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BEING  
A  
FOLKLORIST

■ APPROACHING ANY FIELD, ■  
ACADEMIC OR OTHERWISE, THE NEW-  
COMER BECOMES AWARE OF WHOLE MOUNTAIN  
RANGES OF ESOTERIC BOOKS AND ARTICLES THAT  
seem to require conquering and digesting before any claim to proficiency  
—even legitimacy—can be made. True enough, it is impossible to study  
any subject seriously that has enjoyed a long history of scrutiny and com-  
mentary without coming to grips with at least the high points of those  
discussions. Yet we recognize that being a doctor involves much more  
than scholarship in medical school or the mastery of Latin; being a pro-  
fessor calls for more than a graduate degree; being a mechanic requires  
more than owning a set of tools. Being a folklorist requires more than  
climbing (or creating) alps of Germanic scholarship. Fortunately, the  
basic requirement for being a folklorist—a fascination with and an ap-  
preciation of culture-based expression—is something most of us already  
possess. Whether you are a folklore student planning further work in the  
field, a curious beginner, a retired and jaded professor, or an intellectual

tourist, you have already had extensive exposure to and training in folklore.

**EVERYFOLK** Nearly everyone is a folklorist: some are professionals at it. To put it another way: Although some people choose to study folklore and obtain the training necessary in that profession, all of us, to one extent or another, learn, collect, and use folklore as a natural consequence of being members of close groups. The millworker needs to learn and use the hand signals that allow communication in a noisy shop; the college student needs to know how long to wait for a late professor; we all learn how late is late—at a cocktail party, a wedding, a class, a picnic; we need to know what connotations are available to us in our language (or else risk not understanding most of what is said to us); we need to know what a joke is and where the punch line goes (or risk exasperating our friends and losing out on fantasy and enjoyment); we learn the proper food for breakfast and the proper dress for supper ("Junior, don't you dare sit down to the table without your shirt"). All of these and many more "rules," customs, mores, observances, and communicative traditions we learn and use through the dynamics of folklore. Indeed, unless we "collect" and perform the folklore of our close groups, we may be thought of as nearly outsiders. Just to belong to a close group we need to be amateur folklorists, then; how rapidly we become members of new close groups and how deeply we remain members of others will probably lie in direct proportion to our command of the group's folklore.

**LEVELS OF FOLK INVOLVEMENT** There are two kinds of involvement with the processes of folklore: cultural and intellectual. By cultural involvement I mean that gut-level personal relationship to the close group felt and acted out by the individual in the very performance of folklore under normal circumstances. The performances and responses in this kind of involvement are geared more to the group—the culture—than to the individual. In the intellectual, intentional engagement with folklore, the individual stands aside with some objectivity, actually studying and analyzing those dynamic processes that, as a member of the close group, he may have participated in culturally without self-consciousness.

Unfortunately, the jump from cultural to intellectual involvement is farther than we may suspect, and many people are not willing or able to become objective about those matters so closely related to their own sense of cultural propriety, personal stability, ethnic identity. For this reason,

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people are often more willing to study the folklore of others than the traditions of their own group. Until recently, folklorists and anthropologists had an inclination to run off to the South Sea Islands, to Africa, to the Native American reservations in the United States, and to immigrant colonies to study their folklore. Probably this is related to the continued interest in rural folklore by urban-bred and university-trained folklorists, too. And it probably relates to the terminology one finds until recently in the study of religion: ours is religion, theirs is myth—with the corollary that we can be objective about them and their myths while we simply accept our own as truth.

**FOLKLORE AND EMOTION** I bring up this interesting dichotomy for a double reason. First, as amateur, everyday folklorists—as folk—we may resent it when someone analyzes our folklore; that is, when we suddenly are forced to see some of the reasons behind our customs or sense that our views are not as unique or as universal as we had assumed. As professional folklorists, we need to recognize that when we analyze or study those expressions that are deep aspects of other peoples' cultural involvement, we run the risk of offending them by bringing these intellectual considerations into focus as if they were more important than the real functioning of the folklore in its habitat.

These are obviously opposite sides of the same coin, and they represent one of the greatest potentials for misunderstanding in the field of folklore: People often become angry when their cultural involvement is held up for intellectual scrutiny. This means that people who seek to become intentional folklorists must realize that they will be dealing with the most delicate and potentially volatile of human expressions: those that relate the individual solidly to a close group—those that can therefore undergird such dynamic matters as the frictions between Celt and Saxon in Ireland, between Arab and Israeli in the Middle East, between soldier and marine on leave, between logger and millworker on weekends, between Black and white in the ghetto, between feuding mountain families, between Hopis and Navajos, between "the U" and "the Aggies," between kids and adults, between men and women. For, regardless of other psychological, economic, political, or historic factors, membership in any of these groups is also a matter of involvement with that group's folklore, and a demonstration of belonging lies in the expression of shared tradition as much as it does in intellectual pronouncements of philosophy and personal opinion. Question these deep allegiances, or be condescending about them, at your own risk.

UL 8  
THE CULTURAL CEMENT TRUCK DRIVER During our friendly discussion of urban belief tales, a university administrator told me he knew of a similar story which was "actually true," for it had happened in his home town. He told me of a cement truck driver who stopped home one morning to have a cup of coffee with his wife. To his surprise, he found a strange car there, and being a suspicious sort, he assumed his wife was having an affair and filled the strange car with concrete. The car could still be seen at a certain gas station in his town, but more important, the episode demonstrated how men in his community dealt directly with a marital threat. "He didn't see any more of her after that," he concluded proudly.

I made the mistake of responding on the intellectual, not the cultural, level. Instead of registering the story as an amusing confirmation of a man "in the driver's seat," I cheerfully pointed out the widespread occurrence of that story across the United States and noted the various outcomes I had heard. My acquaintance immediately felt that in front of his own colleagues his honesty had been questioned (along with the integrity of his home town, I now believe) and became very irate, insisting that we step outside to settle the matter. I narrowly avoided a fight by apologizing and noting the possibility for coincidence. I told him I would value highly a picture of the "real car" so that I could put it in along with other versions of the legend that I had collected, and he loudly promised one, by God, before the end of the month. Now, fourteen years later, I have begun to lose hope. Perhaps he forgot. But I have not forgotten the lesson: He was telling me the story not because I was a folklorist, but because I was a man and we were sitting with a group of men. I had awakened the legend in his mind by referring to some similar anecdotes, but he was clearly telling me the story because he thought I would be interested in what it represented. He was operating on the cultural level, I on the intellectual level, and the immediate result was outrage.

The folklorist, amateur or professional, must demonstrate a personal interest in the traditions being shared by any folk performer, but to analyze those traditions in front of the performer is to ask for trouble, not because the performer is intellectually incapable of such discussion, but because analysis and comparison seem to bring the veracity of the tradition-bearer into some question.

