



THE AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE NEWSLETTER

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Interest in the history of childhood in Australia, and in Australian children's folklore, grows apace.

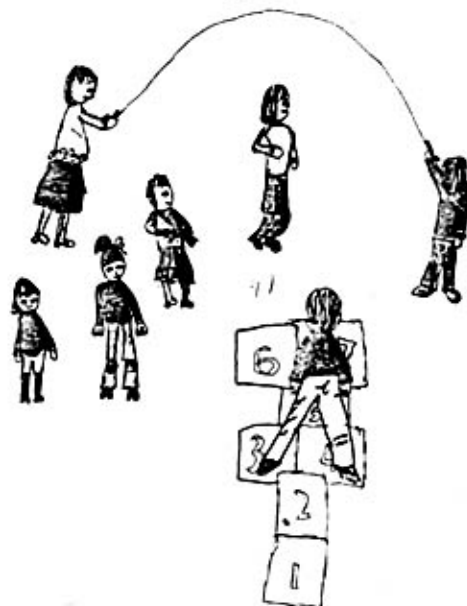
In academia, we have the annual one-day conference on childhood, conducted by the History Institute in Melbourne (258 Faraday Street, Carlton, Vic., 3053), and the forthcoming national Oral History Conference has a special section devoted to childhood. (For details of this conference, see the brochure enclosed in this issue of the A.C.F.N.)

As well, the Melbourne College of Advanced Education's two campuses - Carlton, and the Institute of Early Childhood Development - have combined to plan a Graduate Diploma in Australian Children's Folklore and Literature, which, it is hoped, will be ready to accept its first students in 1987.

Outside the academic world, we have been encouraged by the warm reception accorded to the children's folklore participants in last year's National Folklore Conference. One paper-on-tape, sent by Dr Dorothy Howard from New Mexico, U.S.A., is reprinted in this issue.

The Australian Children's Television Foundation (22-24 Blackwood Street, North Melbourne, Vic., 3051) has also recognised the importance of an understanding of childhood and children's culture for those who promote and produce television for children. It has recently published a monograph by one of the editors of A.C.F.N. (see notice on p.14), and has included children's culture as one of the themes of its forthcoming conference on 'The Challenge of Kids' T.V.'

Such stirrings of interest among important groups in the community suggest that childhood, and children's folklore, are subjects at last emerging from the obscurity and neglect which has been their lot in this country for a very long time. We hope that the A.C.F.N. can actively support these developments. Views from readers would be appreciated.



The Multicultural Playground

by Heather Russell

The project, The Multi-Cultural Playground, was carried out last year in an inner suburban school playground. The aim of the project was to document, through observation and interview, the life and lore of a playground which had a high percentage of NESB¹ children.

Children's spontaneous games, rituals, rhymes and jokes and other more informal activities were observed during lunchtime and recess for a two month period. Information about children's friendship patterns, preference for playmates and attitudes to different cultural groups was observed and followed up in one-one interviews.

The playground has mostly Turkish and Indo-Chinese (Vietnamese, Chinese Vietnamese and a few Lao) children. In the minority are ESB² children and other NESB groups such as Yugoslavs and Arabs.

The following article is taken from the draft report of the project. The final report will be completed soon, and any enquiries regarding the report, or the project itself, should be directed to Heather Russell, Institute of Early Childhood Development, 4 Madden Grove, Kew, 3101.

1. NESB Non English speaking background
2. ESB English speaking background

Counting Out

Counting out rhymes have always been the traditional Australian method of deciding who will go 'he' or 'it' in games of Chasey, or who will hold the end in games of Skippy. While interviewing Turkish children, I discovered that counting out rhymes are also a traditional part of Turkish children's culture, and I managed to collect two of these rhymes. In the playground, I observed the counting out ritual being performed only two or three times, and during the course of the interviews eight different counting out rhymes:

- One potato, two potato, three potato, four ...
- Tic, Tac, Toe here I go ...
- Little Miss Piggy fell down the sink ...
- There's a party on the hill would you like to come ...
- My mother and your mother were washing the clothes ...
- I saw Tarzan behind a rock, he was fiddling with his cock ...
- Racing car, racing car how many miles are you going ...
- 1p Dip Dog shit, one, two, three ...

Generally, children at this school do not use counting out rhymes to determine who goes 'he'. Instead, they use the following ritual which combines the verbal and the kinesthetic. The ritual has two parts: Black and White, also known by the word 'Aw-Sum' (the children do not know the origin of this word); and 'One, two, three' which is also known as 'Paper, Scissors Stone'.

