

DUNDES, A., s.d. "Projection in Folklore - A Plea
for Psychoanalytic Semiotics" in: Alan Dundes
Interpreting Folklore Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Eg. 22..

Projection in Folklore

A Plea for Psychoanalytic Semiotics

Folklore means something—to the tale teller, to the song singer, to the riddler, and to the audience or addressees. A given item of folklore may mean different things to different tale tellers or to different audiences. It may mean different things to different members of the same audience; it may mean different things to a single tale teller at different times in his life. This seems obvious enough. But despite the assiduous collection of scores and scores of folklore texts, there has been precious little attention paid to what these texts mean.

In the nineteenth century and before, folklore was thought to be a *dead* survival from ages past rather than a *live*, functioning part of the present-day world of man. Even as late as 1931, Ruth Benedict, writing the entry on folklore for the prestigious *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, observed that "folklore has not survived as a living trait in modern civilization" and "thus in a strict sense folklore is a dead trait in the modern world."¹ To be sure, one can find easily enough bona fide evidence of survivals. Consider, for example, the name of the month September, which is our ninth month. It is derived from the Latin word for seven (as October is from eight, November from nine, and December from ten). Reconstructing history from etymology, we can see that if September were the seventh month, then the first month of the year must have been March rather than January, and in fact the onset of spring makes much better sense metaphorically as the appropriate time to signal the birth of a new year. In Europe, the designation of January first as the beginning of the new year is a relatively recent innovation. But the point is that folklore can hardly be limited to survivals. The folklore of social protest and the folklore of

computers demonstrate convincingly that folklore is a living trait in the modern world.

One difficulty impeding the study of meaning of folklore stems from the fact that a goodly portion of folklore is fantasy, collective or collectivized fantasy. I do not refer here to any Jungian sense of a collective unconscious. The evidence available from the *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* shows quite plainly that few if any narrative elements have universal distribution.² Quite the contrary, most narrative traditions have strictly circumscribed areas of distribution. The localization of fantasy is empirically demonstrable. Trolls are found in Scandinavia; leprechauns only in Ireland, *menebune* only in Polynesia.³ The cultural relativity of fantasy is also suggested by the fact that it is only Christians who report seeing visions of the Virgin Mary. Those who argue that a given example of fantasy is universal rarely cite data from aboriginal Australia, Africa, or the Indian peoples of South America. It is true that all peoples have folklore and in that sense folklore could conceivably qualify as a universal. However, the particular folklore possessed by a particular folk varies from culture to culture even though historically related peoples share some folklore in common. When I speak of folklore being collective, I mean that a myth or a folksong is known by more than a single individual. An item of folklore is known by several individuals, usually many individuals, and it is transmitted from person to person, often over the course of generations. Collective folklore differs from individual dreams. Dreams appear to be similar to narratives in part because they are related in words. But a dream may or may not be sufficiently intelligible or interesting to be related by a second party to a third party. Folktales, in contrast, like all folklore, have passed the test of time, and are transmitted again and again. Unlike individual dreams, folktales must appeal to the psyches of many, many individuals if they are to survive.

The fantastic dimensions of folklore have been consistently disregarded by folklorists and members of other disciplines studying folkloristic data. These scholars prefer instead to concentrate upon collection, classification, storage (in archives), comparison, and endless searching for the oldest cognate versions of a particular piece of folklore. The history of folklore scholarship is by and large a series of attempts to dehumanize folklore. I mean dehumanize quite literally. Considering "folklore" without reference to "folk" is commonplace in

folkloristics. Whether one assigns motif or tale type numbers, or attempts to structurally dissect a given folklore text, one can effectively forget about the fact that folklore is used as a means of traditional communication between humans.

The influence of semiotics upon folkloristics has not been altogether salutary. The scholarship of semiotics seems bloated with pompous terminology and littered with competing unintelligible abstract formulations, formulations which seem far removed from any close contact with empirical data. For semiotics, although ostensibly concerned with meaning, tends to emphasize the logical rather than the psychological facets of the data being examined. Semiotic analyses generally treat the composition or structural patterning of a text to the exclusion of any concern for possible psychological meanings of that text. Structuralism perceived as one branch of semiotics should be considered as being essentially a rigorous means of descriptive ethnography. Structural analyses attempt to tell us what an object is, not what the object is for or what it means. To be sure, there is nothing wrong with descriptive ethnography. On the contrary, one needs to know the nature of the object one is studying. It is only that pure structuralism has a tendency to stop after describing in agonizing detail an object's actual or imagined constituent elements and the patterns of interrelationships between those elements. In short, however useful semiotics may be for honing the tools of description and classification in folkloristics, it has yet to prove itself in the study of the meaning of folklore. Thus, for example, Propp's important *Morphology of the Folktale* gives us an unrivaled view of the nature of Indo-European *Märchen*, but Propp's delineation of thirty-one functions (or what I have rechristened motifemes, following Kenneth Pike) does not explain why the fairy tale pattern should exist in the first place or what, if anything, it means.⁴