AL 7  
CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY AND FOLKLORE Because folklore operates primarily on what I call the cultural level, because its aesthetics, choices, and performances are dictated more by the group than by the individual, the expressions themselves reveal more of group values than

of individual opinions—as I have already suggested. In fact, a person may even disagree on the intellectual level with something he is used to expressing on the cultural level. Some years ago I myself passed on the cement truck driver story to a number of people because I was totally convinced by a close and trusted friend that it had actually occurred in Moscow, Idaho. Why did I tell that story so many times? On the intellectual level, I do not believe that filling someone's car with concrete necessarily resolves a marital problem, especially when it is done without checking on the details. What if, as one version tells it, the car actually belonged to the man's boss, who came over to arrange for a surprise party celebrating twenty years of faithful service to the company? In my own mind, I realize that if I saw a strange car in front of my house, I would not seek to damage it, even if I were suspicious of skullduggery.

Nevertheless, I recognize that on the cultural level I belong to a society in which marital infidelity by women is considered a massive threat to masculine pride and position. Thus, for the cement truck driver to triumph in a symbolic way represents, on that cultural level, a successful resolution to the psychological threat posed. I think when I told that story with relish to a number of friends, of course adjusting the corroboration of the story a couple of steps so that the anecdote related an event that had happened to a friend of a friend of mine, I was participating psychologically with my culture, not expressing my own opinion on how a rational male should deal with a situation he does not understand. One aspect of the intellectual approach to folklore is that now, having heard versions of this story all over the country, having seen cute advertisements for cement companies illustrated by a grinning truck driver loading an old jalopy with concrete, having read of numerous pranks in which people's cars were filled with concrete, I am in a position, as a student of folklore, to make some analytical remarks about that story that I never would have thought of back when I believed the story represented something that had actually happened in a nearby community.

THE BLACK ELEPHANT Folklorists Alan Dundes and Roger Abrahamson once made a study of the designs, texts, and categories of the well-known elephant joke craze of the early 1960s. They noticed that if all available versions of elephant jokes were compared, certain broad categories emerged, such as the supersexual elephant or the elephant who tries to disguise himself by an absurd use of color (Why do elephants wear red tennis shoes? So you can't see them hiding in the cherry tree), or the intrusive elephant (whose tracks are found in the peanut butter, or whose presence is felt in bed or in the bathtub). Clearly, all of the elephant jokes

depended for their effect on a basic set of absurdities: Elephants were always described hiding in places that could not possibly hide an elephant, being found in places obviously too small for elephants, being attracted by totally impossible sexual partners, and so forth.

At least one element of the elephant joke that anyone would recognize would be its play on absurdity. However, Abrahams and Dundes felt that there were a number of other features that were too prominent and too timely to be overlooked. For example, they wanted to know why the elephant joke craze had swept the country at that particular time. They wanted to know why certain categories were so prominent. They wanted to know, in short, what the elephant might symbolize for those who were telling the jokes at that time, for certainly there were many other absurdities available in the world.

They noticed that the categories of the elephant joke matched very accurately the categories found in comments and feelings about other races, especially about Blacks; for example, the absurd disguise with color seemed to parallel the widespread white notion that Blacks are absurdly interested in lightening their color, straightening their hair, buying cars associated with white affluence, and, in short, acting the "wrong" role. The supersexual elephant with gigantic anatomical parts and eclectic tastes seemed to mirror the widespread sexual folklore about Blacks encountered commonly among whites. The intrusive elephant, described as being found in the refrigerator, bed, and bathtub—in all the most personal and private places—seemed to be an analogue to the widespread fear by whites that Blacks were moving into areas of housing and employment that were not proper for them. Another category, one in which we are asked how one takes power away from elephants, usually featured some aspect of castration: How do you keep an elephant from stampeding? You cut his stampeder off. This category seemed an obvious counterpart to the fear-inspired castrations, in reality and in story, in which whites symbolically took power away from Blacks who threatened them.

Using Freudian psychology, Abrahams and Dundes argued that humor often functions in such a way as to allow a joke teller to bring up a topic of some anxiety among the members of a group and then to demonstrate or experience superiority over the implied threat by reducing it to something laughable. In other words, jokes may well represent traditional symbolic experiences with precisely those matters that bother us on the group level.

If that is so, how can the elephant possibly symbolize white anxieties about Blacks? And what does that have to do with the timing of the ele-

phant joke fad? First, the authors noted that in the popular imagination of Americans, elephants come from Africa (even though in fact the elephants we see at circuses come from India). They also noted that the elephant joke craze took place precisely at the height of the civil rights movement across the country. They argued, cogently, I think, that the elephant jokes provided an outlet for fear and anxiety among whites.

In order to find out for myself whether this interpretation was noted by people on the cultural rather than the intellectual level, I asked a friend of mine from Philadelphia (which has a large Black population) whether he had heard Black people of his acquaintance telling elephant jokes during the civil rights movement. His answer was both curious to me and supportive of the Abrahams and Dundes hypothesis. He said, "You know, that's really an interesting question. I have a Black secretary, and when I came in one day and told her a really funny elephant joke I had just learned from a friend, she said to me—really sarcastically—"You folks used to call us monkeys; how come you changed it to elephants?" Of course, this one bit of testimony does not prove the theory, but it does indicate a certain validity that the authors could not have known. I do know that the elephant jokes are not particularly funny or even understandable to people of other ethnic backgrounds. For example, once when I was struggling with the problem of what was funny about a certain Navajo joke, one of my Navajo friends said in exasperation, "I'll tell you what's funny about this if you can tell me what's funny about elephant jokes."

What is funny about elephant jokes? Is it only their basic absurdity? If so, why did they start during the civil rights movement and fade as that era faded? I think Dundes and Abrahams go a long way toward explaining what happens in ethnic, esoteric humor; it is all the more valid because it ties in with what we may notice in other kinds of joke fads in our culture. And it is important to know that different groups of people find different things funny; therefore we cannot make the simple assertion that these matters are universal.

Nonetheless, my experience with mentioning this theory to people is that they immediately become angry and deny that it has any validity. "Well, I told lots of elephant jokes during the sixties, and I myself was involved in the civil rights movement!" In other words, we will find that the very people who were telling those jokes are not only not in a position to analyze them according to any larger system such as that suggested by Abrahams and Dundes, but they also resent, on the intellectual level, any implication that they might have been joking about a subject of such

passionate philosophical meaning to them. But of course this is exactly the point. As intellectual individuals in a culture that encourages individuality, we may expect that in discussion people will bring forth those ideas that represent them in public, among friends, or among their professional colleagues. When we are acting or performing as members of a folk group, our expressions will be less geared to the personal, intellectual statement than they are to the feelings of the entire group. The country was gripped by excitement and anxiety over the civil rights movement during the 1960s, and the elephant joke illuminates the fact that regardless of our intellectual orientations, we did not escape in any way the ramifications of membership in a larger culture that was very much threatened by the racial issue.