In the first part, Black and White, the children stand around in a circle and chant 'Aw-Sum'. On the word 'Sum' everyone puts one hand in the middle either palm up (white) or palm down (black). Those in the minority go out, and the rest continue until there are 1 or 2 players left. If two players are left, they 'play off' with 'One, Two, Three' (also known as 'Paper, Scissors, Stone'). In this second part, both children chant 'One, Two, Three' and on 'Three', they put one hand into the middle in the shape of either paper (hand outstretched), scissors (two fingers forked) or stone (clenched fist). Paper beats stone, stone beats scissors, and scissors beats paper. The children have either a one off game, or play the best of five. The loser is 'he'.

Both sections of this ritual are known to be part of Vietnamese, Laotian and Chinese Vietnamese children's culture.



Many Indo-Chinese children performed this ritual in their country of birth, but instead of saying 'Aw-Sum' they chanted rhymes in Vietnamese, Chinese or Laotian. Similarly, the chant of 'One, Two, Three' in the second part also had rhymes to accompany it. Here, in the Australian playground, these rhymes have been replaced by a single 'Aw-Sum' and 'One, Two, Three'.

'We do "Aw-Sum" - palm side up versus fingernail side up. If two people are left we do 'One, Two, Three' - scissors, straight hand and fist. We can do Eeny, Meeny Miny Mo but some people can say you cheated when, (if) you said something to try and get your friend out, so it's easier doing it that way (Black and White). (Where do you think it comes from?) I don't

"On the word 'Sum' everyone puts one hand in the middle..."

Whilst 'Black and White' seems to be a new addition to the culture of Australian playgrounds, 'One, Two, Three' or Paper, Scissors, Stone is definitely not. This game was documented by Dorothy Howard in the 50's and is part of childhood memories of many adults today. So, here we have another example of the universality and continuity of children's folklore.

But, what has happened to counting out rhymes and the classic, hundred year old tradition of Eeny Meeny, Miny Mo? I asked many of the children at the school about their counting out traditions. Most of them, regardless of age or ethnic background, reported 'Black and White' and 'One, Two, Three' as the standard way that they decided who would go 'he'.

know. When I first came to this school I didn't know how to play it at all but I just kept looking at other people and I got the hang of it and now I know how to do it. And now, other people that come new and they don't understand, I just try and teach them.'

(Grade 6, ESB girl)

Some features of the playground games:

Cross - cultural influences: Some games show obvious signs of cross cultural influences. Take Marbles as an example. In this playground, marbles players can use two acceptable flicking styles. The 'Australian' flick has the marble held against the thumb nail, in the crook of the index finger. The marble is shot out by

the force of the thumb pushing forwards against the marble. The 'Chinese' flick, equally acceptable to all marble players, has the marble held between the thumb and index finger of the left hand, cupped in the crook of the index finger of the opposite hand. The thumb of this hand is placed on the ground for balance and strength, and when the marble is flicked outwards, it travels through the air, directly to its target, and not along the ground.

Most marble players at this school prefer the Chinese flick because it is faster and more accurate. Cross-cultural influences can also be seen in Elastics: the Vietnamese and Chinese girls have introduced a rule into Elastics which involves twisting the elastic around one leg, and jumping out.



Cooperation and Collaboration: It has long been observed that children's traditional games emphasise cooperative elements rather than competitive elements. The present study provides further evidence to support this observation.

Children's games are undoubtedly competitive, but their rules are flexible so that all participants have a reasonable chance of winning. High Jump is a good example of children's flexibility and cooperativeness in game playing. High Jump is governed by a strict set of rules which

determine the height of the elastic. Starting at knee level, the elastic moves to 'underbums', 'waists', 'underarms', and so on to 'straight arm' when the elastic is held at an arm's length above the head. To compensate for shorter players, girls were observed taking either of the following two courses of action:

1. The elastic is lowered an agreed upon amount according to the height of the player, or
2. The shortest player is allowed to do a hand stand next to the elastic. When her feet are in the air she then flicks the elastic down with her foot, and lands with both feet on the other side of the elastic.

Cooperation and collaboration are also evident in boys' games. When football is played by a certain group of Grade 5 boys, the two best players always take on the role of captain of each team. Even though these two boys are best friends, they always play on opposite teams to ensure that the teams are evenly matched.