I believe that one reason why structuralism is sweeping through folkloristics (which habitually maintains a respectful pace of a decade or so behind advances in linguistics theory) is that the shift from diachronic to synchronic methodology posed no serious threat to the folkless study of folklore. At first, practitioners of the historical and comparative methods were adamantly opposed to structuralism, which they felt gave short shrift to historical and comparative dimensions. But in time, it was realized that the same nonpsychological bias could prevail. Instead of plotting the distribution of motifs or quaint cus-

toms on maps—as is done in European atlas work in folkloristics, one could stick the very same “butterflies” on another kind of board and proceed to dissect them. Butterfly collection of antiquarian days had finally advanced to the point of demonstrating that a butterfly was a mediating model consisting primarily of two wings in opposition—if I may somewhat facetiously and unfairly describe the binary penchant of Lévi-Straussians.

Interestingly enough, structuralism has opened up anew the question of the existence of the unconscious, but it has done so in a curiously unproductive way from my point of view. It is true that matters of grammar and syntax are not conscious—in the sense that individuals perfectly well able to speak a language cannot articulate the underlying grammatical or syntactical principles governing their speech acts. But this is hardly the unconscious of the Freudian variety in which materials, often of a taboo nature, are repressed and disguised.

It is my contention that much of the meaning of folkloristic fantasy is unconscious. Indeed, it would have to be unconscious—in the Freudian sense—for folklore to function as it does. Among its functions, folklore provides a socially sanctioned outlet for the expression of what cannot be articulated in the more usual, direct way. It is precisely in jokes, folktales, folksongs, proverbs, children’s games, gestures, etc. that anxieties can be vented. If a person knew exactly what he was doing when he told a joke to his boss or to his spouse (or if the boss or spouse knew what he was doing), the joke would probably cease to be an escape mechanism. Man needs such mechanisms. That is why there will always be folklore, and also incidentally why there is always new folklore being created to take care of new anxieties—I refer, for example, to the folklore of bureaucracy transmitted so effectively by the office-copier machine.⁵

The unconscious nature of so much of folklore makes the study of meaning difficult though not impossible. It is difficult because it is not easy to elicit native testimony about such meanings. Unconscious symbolism is just as hard for informants to articulate as is the grammar of the languages they speak. Moreover, just as there are competing modes of grammatical analysis, so also are there competing schools of symbolism. So if the informant cannot enlighten the folklorist with respect to meaning—either by telling him about it initially or by corroborating an educated guess of the folklorist, how can the meaning of folklore be investigated?

Fortunately, there is patterning and system in folklore, and it is this remarkable consistency which can assist the folklorist interested in meaning. Jakobson and Bogatyrev in 1929 pointed out that the Saussurean distinction between *langue* and *parole* could be applied to folklore.⁶ Accordingly, an individual folkloristic performance or communication act bore the same kind of relationship to the general folkloristic code that an individualistic speech act did to the language as a whole. I believe symbolism works in a similar fashion, so that the symbol employed in any one given folkloristic (con)text may be related to a general system of symbols. This does not mean that I think any one symbol is necessarily universal. In fact, I know of no symbol which is reported from all peoples, just as I know of no myth which has universal distribution. What I am saying is that within a culturally relative system of symbols, the use of a particular symbol may be remarkably consistent. I hasten to add that symbols—as opposed to signs—may carry multiple meanings. (I realize that some semioticians consider symbol a subcategory of sign, but I prefer to treat them separately.)

I intend to illustrate the above by referring to several specific examples of folklore; but before I do so, I should like to mention briefly the crucial device of projection. In psychology, projection refers to the tendency to attribute to another person or to the environment what is actually within oneself. What is attributed is usually some internal impulse or feeling which is painful, unacceptable, or taboo. The ascription of feelings and qualities of one's own to a source in the external world is accomplished without the individual's being consciously aware of the fact. The individual perceives the external object as possessing the taboo tendencies without recognizing their source in himself.⁷ I might mention that Charles S. Peirce was aware of the existence of projection. He wrote, "I think it is probably true that every element of experience is in the first instance applied to an external object. A man who gets up out of the wrong side of the bed, for example, attributes wrongness to almost every object he perceives. This is the way in which he experiences his bad temper."⁸ Despite the triviality of the example, the aptness of the insight remains valid. Of course, Freud said it too and with specific reference to folklore: "As a matter of fact, I believe that a large portion of the mythological conception of the world which reaches far into the most modern religions, is nothing but psychology projected to the outer world."⁹

I should also point out *en passant* that the discipline most concerned

with projection is psychology and yet psychologists rarely think of folklore in connection with projection. Lindzey's *Projective Techniques and Cross-Cultural Research* published in 1961, for example, contains not even a mention of folklore.¹⁰ For psychologists, projective techniques involve the utilization of tests or devices such as Rorschach or T.A.T. (Thematic Apperception Test). As a folklorist, I would argue that such devices are a priori artificial techniques usually imposed upon hapless subjects from outside the cultures of many of the subjects. How many peoples around the world are accustomed to interpreting inkblots? It is a question whether the results of such tests reflect the personalities of the test-takers or the test-makers! Folklore is quite different. The projective materials, if folklore is indeed projective, come from within the culture. It has been created, passed on, and enjoyed for considerable time long before the analyst arrives upon the scene. Folklore as autobiographical ethnography, as a mirror of culture, is a natural projective test—as opposed to the artificial schemata designed by psychologists.