If we were to list the most common jokes told in our culture, I believe we could relate most of them to anxieties, threats, and concerns felt by different groups at different, noticeable periods of time in our history. Probably the bulk of American jokes concern sex, politics, religion, and ethnicity—just the very subjects that cause us continual malaise in conversation, the topics our mothers told us never to discuss in public. I think it is too much to place on the shoulders of coincidence that all these joke topics continue to parallel the ongoing emotional concerns of society. Can it be coincidence that moron jokes were circulating in the 1940s just as IQ tests were becoming so common that they were almost obligatory in every child's life? Is it not possible to see the moron jokes as an expression of anxiety among parents about where their children would fall on the grand chart?

What about the dead baby jokes that were being told, even at the table, recently by pre-teen-age children? When I became incensed at my own children for telling these "jokes" at supper, I was told indignantly by one of them, "Why do you care about dead babies? Nobody wants babies anymore." It suddenly occurred to me that dead baby jokes, as circulated among children, might well have been a similar kind of symbolic playing through of anxieties occasioned by the sudden public discussion of contraception and abortion. Similarly, a few years ago, when disabled children began to enter the regular school system in some numbers, we were flooded with Helen Keller jokes, MR jokes, and others ("Mrs. Smith, can Billy come out to play?" "No, of course not, you know he doesn't have any arms and legs!" "We know! We want him to play second base!"). And who is the traveling salesman but perhaps the symbol of that marital threat felt by many men, also experienced to some extent in movie characters like Shane and serial heroes like the Lone Ranger? These homeless wanderers move into other people's towns, sometimes solving the

local problem, often threatening the men and entrancing the women. It is important to note that the traveling salesman is outrageously funny only insofar as he remains in the joke; if he arrives on our front doorstep, the joke is over.

THE RACIAL POLACK Not long after the elephant joke cycle came the so-called Polack joke, a kind of ethnic slur focused on one particular group, but made up of attitudes and phrases found throughout Europe and America wherever esoteric-exotic ethnic factors exist. One finds the same jokes today in Yugoslavia, where the Serbs use them in referring to people who live in other parts of the country. The Germans tell them about the Italians, the Danes tell them about the Germans, the Romanians tell them about the Russians. In the United States, the people in Montana tell North Dakota jokes, the people in Texas tell Aggie jokes, and so on.

If we keep all these things in mind, and if we remember that the word Polack has an older history than it has had as American slang for Polish (in the Slavic languages it refers to a person who lives out on the land, a country bumpkin), if we recall that a good many of the Polack jokes were told in the 1930s as "nigger" jokes, and if we make the same category analysis as suggested by the Abrahams and Dundes study, we may be able to see that the Polack joke is not about Americans of Polish descent but probably about ethnic minorities in general, especially of the non-white variety. The main categories are stupidity, strength, and dirt. These are the most recurrent topics in ethnic slurs across America; they are most commonly applied by European-Americans to non-European-Americans, sometimes to any immigrant group.

Just as the traveling salesman joke is not about salesmen, so the Polack joke is not about Polish people; rather, it is a symbolic ethnic slur, the ingredients of which call up, on the cultural level, stereotypical assessments of groups outside the majority. Any number of ethnic groups could have been named in these jokes; I suspect that it is because Polish-Americans have become so Americanized that it is clear to most people that the reference to the Polack is only on the most superficial joking level, while the more serious levels of the joke, which may indicate anxiety and tension about an unskilled labor force threatening jobs in industry, do not represent matters of concern about Polish people.

Those who tell Polack jokes would assure us that they had no negative feelings about ethnic minorities, though some will admit that they feel Polish people are dumber than others. Again, our point about cultural psychology is that very often, as members of a culture, we may be responding to and expressing ourselves in a series of traditional idioms

that really belong to the group. For this reason, if someone comes door-to-door with a questionnaire or survey, we are likely to give our intellectual answers to the questions that relate to our feelings about other groups. If we collect our jokes, on the other hand, we may get an entirely different cultural answer about the dimensions of intergroup feelings and tensions.

**THE ETHNIC THREAT** The story of the castrated boy mentioned in Chapter 5 is another good example of how folklore represents the feelings of a culture. One of the things we noted about that story was its ability to exist in a number of different generic frameworks while still passing on the same ethnic information: one of "our" innocent people has been mutilated by members of the locally feared minority group. One need not ever have heard of Freud to be aware that castration has been widely used as a symbol of taking power away from someone. We have stories in which other people's aggressions toward ourselves are described in terms of castration, and there are stories, legends, and even factual occurrences that detail how castration has been used in retaliation to such aggression. Moreover, the accounts of a number of cavalrymen and American Indians from the frontier days of the United States tell us that castration of enemy dead and dying was a standard procedure. Yet we can assume, I think, that castration is more common in story and song than in reality. Again, without even inquiring of the standard works on psychology about the nature of this symbolic action, we can assume from the records available in folklore that such an image as castration may stand as a startling kind of tableau that can express for a close group the most horrible aspects of interracial strife.

On a somewhat broader level, but related nonetheless, we noted that feared ethnic groups are often depicted as being "out to get us" sexually. One hears the urban legend, sometimes circulating as rumor, that all the illegitimate children in a local high school had nonwhite fathers. One hears that Blacks, Indians, and Jews want nothing more than to cause someone from "our" group to become pregnant. There is the story "Goldilocks on the Oregon Trail": On the way across the Plains, grandmother (who was then young and beautiful) was almost bought by an Indian chief (this story is not in any of the family journals of the trip, no matter how exhaustive their entries; nonetheless, it is told as true by at least a dozen unrelated pioneer families). And of course the image is often used in popular literature and in the movies: The young, innocent, light-skinned heroine is threatened, tortured, or even sexually attacked by an animallike, darker, aggressive male.

In the psychology of ethnic folklore, the majority group symbolizes its anxieties about minority groups by seeing them as sexual threats to "our" innocent males and females. The virtue is on our side, the aggression on theirs. One is motivated to inquire into how these themes can be so vitally and continually passed on in oral tradition if indeed it is true that "nobody believes them." Here, I think, is the confirmation of the double level of the folk involvement I suggested previously in this chapter. As our culture has become increasingly intellectual in the way it rears its individual members, we are reared in at least a double view of reality; included, of course, are all those codes, attitudes, connotations, and traditional patterns that we picked up as members of our ethnic, familial, regional, and occupational folk groups. Included also are all those individualized patterns and philosophies that we have been encouraged to develop for our own view. These two kinds of involvement exist simultaneously in most of us; being a folklorist does not exempt anyone from the effects of both levels.