Whilst cooperation is a strong feature of children's games, it would be wrong to assume that this co-operation is achieved harmoniously and without initial disagreements, or that once the rules have been

decided upon, the game that ensues is not competitive. A good example is a game of high jump that was played one recess by a group of Grade 5 and 6 Vietnamese girls. I had asked these girls if I could video their game, and they had agreed, if somewhat reluctantly. Most of the fifteen minute recess time was taken up with a rather violent argument in Vietnamese which, I later learnt, revolved around the selection of teams. The arguing was fierce but finally a decision was reached. The situation worsened however when the team that began won the game outright without the opposing team getting an opportunity to jump. At the end of the game, the losing team stormed off in disgust. Despite the serious looks and passionate arguments that day, the two groups of girls were later observed playing another game of high jump together.

Marbles is a game that can at times be fiercely competitive. Marbles, played for 'toys', is the playground jargon for a game where children play to win, but the winner doesn't take possession of his or her opponent's marbles. Marbles, played for 'keeps', is exactly as it sounds - 'winner takes all'. Marbles played for 'keeps' is probably the most competitive game in the playground, and such a game is easily identifiable at playtime because it usually attracts the biggest crowd of onlookers.



Duck under the table: Adult Folklore addressed to Children

by Gwenda Davey

Although the Oxford Book of Nursery Rhymes contains over 800 entries in the English language, to date it has not been known which of these rhymes are still in active transmission in Australia. Through the Australian Folklore for Children Project funded by the Australian Folk Trust, Institute of Early Childhood Development (Melbourne CAE) and the Music Board of the Australia Council, attempts are being made to answer this and related questions. Folklore for children which is currently being collected includes many types other than nursery rhymes such as the evasion noted in the title to this paper. English and community languages other than English are being collected in this project. This paper will discuss the progress of the Australian Folklore for Children Project and will give examples of material collected.

The Australian Folklore for Children Project has two antecedents, the Multicultural Cassette Series (Melbourne, Institute of Early Childhood Development, 1979) and the Baby Poetry Book (see below).

In 1976 the Australian Government Children's Commission made available a year's funding to employ me and two part-time assistants to produce the Multicultural Cassette Series, a developmental project aimed at encouraging the maintenance of some young immigrant children's language and culture through cassettes of stories, songs, rhymes and music from Australian immigrant communities speaking Italian, Greek, Turkish, Spanish, Arabic, Macedonian, Serbian/Croatian. It was also hoped to encourage cultural interchange between ethnic groups in Australia, and some translations both from English and into English were included. Two English cassettes were included in the series.



Printed sources such as children's books and folktale collections as well as direct field recordings from adult informants were used, and the principal criteria for selection involved authenticity of the sources. After some monumental difficulties including the theft of the entire collection of field recordings, the Series was completed, and now consists of a manual, 26 cassettes and some printed booklets which are distributed all over Australia by the Institute of Early Childhood Development.

Ultimately, the Series raised many interesting questions about oral and written literature presented to young children, whether in English or other

Australian community languages. With regard to folklore for children, the key question clearly concerned what was still in transmission and what was not. This question involved three dimensions:

- (a) authenticity,
- (b) contemporaneity, and
- (c) frequency.

With regard to (a) authenticity, it was noted that many published collections of folktales either fail totally to give sources or simply draw upon earlier publications of a similar type. Contemporaneity is significant when one considers, for example, that the Oxford Nursery Rhyme Book (Opie, 1955) has 800 entries, but it is totally unknown which of these 800 are used in Australia today, and with what frequency.

"With regard to folklore for children, the key question clearly concerned what was still in transmission and what was not."

As a first step in answering some of these questions, my students at I.E.C.D. interviewed over several years mothers of infants under 12 months, and established an unmistakable "Top Ten" games, songs and rhymes for this age group:

Peekaboo
This Little Piggy Went to Market
Round and Round the Garden
Humpty Dumpty
Pat-a-Cake
Can You Keep a Secret?
Rock-a-bye-Baby
Clap Hands till (Daddy) Comes Home
Baa Baa Black Sheep
Twinkle Twinkle

These were published c.1983 in booklet form as the Baby's Poetry Book by a group coordinated by my colleague, the then Children's Services Officer in Fitzroy, Caroline Lunt. I note with interest a recent commercial publication, Round and Round the Garden, compiled by Sarah Williams (Oxford University Press).