If one admits there is no such thing as a culture-free test, projective or otherwise, one ought in theory to be delighted to have native or folk projective tests, that is, projective materials devised by a people themselves. Consider the New Year's practice found in Finland and elsewhere which calls for boiling lead and pouring bits of it into water. Someone then "reads" the shapes formed by the lead to predict the fortunes of individuals in the coming year. Reading lead shapes is somewhat similar to reading inkblots. By the same token, there are folkloristic analogues to sentence completion, word association, or storytelling psychological tests. For example, there is a popular American party game in which "It" is sent out of the room while supposedly those remaining are engaged in making up a story. "It" is told that he will be summoned shortly and asked to guess the story plot. After "It" leaves, the group members are told that there is no story, but that "It" will make up his own story upon his return. The trick is that to each of "It's" questions, the group will answer only yes or no, according to whether the last orthographic letter in "It's" question is a vowel (plus "y") or a consonant. Thus if "It" asks, "Is it a story about me?" a member of the group would answer yes. The question, "Does it take place on earth?" would require a no response. (In a variant, the rule is 'yes' if the last letter of the last word falls within the first half of the alphabet, no for the last half.) What usually happens in this game

is that the story "reconstructed" by "It" often reveals interesting facets of "It's" own personality. A psychologist would probably say that "It" projects his own anxieties, thoughts, wishes, etc. upon the minimal structuring provided by the mechanical replies of the group.

The above party game and most of the examples of folklore I shall discuss will be familiar ones. This is intentional. Typically, anthropologists offer elaborate exegeses of some esoteric symbolic system which their audience cannot really confirm or reject inasmuch as they are completely dependent upon the data provided by the anthropologist for any knowledge of the culture under examination. It is for this reason that I have chosen examples from American folklore. I assume that most Americans will have personal acquaintance with the data. Let us begin with a jump rope rhyme.¹¹

Fudge, fudge, tell the judge
 Mama's got a newborn baby.
 It ain't no girl, it ain't no boy
 Just a newborn [or 'common', or 'plain ol', or 'ordinary'] baby.
 Wrap it up in tissue paper
 Throw (send) it down the elevator.
 First floor, miss
 Second floor, miss, etc. [until the jumper misses]

What does this rhyme mean? Were we to ask little girls jumping rope to it to give us a full *explication de texte*, what would we elicit? What does "fudge" mean? Here we have a typical piece of concrete data and what would conventional semiotics do with it? Why is there a judge? Is it merely a matter of 'judge' rhyming with 'fudge', or 'fudge' rhyming with 'judge'? Folklore is admirably concise and I am persuaded that whatever is contained in a folkloristic text is meaningful—even if we do not always have full insight into what the meanings may be. What I am unalterably opposed to is the all too commonly vouchsafed platitude that folklore is bound to contain irrational nonsense which has no meaning. Why would individuals bother to remember something and repeat it with such gusto if it had no meaning? It seems clear that if an item remains in tradition, it must have meaning for the carriers of the tradition. *Van Combs, 1968*

We can see that the jump rope rhyme reflects sibling rivalry. A newborn baby is a threat to the older children who may resent all the attention paid to it by their parents. We know that there is often a

wish on the part of older children to dispose of the new baby. Wishful thinking and wish fulfillment are, of course, widely found in folklore.¹² There is more than a hint that Mama has committed a crime in producing a sibling rival. The crime is signalled in the first line insofar as a judge is to be informed (and possibly the punishment for the 'crime' of throwing the baby away is projected to the judge). But why fudge? If one thinks of the color and texture of fudge, *and* is also familiar with infantile sexual theory, one can arrive at a possible explanation. In the days before sex education was taught in elementary school, young children in our culture did not always understand the true nature of childbirth. After having been told by a parent that a baby brother or sister was present in mother's obviously expanding abdomen and that it would soon come out to join the family, the often bewildered child frequently assumed that this new baby would come out of the stomach area the same way the child understood that all materials exited from its own stomach, namely, via the anus. The equation of feces with babies is reported extensively in the psychoanalytic literature, but I doubt that any little girl jumping rope would offer such an interpretation of the possible meaning of 'fudge.' Yet there is additional evidence, for cultural symbols rarely occur in unique single texts. Another children's rhyme, though not one used for jumping rope, goes as follows:

Milk, milk, lemonade
 Around the corner, fudge is made.

Gestures accompanying this rhyme point in turn to several areas of female anatomy (breasts, vulva, and anus). However distasteful or crude one may find the rhyme, one cannot very well deny the explicit equation of fudge and feces. Returning to our original jump rope rhyme, we can now better understand the action taken. Wrap it up in tissue (toilet) paper, throw it down the elevator. The new baby is 'giftwrapped to go,' namely, to be flushed down the toilet-elevator. Notice also that the more skillful the jumper, the greater the number of floors or distance the baby is sent away, thereby providing a most effective means of "passing" judgment on or "wasting" a sibling rival.