Being a folklorist involves recognizing that one cannot escape from tradition merely by studying it. One belongs to a particular ethnic group and perhaps has deep connections with the regional, occupational, and national groups of parents and relatives. Being a folklorist on the level of cultural involvement is a simple matter of participating in those expressions and customs that relate to the group's sense of being. Being a folklorist on the intellectual, intentional, level of involvement thus does not imply that one can in any way claim an intellectual superiority or an aloofness over folklore and other bearers of tradition. We need to be able to realize that we are at one and the same time participating members of a culture in which the elephant jokes made sense a few years ago and as individuals who can, because of our particular interest, stand back and scrutinize our own position in those traditional networks. Anyone is free to hold a personal opinion on such matters as race, sex, politics, and human rights; at the same time, it would be naive to deny the effect tradition has on any society in exactly such matters as these. The folklorist therefore needs to distinguish between personal opinion and the powers of tradition. The larger importance of this can be grasped only if we are capable of noticing that the two kinds of involvement exist daily side by side.

Currently, there is a very strong move toward equal rights for women; many people have spoken out forcibly on one side or another. Regardless of the particular position taken by individuals, however, we still must

recognize that we live in a society that tells jokes about mothers-in-law, that relates jokes and legends of women's alleged inability to understand mechanics or money, that thinks it funny to ask someone "Have you stopped beating your wife?" and in a society whose members still laugh at ballads like "The Farmer's Curs't Wife" and "The Wife Wrapt in Wether's Skin." It would seem clear, considering these elements of tradition, that the final determination of women's rights will very likely not be made on the basis of shifting opinions of individuals but, if at all, on the development of another sense of propriety within the culture. Such changes come slowly, especially when pressure is applied from without. The folklorist is in a position to see and appreciate how cultural involvements impinge upon timely matters that might otherwise be thought of as entirely political, personal, or philosophical.

**FOLK MEASUREMENTS** A less ominous example of how we all participate in a cultural and intellectual use of folklore is in our traditional measurements. Even though we are pleased to believe that our measurements are exact and reproducible, and even though we may believe they are based only on scientific exactitude, it is interesting to know that our most commonly used measurements are based on rather inexact foundations that reveal more about our culture's earlier attitudes than about scientific precision. For example, our foot seems to have been based originally on the average size of a man's foot. Similarly, a rod was the length of the left feet of sixteen men in the 1500s. Our word *mile* comes from the Latin *milia passuum*, one thousand paces. *Yard* comes to us from the Old English *gierd*, by way of the Middle English *yerde*, a rod or staff. A furlong was the length of a farmer's single furrow in a field.

In due time, of course, these measurements became standardized, and once they became formal entities within the intellectual framework of science they developed a sanctity that is now almost impossible to shake loose, for the foot has become so believed in as an actuality in nature that recent attempts to change over to the metric system have been greeted with suspicions of an international conspiracy against our culture. These measurements are therefore a part of our cultural bearings as well as building blocks in our intellectual connections as we study the formalities of weights and measurements. This is not only a good example of how folklore and formal culture interpenetrate continually, but it is also testimony to the necessity for the folklorist to realize that we live in a world in which people share traditions and in which the intentional intellectual use of those traditions can be developed to a high art indeed.

Many scholars have pointed out how concepts of time in Western cul-

ture developed in pretty much the same way. We are aware that there was not even a future tense in Anglo Saxon (Old English), the forerunner of modern English, which was spoken from about A.D. 700 to 1000. Not only did northern Europe and some cultures in the Middle East develop the concept of measurable time, but some of these cultures became exceedingly interested in future time. We have become so intensely involved in measuring time that we actually believe that time exists as a separate entity in and of itself, that it can be counted upon, that it can be followed like a ribbon. Yet the concepts leading up to this current situation, in which we can measure microseconds, probably have more to do with cultural attitudes and traditions than with scientific observation.

It is illuminating that our folk speech today contains a great number of measurements that seem to the scientific eye very inaccurate, or at least inconsistent, and yet we use them on a daily basis perhaps more readily than we use more specific measurements. For small quantities we have just a tad, a smidgen, a touch, a skosh (no doubt brought back from Japan after the Second World War, for in Japanese the word for a small quantity is *skoshi*), a dab, a dash, a thimbleful, a pinch, a bit, a little bit, and, for evenly distributed but sparse objects, a smattering.

A small, undetermined period of time is referred to as "just a minute"; the implication of the term is that although a small amount of time will elapse, the person waiting is not to take it seriously. This can be contrasted with the statement, "It took hours for you to get here." A short distance can be referred to as "only a whoop and a holler down the road." Terms like "just a little ways," "a little bit farther," and "pretty soon" indicate small measurements whose precise dimensions are not required in order to gain the knowledge we need.

Some particular occupations have what might be called hyperbolic folk micromilemeasurements. In logging, when gigantic logs are being loaded onto railroad cars or logging trucks, it is often necessary for the person guiding the loader to indicate how much farther the log needs to be lowered or placed to one side or the other. In order to indicate tiny movements of the log, measurements such as BCH, YCH, and RCH are used, based on the supposed difference in diameter of female pubic hair. The colors black, yellow, and red, indicating increasingly fine measurements, are used by loggers in preference to such terms as "eensy-weensy" or "just a teeny bit more," either of which might bring gales of laughter from one's colleagues or, worse, aspersions cast on one's masculine credentials.

Measurements for larger amounts include such terms as scads, a gang, a whole bunch, a whole raft, a pile, the whole shooting match, and the

whole kit and kaboodle. In Ireland one sometimes hears the term "a clatter of people," an appropriate measurement that indicates not only a large group but also the noise it makes.

As people who are culturally involved in our own folklore, we use such terms as these every day, even though we like to think we are very precise and practical. As intentional folklorists looking to intellection as a way of interpreting some of these matters, we may be in the somewhat more complicated position of being able to study such measurements further, making complete lists and definitions, and finding out thereby how our culture actually uses the concept of measurement on a day-to-day basis. These measurements convey something accurately or they would not be used. As with the jokes mentioned earlier, daily concepts of measurement may differ quite distinctly from what people think they think about measurements.

Another step for the professional folklorist, of course, is to compare the measurements used commonly by one's own culture with those used by others. An interesting way to start is to apply the measurements directly to situations experienced in the other culture. An old friend of mine, the Reverend Baxter Liebler, a long-time Episcopalian missionary to the Navajo, tells of his first adventures in Navajo country when, riding an old bony nag across the desert, he tried to locate a certain area where he thought he might find a mission. He met a Navajo riding nearby and inquired if the man could speak English. He said he did, so Liebler asked him how far it was to the place he sought. The Navajo sat his horse thoughtfully for a while, looking at Liebler's skinny horse. Then he said, "It's about five miles; on that horse of yours, about ten." Our first inclination is to smile at the well-intentioned inaccuracy of the measurements. Yet it is clear that the man had learned that a mile was some unit of distance, and in this situation he probably had said something far more meaningful than if he had been able to give the precise distance to Liebler's destination.