The Australian Folklore for Children Project has now been established to collect data about folklore for children which is still in active transmission in Australia. Funds have been received from the Australia Council (Music Board). Information is being obtained through survey, direct field recording, and media coverage such as the Australian Women's Weekly (January 1985). Items in both English and languages other than English are being collected.

The establishment of a rich collection of such folklore-in-use will provide information of considerable interest on a number of issues such as the following, which are in no particular order:

1. The process of transmission from popular into folk culture. Data already

collected clearly suggest that the following popular or old music hall songs are passing into oral tradition, and are regularly sung by many parents to their children:

Waltzing Matilda
How Much is that Doggie in the Window?
Michael Finnigan
You are My Sunshine
Somewhere over the Rainbow
Daisy Daisy

The image shows a musical score for the song "How Much is that Doggie in the Window?". It features a treble and bass clef staff with a 2/4 time signature. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The lyrics "1. 2. How much is THAT DOG-GIE IN THE" are written below the staff. The score includes dynamic markings such as "mp" (mezzo-piano) and "C" (crescendo). There are also markings for "C" and "Cdim" above the staff, likely indicating chord changes or specific musical instructions.

2. The actual items used by adults with children. Data collected indicate that the following folk sayings are examples of a number in common usage:

Admonitions: If you pull a face and the wind changes, you'll stay like that.

Evasions: A wigwam for a goose's bridle (in response to question such as "What are you making, Mum?")

or

Duck under the table (in response to "What's for dinner?").

Folk wisdom: Eat your crusts and your hair will curl.

Reprimands: You're too big for your boots.

Folk sayings of this type can be revealing about changing patterns of family relationships, particularly when contextual factors are known, as well as the item itself. How often and how seriously are "put downs" used today? For example, there is the traditional French interchange:

Child: J'ai faim!
(I'm hungry)

Adult: Mange ta main;
(Eat your hand)
Et garde l'autre
(And keep the other)
Pour demain.
(For tomorrow).

Clearly the intent or "tenor" of the retort is crucial.

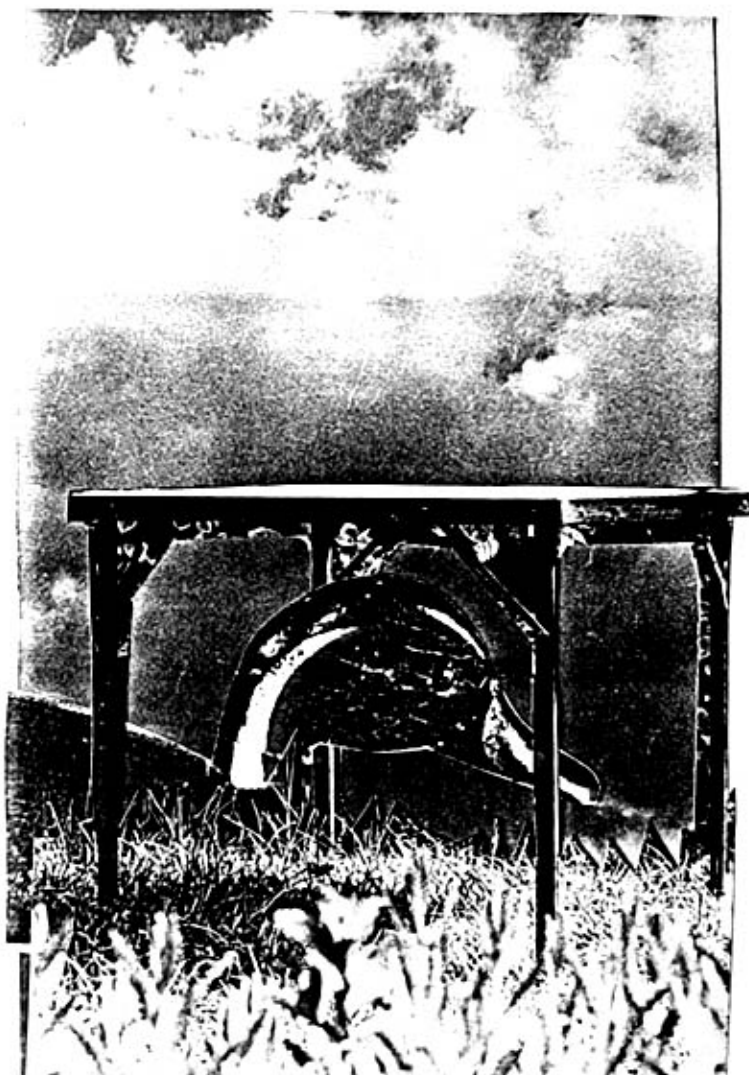
3. Inter-ethnic comparisons. Frequent emphasis is placed on differences between ethnic groups, but examination of traditional folklore addressed to children suggests that peoples of diverse languages and nationalities are in many ways more similar than different. (See my article on Nonsense Rhymes in Polycom magazine, October 1984.)