It should not be necessary to say that sibling rivalry is a normal feature of family life. However, since parents often interfere with or restrict overt acts of violence directed by one child towards another, it

is clear that some outlet is necessary for the expression of the hostility which is bound to occur. Rhymes against babies are just as healthy as are rhymes against parents, e.g., Step on a crack (line); break your mother's (father's) back (spine). In terms of projection, it would be interesting to know whether individual children intentionally stepped on sidewalk cracks or intentionally avoided doing so, and then correlating such behavior with the overall personalities of such children and their stated attitudes towards each parent.

Children's projections of parents occur more commonly in narrative form than in rhymes. Fairy tales, for instance, are essentially stories about children and their relationships to siblings and parents. The "step" relationship is a convenient device to allow full-fledged hatred. A girl can, with clear conscience, hate wicked stepsisters, or a wicked stepmother. Fairy tales with girl protagonists may include wicked sibling rivals as well as a wicked mother in the form of a stepmother or witch. Fairy tales with boy heroes may include the same kind of wicked brothers plus a male antagonist in the form of a monster (e.g., dragon) or a giant. Let me select one fairy tale found primarily in England and the United States to illustrate the nature of symbolic projection. Once upon a time, a boy named Jack lived *alone with his mother!* That very opening should give pause to anyone with a psychological bias. In boy-centered fairy tales, the father is often portrayed as missing or dead—which allows the boy to be "alone with his mother." (In girl-centered fairy tales, the mother is similarly missing or deceased, which allows the girl to be alone with her father.) As most will remember, Jack trades his milk-giving cow to an old man who gives him some beans in exchange. Jack's mother insists, at the sight of the beans, that he throw them out of the window. (I shall refrain from commenting upon each and every symbol.) The next day, a huge beanstalk is discovered. Jack's mother begs him not to ascend, but he disobeys. Up in the beanstalk world, there is a cannibalistic giant who often in some vague way is linked with Jack's father—e.g., the giant allegedly stole Jack's father's treasures. Fortunately, someone up there helps Jack. It is Mrs. Giant. Did it ever strike you as somewhat peculiar that Mrs. Giant would help a total stranger, a young boy, taking sides against her own husband? (In this Oedipal projection, the upper world is an extension of the lower one.) In this connection, it may be worth recalling where Mrs. Giant hides Jack—it is in her oven. (The symbolism of ovens in European folklore

generally is quite consistent.¹³) Consider, for example, the initial morpheme of the verb *fornicate* and in this context, note the poetic justice in the best known version of tale type 327A,¹⁴ Hansel and Gretel, according to which Gretel tricks the witch into being burned to death in her own oven. In any event, the stupid old giant fails to see Jack hiding in his wife's oven. Finally, Jack rushes down the stalk with the giant in close pursuit. As it happens, down at the bottom of the stalk waiting with a hatchet in her hand is Jack's mother. Taking the hatchet, Jack cuts down the stalk, an act which causes the death of the giant. The story ends with Jack living happily ever after *with his mother*.¹⁵

Surely the maternal aid in both the upper and lower worlds can be understood as a projection of the young boy's point of view in terms of an Oedipal struggle against the villainous giant. From Jack and the Beanstalk, I should like to turn to another example of projection. This example is not folklore, but it is dependent upon folklore and folkloristic associations. One reason for using the example is to show that projection is such an important device that it may utilize even historical events rather than relying solely upon the traditional forms found in folklore proper.

The example of projection I have in mind is the first lunar landing. I must insist that nothing of what I am about to present should be understood as in any way demeaning the very real and splendid achievement of landing on the moon. My sole purpose is to try to demonstrate how large a part folkloristic projection plays in all our lives—whether we are aware of it or not.

First of all, there is the name of the lunar mission: Apollo. I should stress here that it is precisely in the selection of names and symbols that those of us interested in psychoanalytic semiotics are afforded prime data. It might well be erroneous to interpret a detail which was an integral part of the scientific apparatus, but the choice of the name Apollo is not such a detail. In theory, the mission might have had any one of a hundred names. The name Apollo is a conscious or perhaps unconscious invocation of traditional mythology. And in mythology round the world, we find the most pressing problems of earthly bodies projected onto heavenly bodies. In this light, constellations and their names in different cultures may appropriately be studied as native projective Rorschach gestalts. As for planet names in our own culture, it is interesting that earth falls between Venus and Mars, love and

war, perhaps even life and death. Has earth separated god and goddess lovers just as in the widely diffused Oedipal sky-father/earth-mother myth (motif A625, World parents; sky-father and earth-mother)¹⁶ in which a culture hero forcibly pushes the sky back out of the connubial embrace with the earth in order to provide living space for man?