I tried once to show a small group of Navajo friends exactly what a mile was. We got into a jeep and I inquired if they saw where we were at that moment. They answered that they did. I then drove as straight as I could across the desert until the odometer told me we had gone one mile. I stopped and announced, "Well, here we are. This is one mile." My Navajo friends sat silently for some time, then one asked politely, "Where?" "Right here," I said. "This is a mile." "Oh," they said politely. "Didn't you see first of all that we were way over there and now we are right here?" I asked. "Yes, we see," they said, "but where is it, this thing you are talking about?" Of course, at the time I was exasperated at my

friends for not understanding me, but I had failed to recognize that the distance we had traveled, the place where we started, and the place where we ended were all irrelevant in the world they lived in, and there was no reason at all why they should have seen it as important or worthy of any kind of measurement. In fact, so various is the Navajo understanding of our word *mile*, that the term *Navajo mile* has come to have a meaning all its own in the southwestern United States. When used by whites, it means a distance of up to thirty miles. As far as I can tell from my older Navajo friends, their understanding of the term is "way down the road and out of sight." Travelers in Navajo country looking earnestly for a gas station or a restroom, or who pick up a Navajo hitchhiker, would do well to be aware that "Oh, about a mile," is not a sure sign that the goal is near at hand.

I had lived with the Navajo family of old Little Wagon for several months before he politely asked me early one morning what kind of noise I was making on my wrist every day. I tried to explain to him that my watch was a means of measuring time, but of course since the Navajos have no word for time as we know it, and because I was still learning the Navajo language, I had no way to explain it to him. My first impulse was to believe that I could simply describe what time was like and why it was important to know it and where I was in relationship to it, but I was brought up abruptly by my realizing that nothing I could say to the old man made any sense to him at all. I pointed out to him how the hands went around a dial that was marked off in equal sections. I then told him that by watching where the hands were I could determine what kinds of things I should be doing. "Like what?" he asked in Navajo. "Well, eating. It tells me when to eat." "Don't your people eat when they are hungry? We eat when we are hungry if there is food." "Well, yes, we eat when we are hungry; that is, no, we eat three times a day, and we are not supposed to eat in between times." "Why not?" "Well, it's not healthy." "Why is that?" And so on. I tried another tack. I said that this machine told me when I needed to do those things that were necessary in order to make my living (there is no Navajo word for *work* that sets it apart from other useful and normal things a person might do). The old man asked, "Aren't those things that you do anyway? What is it that this tells you to do that you wouldn't do anyway?" "Well, it tells me when to go out and look for rocks [there was no Navajo word for uranium at the time], and then my company will know how much to pay me." "Do you mean if you lost that machine, you would stop looking for rocks?" "Well, no, I guess I wouldn't." Finally, in exasperation, I said that the watch actually was my reference point to some larger ongoing



process outdoors, and this seemed to satisfy the old man. But later, when we were outside that afternoon, he stopped me and held me by the elbow and asked, "Where is it? That which is happening out here?" Beginning to be even more frustrated, I said, "Well, the sun comes up and goes down, doesn't it?" "Yes," he agreed expectantly. "Well, I guess I can't explain it to you. It's nothing, after all. It's all inside the watch. All it does is just go around and make noise." "I thought so," he said.

In these adventures, although I didn't know it, I was being asked to be a folklorist in function if not in title. I suppose every person who has worked among the members of a distinctly different culture will have great numbers of similar stories to tell. The point is that when we experience the people of another culture, even to understand them and to encourage them to understand us, we must operate through the worldview codes that are expressed in everything from art to science. When we find ourselves among people whose codes and systems are so different from our own that almost no understanding can take place without further study, we are forced to become applied folklorists and anthropologists even to survive. What many people do not realize, and the point I have been trying to illustrate through several of the examples here, is that we are obliged to be applied folklorists in direct proportion to the extent we try to exist fully within our own close group as well. We may not be so overtly aware of it, not so painfully cognizant of it because of dislocations in meaning, but we are forced to study, learn, and use folklore nonetheless or be labeled oddballs in our own group. By noticing what kinds of everyday measurements we have and do not have, and those that other people have and do not have, we are given one code by which we can navigate in our culture or in theirs a little more clearly. Similarly, by knowing what is and what is not funny in a culture we have one more avenue of relating ourselves to that culture, whether it be that of the Navajo or of our own family.

**THE INTENTIONAL FOLKLORIST** As I have suggested, the intellectual involvement in folklore, at least for clarification, can be seen as that objectified scrutiny of tradition that is brought about by our awareness of the existence of many versions of a story, the many ways of telling a joke, the variety of barn styles, and so on. In short, once we are cognizant of how tradition functions in lives and close groups outside our own, we can make an intellectual approach to the

subject as well as maintain our own personal cultural involvement with the folklore of our own group. There are at least two kinds of intentional folklorists. For our simple purposes here, we may describe them as amateur and professional, but perhaps untrained and trained would be closer to the dichotomy many professional folklorists feel between themselves and others in the field.

**AMATEURS** There are two kinds of amateur folklorists: good and bad. The good amateurs are those who, in spite of a lack of professional training, have developed and maintained a real appreciation of the depth of a local tradition. Their attempt is usually to contact the real bearers of local traditions, to interview them in depth, to record their expressions, and to bring their works forth in book form or in educational TV series, commercial records, and the like. In fact, a good many fine records of folk music have been produced by amateurs in folklore who, armed with a personal knowledge of folk music and proper equipment, have been able to provide for amateurs and professionals alike a tremendous range of traditional musical art the likes of which most people are not in a position to experience firsthand.

One recent phenomenon in this area has been the Foxfire project, begun in Rabun Gap, Georgia, by Eliot Wigginton as a class exercise for his high school students. Typically, the students combed their neighborhoods for local traditional artists of all kinds, those with special talents in everything from hog butchering to cabin building, to chair carving, to singing songs and telling anecdotes. The Foxfire project, and the great number of imitative progeny across the land based on it, are exciting not so much for their analytical brilliance as for the obvious local commitment and rededication to those traditions that might otherwise have died out without the strong attention and interest of the younger generations.

The Foxfire students and their adviser do not claim to be professional folklorists whose interests are in the discussion and analysis of tradition; rather, they are local aficionados in the fullest sense of that term, partisans of their own culture who want to see it recorded and properly revered. Sometimes these projects have been taken to task for their superficiality or thinness, but I believe it is better to laud them for the dynamic way in which the public school—certainly one of the most conservative formal elements in American life—has been able to open its perspectives to include the folk arts and traditions of the students' own locale as meriting the same serious consideration as other topics in the curriculum.

Quite the most stalwart and tireless of the people who have elevated our awareness of the traditions of their regions without first obtaining academic credentials has been Vance Randolph, the venerable Ozark folklorist. Long before folklore became a big publishing business in the United States, Randolph was publishing small collections of Ozark tales, retold according to the vocabulary demands of the publishers. *Who Blowed Up the Church House?* and *The Devil's Pretty Daughter* are simple retellings of Ozark folk tales and jokes. *Ozark Superstitions* is a somewhat more formal gathering of beliefs and customs from the Ozark area, gathered by Randolph over a lifetime of active participant observation. His *Pissing in the Snow*, a collection of Ozark folk tales that could not have come into print until now, is an astounding compendium of anecdotal and narrative material, much of which can be traced back to its European origins. Vance Randolph valued his Ozark heritage enough to want to share it with others not of the same close group. Without a formal degree in folklore, without the benefit of grants and government foundations, sometimes in the face of grinding poor health, he has shown us the richness and beauty available in regional folklore when one is dedicated to the conscientious amassing and interpreting of personal traditions.