Peekaboo is a game widely played with babies in many places. French, Spanish and Italian-speaking adults seem to say cou-cou, cuco or cucu-sette; Greeks hoo-hoo, I-da or na-tos, Macedonian coc-coe-da and Japanese inai-inai-ba. No doubt there are many other variations as well

Similar body and tickling games are played with older infants, likewise variations of "Clap Hands till Daddy Comes Home". Sometimes Daddy brings money or sweets (Greek), sometimes sweets "wrapped in paper", or he may bring chocolates or biscotti (Italian).

The full version in English as I remember it, seems to have been largely discarded. Well, this is the era of equal opportunity! My version is:

Clap hands, clap hands
Till Daddy comes home;
Daddy's got money,
And Mummy's got none.



An interesting and entertaining discovery is that a gentle ribaldry concerning bodily functions is common in families of many diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, and is often encoded in traditional rhymes and songs such as the French/Mauritian 'Mam Mam':

Ma Ma Ma Ma Ma Ma Ma Ma Ma;
 Cette jolie cinq heures,)
 Cette jolie six heures du matin) 2 x
 Ma ma mi yo hi yo ha) 2 x
 Elle a fait 'pipi' dans son pantalon,
 Elle a fait 'pipi' dans son p'tit 'pec'
 Dans son p'tit 'tousse'.
 Ma ma mi yo hi yo ha) 2 x

Dorothy Howard Speaking

One of the highlights of the First National Folklore Conference, held in November 1984 in Melbourne, was a taped address sent from New Mexico, U.S.A., by the pioneering children's folklorist, Dr. Dorothy Howard.

Dorothy Howard, now 81 years old, had hoped to attend the conference, and re-visit the country she came to know in 1954-55, when, as a visiting Fulbright Scholar, she travelled from Melbourne to Perth and from Brisbane to Hobart, collecting Australian children's games and rhymes. She was the first to undertake such a study in Australia, and her work remains of enormous value and significance.

Although ill-health prevented her from coming to Melbourne last year, she sent a tape of her address, and it was played to an appreciative audience on the first day of the conference. That address is re-printed below. We welcome readers' comments.

4. Inter-ethnic and racial attitudes. A final comment on the enlightenment which can be obtained through knowledge of the folklore which adults currently and commonly use with children concerns the values expressed in the items transmitted. With regard to ethnic and racial attitudes, it is interesting to note that although the offensive term 'nigger' is frequently discarded in children's playground use of 'eenie meenie' (often in favour of a 'tigger'; A.A. Milne variety, perhaps?), I was recently asked for the full words of 'Ten Little Nigger Boys', and was also recently given a rhyme about 'Little Jika Jika' ('all the darkies like her') which I was told was an 'Aboriginal poem'. Both the latter items were in current use in families.

"I regret that I could not blaze a wider trail...over the mountains of academic arrogance..."

Today I must greet you from afar; my colleagues and friends in Melbourne - all of us, friends of children everywhere.

As a pioneer in research in childlore, I was invited to speak to you today. June Factor first called me a "forgotten pioneer" and, later, "a pioneer remembered". Brian Sutton-Smith has called me "the pioneer woman" in childlore research next in line with Lady Alice Bertha Gomme, and Sylvia Grider has linked my name with that of Lady Gomme.

Be all of that as it may or may not be, if I have been a pioneer, I regret that I could not blaze a wider trail (for you young pioneers): over the mountains of academic arrogance; through the forests of academic ignorance; and across the sloughs of academic indifference. All of us (you and I) are pioneers. All of us still know

little about children and childhood. A poet (whose name I now forget) once wrote:

The children we were
Are waiting for us
To come back to them.

Most of the children we were have waited in vain. Why? Because; as soon as we were out of diapers (nappies) and could walk and talk, we were expected to behave like adults. The children we were were laughed at (as cute); or ridiculed (as silly); or punished (as bad). We learned to be ashamed of the children we were; and to renounce and bury them in the deepest graves of our minds.