To return to the lunar mission, who is Apollo and what, if any, is his relationship to the moon? Apollo the sun is the brother of Diana the moon. Thus mythologically speaking we have a brother trying to reach or land on his sister. And what are the semantic associations of Diana? One of the most obvious is virginity. Diana is traditionally associated with chastity.

Once the projective metaphor has been pointed out, it is easy enough to see its consistency. Among the principal problems to be overcome in the Apollo missions was gaining enough power to escape the gravitational pull of the earth. The standard term for this power was "thrust." Keeping in mind that the mythological associations of earth include 'mother,' we have the astronauts trying to get up enough thrust to escape the gravitational pull of mother earth. (I shall not dwell on the symbolism of rockets other than to recall that "to have a rocket in my pocket" can be a euphemistic phrase for masturbation (cf. "pocket pool").)

I have spoken of the name of the mission, but what were the names of the three astronauts and who was the first man on the moon? Neil Armstrong. Why was Armstrong the first? Was it mere alphabetical order? No, it was not because in that event, Aldrin would have been first, not Armstrong, or Collins. Could it have been the association of Jack Armstrong, the all-American boy, hero of radio adventure serials of several decades past? And could it have been the very name Armstrong was deemed appropriate because it literally refers to a strong body extremity? A well placed television camera allowed all other earthlings to voyeuristically watch as Armstrong's leg emerged from the capsule and stepped upon the surface of the moon. Certainly it made symbolic sense for the name of the first man to stand on the moon to begin with the first letter of our alphabet. Who can remember the names of any of the men who made the second lunar landing? The point is that the moon could only be violated once. No one cares who the other violators were. It is, after all, only on a maiden voyage that a bottle of champagne is broken over a ship's hull. Once on the moon,

the astronauts put up an American flag, a common symbolic ritual act for claiming virgin land for one's mother country (or fatherland). We may have here the same projection which led earlier generations of American explorers into what Henry Nash Smith has so aptly termed the "Virgin Land."¹⁷ What did the astronauts bring back as souvenirs of their conquest? Pieces of rock. In this context, the whole mission involved going out to get a piece of virgin moon to show off to one's peers back home—a super masculinity dream come true! Americans surely wanted to get to the moon before the Russians did. The fantasy I have just delineated is not a universal one—in some cultures the moon is considered masculine rather than feminine. But in American culture, the moon is definitely feminine. It even has maternal associations of a cow jumping over it or being made of green cheese. The image of a 'man in the moon' may even suggest an idealized intrauterine one. The maternal associations of the moon hint at an Oedipal projection and in English, the choice of the name Apollo at least permits the possibility of a homonymic pun on sun/son. So the sun/son who leaves mother earth to be the first to violate the virgin moon (sister, mother) may well be related to American fantasy—regardless of the purely scientific features of the mission.

The lunar mission brings to mind the interweaving of folklore and history. The point is that historical events and personages may serve as anchors for flights of projective fantasy. I believe many historians seriously err in dismissing or ignoring elements which they label as spurious or apocryphal. Folklore, as an item of folk speech—think of the phrase "that's (just) folklore"—means error, that is, something to be carefully weeded out of otherwise accurate historical source material. As a folklorist, I have learned to respect what the folk say and think about history regardless of the historicity of their words and thoughts. What happened is important, but no less important is what people think happened or what people wish had happened. Folk history may tell us more about folk than about history, but surely that is worth knowing. The folk history of George Washington, for example, includes his famous confrontation with his father over the chopping down, not of a beanstalk, but of a cherry tree. Actually, George, a son in that anecdote, is more celebrated for his paternal role. Why is it, for instance, that George is reputed to have slept in so many beds on the east coast of the United States. Signs proclaim that George Washington *slept* here, not ate, drank, or visited here. Of course, if he is

considered to be the *father* of our country then the verb choice is apt—just like the particular style of monuments *erected* to honor him.¹⁸

But can there be any validity to the projections discussed thus far? I can anticipate the most obvious objection. The reader may have watched the lunar landing himself and he did not think of any associations of Apollo-Diana, brother-sister incest, etc. He did not think of the lunar landing as a violation of the moon. Any tension he may have felt was strictly due to his genuine concern for the safety of the astronauts. But sometimes the tension was excessive. Some individuals refused to believe that the lunar landing actually occurred. Rather, they assumed that the whole event was simply a fictionalized television program. Several individuals suffered breakdowns evidently precipitated by the successful lunar landing.¹⁹ Here I must reiterate the important point that folkloristic projection is often, though not always, unconscious. Rarely is the nature of the projection consciously recognized. I am always amused by would-be critics of the Oedipal reading of the Oedipus story when they claim that the Freudian interpretation is invalid because Oedipus didn't *know* that he was killing his father and marrying his mother. Of course, he didn't know consciously. That is precisely the point. It is the bringing of the unconscious into the purview of the conscious which is difficult and painful for the psyche. Projection is one of a number of psychological defense mechanisms which provides an unconscious screen or arena for the display of the causes of anxiety and it is for this reason that folkloristic projections are so indispensable as tools in the human arsenal for mental health.

