the Classroom: A Guide for Australian Teachers" Agora, 2, (1983).

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