According to a report in an American newspaper, research carried out in your Sydney area by Dr. Shelly Phillips, University of New South Wales: 1) almost half of all adults are hostile toward children; 2) almost one-third believe it necessary to break a child's will; 3) two in five believe children are naturally naughty; and 4) between one-third and one-half believe parents should let children learn the hard way. Dr. Phillips was quoted as saying, "Australia is typical of a Western industrialized society and therefore a similar pattern would be true in the U.S., Canada or other Western countries."

I do not know whether or not the newspaper report was accurate; I do not know how the study was conducted and I therefore have no opinion about its validity. I have conducted no computerized study of American adult attitudes toward children, but eighty-two years of experience and more than casual observation lead me to think that the prevailing relationship of adults and children in the U.S. is an adversarial relationship. Most parents, teachers, policemen and others in

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**has yet investigated the folklore of pedagogy—the myth that one
learns best when the buttocks are numb."**

charge of children are tyrants (benevolent or despotic) from whom children seek refuge and self respect among their peers on the playground.

My interest in playground lore grew out of an earlier interest in and insatiable curiosity about the history of children and their position in human society; from the time of Aristotle's brutal Athenaeum and Plato's ideal Republic with its equally brutal school for boys (only). When I discovered Socrates, I found my guru. He walked the streets of Athens, barefoot, talking with any young man who wanted to talk; asking questions; and leading his disciples to find their own truths for themselves. He died--as we know--of hemlock poison.

My purpose in studying children's playground lore is and has always been that of a country school teacher curious about how children learn what, where, when and why--without adult help. In 1930, I found myself a teaching principal in a consolidated rural school in New York State, teaching immigrant children and children of immigrant parents from Norway, Sweden, Finland, Latvia, Germany and Italy. My job was to teach them to read, write and speak the English language and (in addition) the beauties of literature in the English language. There were no books to tell me how; and though the children were patient with me and cooperative, I knew I was a colossal failure.

Then one day, standing at a classroom window watching and listening to the children playing on an unsupervised playground, I saw ropes turning, balls bouncing, marbles rolling and little ones darting about playing Tag (Tiggy). I became aware that they were all speaking English. When the bell rang bringing them into the classroom, we (they and I) began to build a curriculum based on their playground language. That was fifty-four years ago.

I suggest that while we are studying children on the playground, they are studying us in the classroom, at home and in public gatherings; and expressing their findings (not in esoteric, academic jargon) but in subtle but direct satire. I suggest that we can learn about ourselves by listening to them. One satire on adult pomposity current in my childhood in East Texas in 1910, is still current (in varying versions) in several states from New York to California:

Ladies and jellypoos,
 Little, big and bigger,
 Knives and forks,
 Bedbug and chigger,
 I stand before you
 But not behind you;
 I come to address you
 But not to undress you.
 The next Wednesday
 Being Good Friday
 There will be a mother's meeting
 For fathers only.
 If you can come,
 Please stay at home,
 Wear your best clothes
 If you have none.
 Admission free, pay at the door;
 Take a seat and sit on the floor.
 It makes no difference where you sit
 The man in the gallery's sure to spit.
 The next number on the program
 Will be
 The fourth corner of the round table.
 We thank you
 For your unkind attention.

Do we remember the children we were?
 Do we remember sitting all day on our derriers, feet flat on the floor, hands on desks (so teachers could see what our hands were doing), silent, staring into teacher's eyes as if giving her our complete attention--while our minds were escaping out the window to the playground.

As far as I know, no folklorist, psychologist, anthropologist or sociologist has yet investigated the folklore of pedagogy--the myth that one learns best when the buttocks are numb.

The poetry of the playground and the poetry in books can help us remember the children we were. The American poet, Walt Whitman, remembered. About 1862, he wrote (in cadenced verse):

There was a child went forth every day,
 And the first object he looked upon
 that object he became,
 And that object became part of him
 for the day or a certain part of
 the day,
 Or for many years or stretching cycles
 of years.

Do the playground poets understand us better than we understand ourselves? Think about that!

Do fathers always know best? Fathers have been the modern-day pied pipers who created hydrogen bombs to blow all the children off the face of the earth.

From far-away New Mexico, U.S.A., I greet you today and say, "Adelante!" "Onward!" My friends, My colleagues. My fellow pioneers. We still have a long, long journey ahead; over the mountains, through the forests and across the sloughs of academic arrogance, ignorance and indifference. I suggest that we need to investigate the mythology of pedagogy which has prevailed in classrooms since the days of Aristotle, Plato and Socrates. I have no answers. I know the questions: Are we adults, all powerful, also all-knowing, all-wise? Or--are we self-elected victims of our own God-Almighty syndrome?