The unconscious nature of symbols and projections does present a serious challenge to those folklorists who are seeking meaning in folklore. But materials which have entered the unconscious can also be brought out of the unconscious. One characteristic which is helpful in the study of folkloristic projections is the play upon 'literal versus metaphorical.' Sometimes seeing projections as literalizations of metaphors or, if one prefers, as metaphorical transformations of literal statements can greatly aid in deciphering the unconscious content of folklore. Let me illustrate this by briefly considering an important detail of the American wedding ritual. One of the high points of the ritual involves the bride's casting her floral bouquet to the females in attendance. What is the meaning of this act? I wish to reiterate my firm conviction that semiotics must ultimately be concerned with

meaning. One can analyze the structure of American weddings and note the binary oppositions between bride and groom, married and unmarried, etc., but unless semiotics can take account of the symbolic, projective aspects of ritual, it can never be more than a purely descriptive technique as opposed to an explanatory one. The throwing of the bridal bouquet involves homeopathic magic and therefore metaphors or, if one prefers, as metaphorical transformations of literal just as contagious magic is analogous to simile. Most poetic tropes have structural analogues in types of magic. Synecdoche, for example, corresponds to the principle of *pars pro toto* in magic practice. In terms of the literalization of metaphor, the bride is through the ritual act of throwing away her floral bouquet signifying her willingness to be, or intention of being, deflowered. Interestingly enough, the flowers, once separated from the bride, furnish an example of contagious magic inasmuch as the lucky girl who catches the bouquet is said to be the next to marry.

I might mention several other examples of the literalization of metaphor in American folklore. There is an American superstition which states that if one wants to ensure that one's newborn baby will rise in the world, one should carry it up a flight of stairs shortly after birth. The metaphorical notion of rising in the world is thus literally carried out. Literalization of metaphor can also occur in folktales. I think, for instance of tale type 311, Rescue by the Sister, in which there is a forbidden chamber. The heroine, as one may remember, opens the interdicted door whereupon an egg or key becomes bloody. The symbolism of telltale blood marking an egg or key after opening a forbidden door seems to be a projection of defloration. What is also of interest is the sight that the heroine sees in the forbidden chamber. Commonly she finds the decapitated bodies of her older sisters. The literalization of metaphor is, if I am correct, exemplified by the vivid depiction of girls who have quite literally lost their maiden heads!

An even better example of the literalization of metaphor in folkloristic projections may be found in yet another genre, namely nursery rhymes. "There was an old woman who lived in a shoe; she had so many children she didn't know what to do." Now what possible connection could there be between a woman living in a shoe and having a superabundance of children? Upon reflection, we may recall that there is a traditional connection between shoes and marriage. Not only does Cinderella find her prince charming through the perfect fit

between her foot and a glass slipper, but in American culture, we continue to tie old shoes on the bumpers of cars carrying newlyweds off on their honeymoon. With respect to the Cinderella story (tale type 510A), it might be observed that very few versions have the shoe made of glass. Cox in her 1892 study of 345 versions of Cinderella found only six instances of glass slippers. However, the occurrence of the glass slipper in the celebrated Perrault version of Cinderella may explain the widespread popularity of this element. I shall refrain from commenting on the theory that the slipper in question was not really made of glass but was rather a mistranslation of the French word "vair" which was a kind of fur,²⁰ a theory which strongly suggests that interpretations of folklore can involve almost as much symbolic projection as the folklore itself. The mystery of the association of shoes with marriage and children is partly solved by another version of the Mother Goose rhyme reported from the Ozarks of the 1890s. "There was another old woman who lived in a shoe. She didn't have any children; she knew what to do." The consistency of the symbolism should be apparent. In nursery rhymes, in fairy tales, in post-wedding customs, the same symbolic equation is found. This supports the idea that symbol patterns are culturewide. One could easily cite additional illustrations, e.g., Cock a doodle doo; My dame has lost her shoe [a real challenge for transplant surgeons]; Her master's lost his fiddling stick. They don't know what to do."²¹ So it may be that participants in a wedding cannot articulate any rationale for the custom of tying shoes to the car bumper, but that does not mean that the custom is a "meaningless" survival. The marriage car carries off the shoe trophies just as the groom will later carry his bride across the threshold of their dwelling, the latter custom being perhaps a metaphor for the successful initiation of male-dominated sexual intercourse.

Now I fear I may perhaps have done a serious disservice to my thesis by having utilized so many examples of sexual symbolism. Some may think that I have badly misconstrued the term *semiotics* as being the scientific study of the "seamy." I must stress that projection in folklore is not limited to sexuality. Any anxiety-producing topic can find expression in projective form. For example, there is projection in the modern urban legend in which a family is obliged to take its old grandmother along on a vacation trip. In a remote area, grandmother dies and the family is forced to curtail its vacation. Strapping the body

to the roof of the Volkswagen, the family starts for home. En route they stop for lunch during which time the car plus grandmother's corpse is stolen. Sometimes the absence of the body causes delay in probating grandmother's will. I have argued that this legend reflects American attitudes towards the older generation and towards death. In terms of wishful thinking, there is the wish that grandmother should die and that someone else should dispose of the body. In terms of the literalization of metaphor, grandmother is "taken for a ride," if I may be permitted to use the appropriate gangster idiom. The normally unutterable mercenary interest in grandmother's demise also finds expression in the concern about the delay in probate.