The bad amateurs are easily identifiable, and I do not intend to name any of them here. They are the ones who insist on cooing over local whimsies and absurdities, pointing out the backward quaintness that "still survives" in the nooks and backwaters of rural America. They would be embarrassed about folklore if it were not possible to describe it in demeaning terms. For such people, folklore is the stuff of children's stories, of cutely reworded anecdotes, of local color uninformed by the richness of live tradition. Many of the bad amateurs are motivated by ancestor worship and a nostalgia for a past that may exist only in the imagination. The materials they concentrate on are therefore often romanticized or given an odd focus; the traditions they mention, insofar as they are recognizable as traditions at all, are usually comfortably juxtaposed to modern times, as if to say: "This is what folks around here were like, back before the highway came through" (implying relief that they are no longer that way).

There would be no harm in this kind of amateur except that such work tends to confirm the misconception many people hold of folklore: It is backward and quaint, it is held chiefly by people of low intellectual ability, it is found mostly in the rural areas where the blessings of technology have penetrated only slowly. Any record or book that portrays local people as hicks who ought to know enough to apologize for themselves

is essentially an insult to serious tradition-bearers and an impediment to our understanding the most dynamic aspect of our culture. The worst possible effect in this category of folklore is that sometimes the folk themselves will hear such a record or read such a book and concur in the sentiments it projects.

**THE PROFESSIONAL** Some people would also divide this category into two sections, the good and the bad, or to put it more technically, the pure scholars and the applied folklorists. The dichotomy is really unfair, and although there may certainly be good and bad professional folklorists, they are likely to be described more accurately in terms of how well they do the professional task they set out to do. At least most professionals are agreed that they have in common the task of encouraging and maintaining not only the field of study called folklore but the traditions themselves that form the basis of the field. Thus, while some professionals as teachers may be boring and others as scholars may be drudges, it is not so simple to divide them into positive and negative categories. Rather, we can observe that most professional folklorists today are either in teaching and research, usually connected with a college or university, or they are employed by public agencies and private businesses who see the need for work in, or exposure to, the perspectives of folklore. Some examples of folklore employment are provided in Chapter 10, "Applications of Folklore." Perhaps here it would be well to describe briefly the nature of some of these jobs for those who may wonder what one can do to make a living as a folklorist.

Probably the most common employment for folklorists today is in the academic setting. A number of major universities in the United States have folklore departments and institutes, but it is more common to find a folklorist teaching a few classes in an English, history, or anthropology department. Usually the professor is interested in a particular genre of folklore, often one related to the specialty of his department: One finds English department folklorists stressing genres such as the ballad and the folk tale, while anthropological folklorists often stress linguistics, custom and belief, Native American oral literature, and so forth.

Most university folklorists spend at least some of their time doing field research, writing up their results for the professional journals, and when travel money is available, reading short papers to each other at regional and national meetings of the various folklore societies. Because the press of academic business and paperwork is always great, however, many folklorists in academe find that they do their research through surrogates—their students. Students in folklore classes are very often found

doing field research rather than library term papers. A typical folklore class features some kind of engagement with field research, some theoretical research in the library, and considerable discussion in class as the professor tries to make clear to students from a variety of academic departments what folklore does and how it does it. Collections of folklore made by students are usually kept either in the professor's own files or in a larger archive of the department or university.

It is a fact of the modern academic approach to folklore that much of the basic field research has been carried out by students. This may be one of the few subjects in which a student can do a term paper that does not end its days in the wastebasket or rotting among the discarded Coke bottles, cheese wrappers, and freshmen themes in the professor's desk drawer. Students who took a folklore course because they thought it might be an interesting way to fulfill a general course requirement have found their own research being used by scholars worldwide. A recent book on Oregon folklore is filled with examples of occupational, ethnic, and regional lore, virtually all of it collected by students. This is fortunate for everyone, for it not only forces students to confront the dynamics of tradition and the idiosyncrasies of tradition-bearers directly, but it also allows professional folklorists access to a far wider range of traditional examples than they could ever make contact with themselves. It has a melancholy side, however: Some professors are known to use the fruits of their students' labors without appropriate acknowledgment.

Professional folklorists who work for public and private agencies usually develop and coordinate festivals, social programs, or research in applied folklore. One prominent medical school employs a folklorist on its staff in behavioral sciences. The Smithsonian Institution employs a few professionals to study family folklore, occupational folklore, and the folklore of ethnic groups, live parallels to the materials found in the Smithsonian's collections. The National Endowment for the Arts employs a professional folklorist as the Director of the Folk Arts Program, a small office that encourages the maintenance of folk traditions and promotes greater public access to them as well as greater public appreciation of them through modest grants. Cities have employed folklorists as coordinators of ethnic heritage programs. Some states have established the office of State Folklorist or State Folk Arts Coordinator. Some companies hire folklorists to train management officials for overseas assignments. Indian tribes have hired folklorists as consultants for heritage maintenance and cultural retention programs. These and other jobs are explained in greater detail in Chapter 10; I bring them in here simply to show that folklorists indeed play a variety of roles in the formal life of

America, and that their job generally requires them to take seriously the matters of tradition brought up in this book and to bring them before the public for a variety of purposes ranging from intellectual scrutiny to personal involvement to social action. The job of the professional is construed, then, not as an attempt to show how quaint folklore is or used to be, but to discuss and analyze its validity in the ongoing culture, to provide greater recognition of its role in our lives, and to encourage people to be more articulate about their role in tradition and about tradition's role in their lives—and to be more aware of the connections between their traditions and the codes and worldview of their entire society.

## RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Keeping in mind that the intentional folklorist is dealing intellectually with material the tradition-bearers themselves deal with personally and culturally, the folklorist presents not only a set of positive functions for tradition (to study, preserve, and provide status for folklore), but also the possibility of a negative impact by intruding upon or mishandling those very personal and gut-level codes that members of close groups share so solidly.

**THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION** First, there is a distinct possibility that folklorists might unwittingly become cavalier about other people's lore. Indeed, since it is not our belief, or our song, we may not feel the need to approach it with the reverence accorded it by someone in the close group. In fact, until very recently folklorists and anthropologists assumed they had an inalienable right as fieldworkers to a proprietary interest in the materials they generated. Very seldom in a collection of tales or myth texts does one find an overt statement by the tradition-bearer giving permission to publish the account. Seldom is the tradition-bearer listed as the author of such a book, either; usually the scholar gets the credit for producing the work. Because of this, and because some groups have distinct restrictions on how materials ought to be used and disseminated—restrictions that are not recognized by the print-oriented culture of the scholar—folklorists and anthropologists have earned, to some extent justly, the reputation for taking things away.