Goodbye, my friends, Goodbye.



Lee St. Remembers

In 1983, Lee St. Primary School, an inner-suburban (Carlton) school in Melbourne, began an extensive and very successful oral history project. Using Supplementary Grants funding, the school has developed a considerable archive of material collected from older residents and ex-residents of Carlton, and of the school itself.

One focus of this project has been the games that children played in the area, and in the school ground, in earlier decades. Current Lee St. school children have interviewed older, ex- Lee St. 'graduates', and asked them: "What did you do during playtime?"

The following account was first published in City Alternative News, April 6, 1984.

"What did you do during playtime, Mr Wicks?" (Grade 5/6B)

"During playtime we played football and cricket ... and cherry bobs."

"What are cherry bobs?"

"Cherry stones, and when your mother cooked cherries and they were purple, they were very valuable ... You used to dig a little hole in the ground called a bunny hole and step back five paces and throw the cherry bobs to try and get them into the hole. The boy was in charge of the hole, if you got yours into the hole he'd pay you five cherry bobs and your own cherry bob back. And we'd play cigarette cards against the wall ..."

"... we used to play cigarette cards too." (Mr Barbour, Grade 5/6A)

"... we used to pitch them like this to the wall. Used to be the other mate of yours used to have a stack of cards like these, and closest to the wall wins ... you can play for hours and hours with these cards."

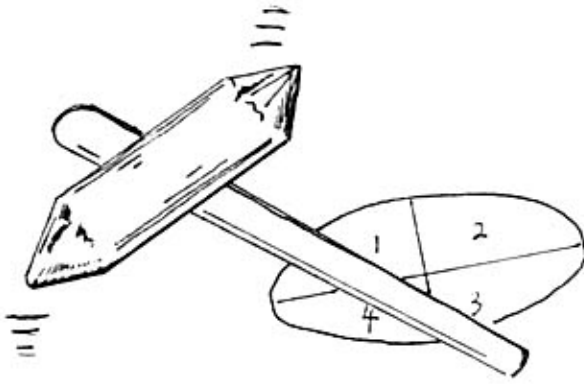
"During the football season, we used to play football ... our parents weren't rich enough to buy a football, but, I'll tell you something else we used to do. We used to make a football. See here. Now this is part of 'The Sun'. We used to fold it into three like this and that ... Fold it again like that and we used to roll it up like this ... get a string ... and you tie both ends like this. This is the football we used to play with because we couldn't afford one ... it used to take about an hour to wear out, but we used to make another one."

Mr V. Pratt told Grade 4/5 about another popular game amongst boys called 'Cat', or 'Kit-Kat'.

"Cat! How do you play that?"

"... you used to get about that much of a broom handle and sharpen it at each end, and then you'd draw a circle with lines across it and number 1, 2, 3, 4 in each of them, and then you'd stand back oh, about 10 feet, and throw the cat into this ring, and say it came out on 1, well you had one stroke of the cat. You just held another bit of broom stick, and belted the cat down the street as far as you could see ... and then you'd say to the chap that you was playing against, How many jumps will you





take from where that cat is, back to where that ring is? ... he might say oh, 10, and if he couldn't do it well that counted on you, and if he could do it well that counted on him and you were out and he was in ... it was a great game at the time. It was dangerous too because children could easily get struck in the eye, see?

"But the girls, they used to play a game called 'Diabalo' ... you had two sticks joined with a string ... it worked the diabalo up like that, you know, throw them up in the air. Oh, some girls could throw them up 30 feet and catch them on the way down."

"Then what ... the idea of the game was to catch them on the way down?"