Similarly there is projection in the standard legend of the medical school prank in which a group of medical students crossing a toll bridge leave a cadaver's arm holding the coin in the surprised and shocked grasp of the tollbooth attendant. Medical students have anxiety—at least initially—about handling cadavers and probably also about paying their way through life at the expense of the health of their patients. After all, the families of patients are charged for operations whether the operations are successful or not. Doctors have to learn to be dispassionate objective practitioners who are able to leave their patients' medical problems, e.g., anatomical parts such as an arm, behind them even as these problems literally hold the lucrative financial rewards of medical practice. Notice that in this projection, the fear and shock of taking money from a dead man's hand is displaced from the medical students to the outside world, the tollbooth attendant.²²

Racism is another anxiety-producing problem which is expressed in folkloristic form. Let us briefly consider the folksong "John Henry." A popular folksong, this ballad tells the sad story of a black steel-driver who wages a valiant struggle against the steam drill. He wins the battle, but the victory is Pyrrhic for in the end John Henry dies. I have had white, middle-class school teachers tell me they use this folksong in the classroom as an example of Afro-American folklore. They like the ballad's depiction of the increasingly important issue of man versus machine. This is all well and good, but as a projection, John Henry is little more than the white stereotype of what black men should be. John Henry is strong, doggedly loyal to the white boss, and he dies doing the white man's work. He is, in short, a projection of the ideal "good nigger." He even dies with his hammer in his

hand—no threat there to the white womanhood of the south. The ballad of John Henry is thus more part of white folklore about blacks than Afro-American folklore, and its continued use in schools promoted the image of the strong, docile, Uncle Tom figure of the black male so ardently desired by whites.

The unconscious projective aspects of folklore make its use all the more insidious and perhaps dangerous inasmuch as few individuals are aware of the semiotic implications of the projection. Racism is nonetheless virulent for its being unconscious. Many whites may not see the racism in an advertisement for "flesh-colored bandaids" but it is there all the same. A terse bit of Afro-American folklore conveys a unique indictment of the use of white folklore in classrooms containing black students. There's the young black girl who asks a question of the mirror on the wall. "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest one of all?" and the mirror answers, "Snow White, you black bitch, and don't you forget it!" In an educational system and society where the values come from white folklore, there is not much potential for a positive self-image for black students. Americans inherited from Europe an entire semiotic of color in which black was evil and white was good. Even a lie, if it's white, is all right. "Black is beautiful" is a conscious attempt by the black community to fight the semantic set of countless words (blackmail, blackguard, blackball, black list, etc.) which assert the contrary.²³

Racist projections are also found in literature and I do not want to give the impression that projections are limited to folkloristic form. Let me cite just one illustration from children's literature. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* is a popular children's book, which was made into a motion picture. The cover blurb calls it "an uproarious morality tale by the world-renowned storyteller, Roald Dahl." And it is a highly moral story, poking fun as it does at a gluttonous eater, a spoiled little rich girl, a fanatic gum chewer, and a television addict. But as some readers may recall, there is a chocolate factory run by Willy Wonka. Who is it that does all the work at the factory? The work is done by the Oompa-Loompas. Who are the Oompa-Loompas? They are pygmies "imported direct from Africa." "Their skin is almost black" and Willy Wonka "shipped them all over here, every man, woman and child in the Oompa-Loompa tribe. It was easy." He "smuggled them over in large packing cases with holes in them, and they all got here safely." "They love dancing and music."²⁴ According to Willy Wonka,

the Oompa-Loompas came willingly because they were told they could have all they wanted to eat (at the company store)! It is hard to know whether this white projection of contented 'lumps' of black slave labor is conscious or unconscious on the author's part, but its potential impact upon a generation of children (and parents) in terms of continuing a stereotype is devastating. Curiously, the title of the book (and the name of the little boy hero) revolves around the name Charlie, the standard slang term in Afro-American folklore for the 'white man.'

Projections are to be found in all types of literature including comics, television, and motion pictures. My plea for psychoanalytic semiotics is based primarily upon folklore only because I am most familiar with folkloristic data. It is equally imperative that popular culture be understood as projective materials. One thinks of the generic "Western" with its rugged individual hero who often has to take the law into his own hands, vigilante-style, in order to prevail over the "bad guys" and to establish law and order, thereby protecting property rights. Similarly, we might look at Star Trek, which relates the adventures of an eternally floating bastion of American values in the context of a popular science fiction television program series. Typically the space ship makes an *uninvited* visit to some alien culture which somehow threatens the existence or safety of the ship (or the ship is itself invaded by the alien culture). Often the progress of the space ship is imperiled or stopped. Its leader heroes, of obvious Anglo-Saxon ancestry (Kirk, Spock, Scotty, McCoy), assisted by various assorted ethnic underlings who obey rather than give orders, take whatever action they deem necessary to *free* the ship. Since the ship's name is Enterprise, we have an all too thinly disguised projection of what Americans will do in the name of free enterprise. And what does the crew of the Enterprise do? The usual solution consists of converting or destroying the alien cultures. Only after such justifiable homicide can the United Starship (= U.S.) Enterprise return to its set course—in accordance with its 'manifest destiny.'²⁵ It is not hard to see how the Western-vigilante and Star Trek projections could lead to the American officer in Viet Nam who explained in all seriousness that "It was necessary to destroy the village in order to save it."