Some of my Navajo acquaintances have become very reluctant to share their beloved Coyote stories with anyone who plans to publish them. They reason that these stories should be told only in the winter, and that the telling of them under proper circumstances enables the Navajos to take part in the annual round of seasonal events on a cosmic level. To tell

these stories out of season is to challenge the stability of this cosmic system. To have the stories available in print makes it possible for them to be read at any time of the year. My friend Yellowman is convinced that this may be one of the reasons why sheep do not produce as much wool anymore, why there is not as much grass as there used to be, and why people are being bitten more often by rattlesnakes. Non-Navajo researchers might well laugh at these concerns in a cheerfully condescending way and assure the Navajos that, indeed, printing a story has nothing at all to do with rattlesnake bites.

This is all well and good for scholars, but it may not allay the fears of tradition-bearers, who, working from the concepts and premises of their culture, have their own psychological stability to watch out for. They are not likely to find the answer for their dilemma in the codes and systems of another distinctly different worldview. Should we stop publishing Navajo Coyote tales? We could, of course, but there are already so many in printed circulation that perhaps action at this time would be fruitless in reducing the fears of Navajo storytellers. Should we suppress those already in print, burn all books with Coyote stories in them? This course of action runs against our feelings about freedom of the press and access to information. This is a good example of an entirely irresolvable dilemma, one that has grown more acute through the years because folklore and anthropological field researchers have assumed the right of access to traditional materials and have assumed the right to publish or disseminate those materials however they saw fit without regard to the hesitations, codes, taboos, and ritual concerns of the real owners of those stories. We are now in a position where we cannot retreat or advance without doing injustice to the people who provided the riches of their culture, perhaps too willingly, for our scrutiny. That they feel dislocated and hurt while we only register embarrassment is a clear indication of the differences in worldview. It is also testimony to the abuse of power.

**OWNERSHIP** One thing that should be made clear both in the mind of the folklorist and in the perceptions of the tradition-bearer is that even though folk materials are seldom copyrightable by an individual, they should be considered owned to some extent by the tradition-bearer or by his community, not by the folklorist. Folklorists, especially those working in archives, have an uncanny ability to translate the stored materials of others into a repository of facts and data to be disseminated to any interested party at the discretion of the archivist. This can very easily overlook the fact that dissemination of some materials may be

embarrassing or shocking to the community that considers those expressions their own. In some cases it may be a matter of simple impropriety, in others a matter of religious outrage.

Albert Lord has observed that some Yugoslavian singers perform certain stories so well—or by special personal inclination—that they are thought by others to own them. Similarly, in many Indian tribes particular storytellers are thought to own the stories and songs by virtue of having been given them by a previous narrator. Even within the person's own village, in a case like this, the story would not be told by anyone else without special permission, or without the narrator "giving the story away." This necessarily means that any folklorists or anthropologists who wish to collect and transmit the stories of such groups as the Tlingit need to be sure that they have been given permission, literally given the tales, before they can feel free to disseminate those narratives. It is a pernicious and corrosive impertinence for folklorists to assume that once the materials are collected the choice of sharing is up to them.

I once talked to an archivist who presided over a collection of Native American anecdotes, reminiscences, tales, and myths being amassed by a fairly large tribe; he insisted that the tribe had no right to tell him which materials could be shared with outsiders and which required special protection and secrecy. He felt obliged as an archivist to disseminate any and all materials to those people he felt were bona fide scholars in search of the kinds of information his archive could reveal. Why else have an archivist? The tribe, frightened that it might lose control of some of its precious ritual information, concerned that older tradition-bearers might not cooperate with the project if they felt their stories might come into the hands of strangers, asked for the archivist's resignation. But of course there could have been a compromise between the two in which the tribe recognized that some of its materials were of great scholarly value and might be shared while the archivist recognized that part of his job was to encourage and protect the tribe's special cultural information. Such compromises are not corrosive to folklore; rather, they ask the folklorist to join forces with the tradition-bearer to make sure that the materials are not squandered, misplaced, misunderstood, or mishandled. Surely those who can most accurately delineate the concerns in those areas are the tradition-bearers themselves.

An outstanding example exists of a horrible situation that arose because of a well-intentioned field researcher sharing secret information with outsiders. The folklorist had been accepted warmly into a small tribe on one of the islands in the South Seas. He had become so familiar with the tribe and its people, so trusted by them, that he was inducted into one

of the men's societies. For a considerable period of time while he lived there he participated fully in the ritual life of this small tribe, even being allowed to take photographs where none had been allowed previously. Obviously, the people trusted him with these photographs, as they might one of themselves, because as a ritual brother he could be expected to act and respond the same way as others in the group. After his return to his home country, he was urged by colleagues to put out a small book of limited circulation describing the rituals of his adoptive tribe. This he agreed to do, apparently in the belief that the data were so full and rich that the only result would be a positive one: A few scholars interested in this particular tribe and its ceremonies would have a fuller picture and a deeper understanding of the beauty and complexity of those rituals. But as can happen the book was listed in a bibliography and came to the attention of a schoolteacher on the home island. Thinking the students would be interested in reading a book about their own tribe, the teacher ordered it for the school library. When eventually—and inevitably—a young girl from the tribe checked the book out and took it home, disaster struck: There, laid out in pictorial detail, were all the secret ceremonies of one of the central men's societies, secrets that had never before been revealed to the eyes of women or of people outside that ritual group. For one thing, the people believed women would go blind if they saw the ceremonies. But none did. Shock and apostasy followed, and the result of this episode was the near-total dissolution of the tribal religion. One of the practical effects of this misadventure has been that folklorists and anthropologists have been generally barred by tribesmen in that area.

This is not a case of a sinister, calculating folklorist with grave-robbing mentality, striking it rich with shocking photographs for bookshelves across America. Rather, the researcher tried, perhaps beyond his ability, to limit the circulation to the eyes of those who could best understand those people. Nonetheless, we cannot avoid admitting that the result was chaos and cultural destruction for the people so innocently betrayed.

## ■ BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

In my estimation, the finest modern statement about the field of folklore, its promises, and its responsibilities is in Dell Hymes's presidential address to the annual meeting of the American Folklore Society at Portland, Oregon, on November 2, 1974. It forms the first part of an article already referred to several times: "Folklore's Nature and the Sun's Myth," *Journal of American Folklore*, 88 (1975), 345-369; see pp. 345-356 especially.

Several notes and queries about the cement truck driver story have appeared around the country in regional journals and newsletters. Louie Attebery brings the strands together in "It Was a De Soto," *Journal of American Folklore*, 83 (1970), 452-457. The widely found Northwest family legend about Grandma almost being sold to the Indians is discussed in Francis Haines, "Goldlocks on the Oregon Trail," *Idaho Yesterdays*, 9 (Winter 1965-1966), 26-30.