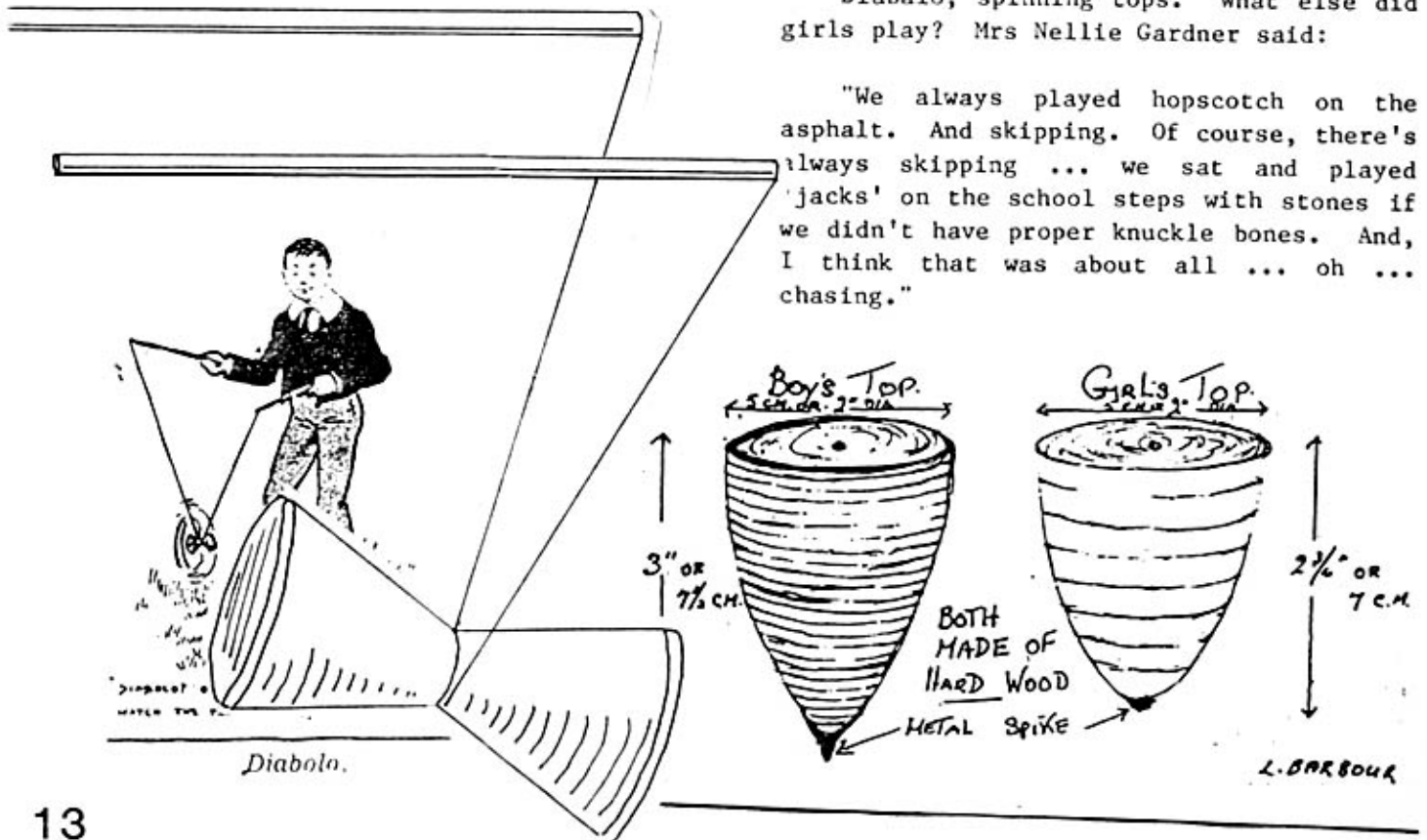
"The idea was to try and keep them going. And then there was 'Tops', spinning tops".

Mr Barbour brought along a diagram of girls' and boys' tops.

"Now just imagine that was wood ... The boys' top has a little metal spike at the bottom. The idea of the boys' top is to put the string down here and wrap the string around the top ... you tie the string around your forefinger and hold it like this, then you pull the string away and that gets the spin on the top ... when it hits the ground it spins around beautifully. Well the girls' top is something the same but you don't use a string. What you do is you tie that around the top (a thick piece of cloth attached to a piece of wood). And you hold the top like that, and then you go like that and that spins it ... while spinning you hit it like this. That top will spin for hours ... as long as you're whipping it like this."

Diabalo, spinning tops. What else did girls play? Mrs Nellie Gardner said:

"We always played hopscotch on the asphalt. And skipping. Of course, there's always skipping ... we sat and played 'jacks' on the school steps with stones if we didn't have proper knuckle bones. And, I think that was about all ... oh ... chasing."



CHILDHOOD AND CHILDREN'S CULTURE #

Readers of the newsletter will be #
interested in a monograph just pub- #
lished by the Australian Children's #
Television Foundation. 'Childhood #
and Children's Culture' by June #
Factor is available from the A.C.T.F. #
22-24 Blackwood Street, North #
Melbourne, Vic., 3051, for \$3.50. #

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