I have already referred several times to the Abrahams and Dundes article on the elephant jokes (*The Psychoanalytic Review*, 56 [1969], 225-241); the piece contains a very succinct résumé of Freud's approach to joking behavior. Dundes explores other more recent jokes stemming from racial friction in "Jokes and Covert Language Attitudes: The Curious Case of the Wide-Mouth Frog," *Language in Society*, 6 (1977), 141-147. In still another article, Dundes suggests that in the case of jokes employing minority stereotypes there is a transference of what is painful, unacceptable, or taboo from "us" onto "them," an indication that the psychological term *projection* provides a clear way of dealing with the phenomenon; see "Projection in Folklore: A Plea for Psychoanalytic Semiotics," *Modern Language Notes*, 91 (1976), 1500-1533. Of special application to this chapter are his comments on the mutilated boy (pp. 1524-1525), dead-baby jokes (pp. 1525-1526), and streaking (p. 1526).

Other references to the mutilated boy are mentioned in previous sections of this book; consult, at the least, Hippensteel, "Sir Hugh"; The Hoosier Contribution to the Ballad, "Indiana Folklore", 2:2 (1969), 75-140, and Florence Ridley, "A Tale Told Too Often," *Western Folklore*, 26 (1967), 153-156. A very fine set of precautions for those who want to use the terms and approaches of psychology and psychiatry is suggested by David Hufford in "Psychoanalysis, Psychoanalysis, and Folklore," *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, 38 (1974), 187-197. Hufford notes that many nonspecialists are inclined to misuse terms like *anxiety* and thus lose the force of what they could have shown in their studies. Dealing with psychological realities, such as real dangers and uncertainties on the job, Patrick B. Mullen shows that one need not use a Freudian approach to make the case for a clearly functional set of beliefs and practices based on shared tensions and group dynamics; see "The Function of Magic Folk Belief among Texas Coastal Fishermen," *Journal of American Folklore*, 82 (1969), 214-225.

For a lighthearted example of how far the naming of animals and people in groups can be carried, see James Lipton, *An Exaltation of Larks, or, The*

*Venerable Game* (New York: Grossman, 1968). For the cultural background of our folk measurements, see Hall's three books mentioned previously, especially *The Silent Language*.

Vance Randolph's most recent book is *Pissing in the Snow and Other Ozark Folktales* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976). Introduced by Rayna Green and with extensive annotations (which do not overshadow the tales) by Frank A. Hoffman, it represents a brave foray against the kind of stereotypicalization that prefers to view the quaint hill folk as harmless churchy clods with dull wits. Other works by "amateurs" would include *One Potato, Two Potatoes*, by Mary and Herbert Knapp—already referred to previously as a fine collection of real children's lore—and that of Eliot Wigginton (and his students), whose Foxfire project, for all its focus on their own rural scene, captured the imaginations of people all over the country. On the snobishness that has sometimes reared its head in spite of these clear examples of valuable work by non-specialists, read John O. West's impassioned but succinct statement, "The Professional-Amateur-Popularizer Feud in Folklore," *Journal of American Folklore*, 88 (1975), 299-300.

For comments, advice, and good examples of the relationships between folklore researchers and their live resources, see the following works. Richard M. Dorson, in the Introduction to his *Buying the Wind: Regional Folklore in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), provides some very helpful remarks based on his own field experience ("Collecting Oral Folklore in the United States," pp. 1-20). Dorson's comments in the introduction to his *American Negro Folktales* (New York: Fawcett, 1967), pp. 12-64, are also illuminating, for they describe, among other things, the dilemmas faced by a white collector trying to get people of another ethnic group to share their most cherished anecdotes. Alan Jabbour and Carl Fleischauer, in their work on the Hammons family records referred to previously, provide us with a high performance to emulate: working with several members of an isolated family over several years' time without flagging and without alienating the family. George Carey gives some thoughtful reflections on our ethics, and on our professional debt to "informants," in his deceptively simple "The Storyteller's Art and the Collector's Intrusion," in *Folklore Today: A Festschrift for Richard M. Dorson*, ed. Linda Dégh, Henry Glassie, and Felix J. Oinas (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 81-91. It is clear from Carey's remarks that while he is not completely sure about the effects his published articles have had upon the lives and reputations of his informants, he is certain of their effects upon him: They have been instrumental in establishing him as a leading professional. Here is a rare and moving example of why vertical distinctions between scholar and folk simply cannot be tolerated. Michael Owen Jones provides another, equally important consideration in "Folk Art Production and the Folklorist's Obligation," *Journal of Popular Culture*, 4 (1970), 194-211, when he warns us of the possible distortion of both art and scholarship by the very nature of intrusion and special focus on a traditional performer. John J. Honigsmann argues that

relations between researcher and subject need not be restricted to objective, formal modes, however, and he suggests, moreover, that the researcher need not remain totally outside the phenomenon being studied or aloof from its eventual description. In "The Personal Approach in Cultural Anthropological Research," *Current Anthropology*, 17 (1976), 243-250—plus discussion, pp. 251-261—Honigsmann puts forth the idea, already well accepted by most folklorists, I think, that the personal approach recognizes the importance of the investigator's own account and evaluation of an event, his interpretation of it, and his conclusions about it (matters often dismissed as too subjective by social scientists).

If you want to meet folklorists and participate in the exchange of views at any regional or national meeting, you can find out how to join the various folklore societies by looking at the fine print in any recent issue of any folklore journal. Usually, subscription to a professional journal includes membership; in cases where it does not, the details for application are usually spelled out, often inside the front cover. The annual meeting of the American Folklore Society draws professional folklorists (most of them college professors), other interested academics, graduate and undergraduate students, local history buffs, and, on occasion, some of the folk from throughout the United States and from many other countries. Many of the best papers and reports are given by students, and many of these, in turn, become published papers, theses, dissertations, and books. *Oregon Folklore*, written by Suzi Jones and already mentioned several times, is one of several good examples of a book researched and written by a graduate student in folklore, using her own fieldwork as well as that of many previous undergraduate students at the University of Oregon. A whole issue of the *Journal of American Folklore*, 88:347 (January-March 1975), devoted to the topic of women and folklore, was edited by a graduate student at the University of Texas (and many of the articles were done by graduate students). *Folklore Forum*, a journal of contemporary folklore studies, is put out entirely by graduate students at Indiana University (some of whom also help edit the prestigious *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, also published at Indiana). There are similar examples of other folklore centers around the United States and Canada, but it is unnecessary to mention them all; the point is clear. I hope. Being a folklorist, on the international level, is a collegial activity involving the professional and the apprentice in an exciting partnership of discovery that would be totally impossible to carry off without the aid, charity, and interest of the tradition-bearers themselves, among whom we may occasionally number ourselves.