Projection can involve placement in the far distant past or the far distant future. This is why one can study projection in myth, the far distant past, or projection in science fiction, the far distant future.

The plots and the dramatis personae are strikingly similar in both myth and science fiction. In sum, it is the projection which is crucial, not so much the time and place or local coloring. It is the removal from reality to fantasy which allows the human spirit free rein to ~~portray~~ its spiritual struggles and play out its moments of anguish. Yet sometimes, even fantasy does not afford sufficient disguise for such activities, not without recourse to what I would call projective inversion.

Most of the projections discussed thus far have been more or less direct translations of reality into fantasy. The code of symbols permits healthful rewriting of a problem on earth into a disguised arena where it may be happily resolved. So the lunar landing might be interpreted as an extended metaphor for the American male's quest to break the silver (umbilical) cord or maternal apron strings in order to seek a virgin bride. But there are some human problems which evidently require more elaborate disguise.

One of the finest examples of projective inversion in folklore is the one first analyzed by Otto Rank in his brilliant monograph, The Myth of the Birth of the Hero, first published in 1909. In this classic study, Rank attempts to explain why the Indo-European hero should so often be born of a virgin mother and why he should be abandoned to die immediately upon being born. According to Rank, it is an Oedipal plot from the son's point of view. A virgin mother represents a complete repudiation of the father and especially his normal necessary role in procreation.²⁶ In Oedipal theory, it is supposedly the son who would like to get rid of his father (which would thereby reserve his mother for his exclusive use) but a narrative in which a son deposed or disposed of his father would produce considerable guilt. Thus, according to Rank, the child's wish to get rid of the father is neatly transposed in the myth to the father's getting rid of the child. Rank called this projection, but I would call it projective inversion. The son's wishful thinking is projected in inverted form so that the father does everything he can to kill the son. One obvious advantage of such projective inversion is the avoidance of guilt. The son need not feel guilt for wanting to get rid of his father inasmuch as the traditional fantasy projects the 'crime' and the presumed responsibility for the crime upon the victim. Projective inversion permits one to blame the victim. Rather than feeling guilt, the son-hero can justifiably take Oedipal revenge and kill the villainous father figure.

In the psychological literature, it seems that both kinds of projection, that is, direct translation from inner thoughts to outward manifestation, as well as what I am calling projective inversion, fall under the same general rubric of projection. Freud, for example, in his 1911 paper, "Psycho-Analytic Notes upon an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia," remarks how the "proposition 'I hate him' becomes transformed by *projection* into another one: 'He *hates* (persecutes) me, which will justify me in hating him'."²⁷ I would call the transposition of 'I hate him' into 'He hates me' an example of projective inversion. Moreover, in terms of a possible generative grammar of folktales, one could imagine predictable rewrite rules governing when a taboo-laden wish would be transformed—active to passive, subject to object. Instead of the hero or heroine doing something to a parent surrogate or sibling, the rival does that very thing to the hero or heroine. Boys wishing to eliminate father figures can be rewritten as kings-fathers attempting to eliminate sons. Girls wishing to eliminate mother figures can be rewritten as queens-stepmothers attempting to eliminate daughters.

Insightful as Rank was with respect to the Oedipal features of the standard Indo-European hero pattern, he seems to have missed the analogous projective inversion in heroine (Electra) narratives. Rank says, for example, "The father who refuses to give his daughter to any of her suitors, or who attaches to the winning of the daughter certain conditions difficult of fulfillment, does this because he really begrudges her to all others, for when all is told he wishes to possess her himself. He locks her up in some inaccessible spot, so as to safeguard her virginity."²⁸ It is not at all clear why Rank is willing to accept the literalness of a father's concupiscence for his daughter but not his presumed hatred of his newborn son.

If we examine a typical Electral folktale, e.g., tale type 706, The Maiden Without Hands, we find projective inversion. The typical girl's wish to eliminate her mother and marry her father is expressed in projective form. The mother dies (not through any fault of the girl) and the father wants to marry someone just like the dead mother. After some search, he decides to marry his own daughter. In the folktale, the heroine cuts her hands off because she will not marry her father. Why should the heroine take this drastic action? Those who would claim that the father's incestuous wish to marry his daughter is a literal reflection of reality ought to offer some explanation for the

daughter's act of cutting her hands off. In part, it might be a macabre literalization of a metaphor insofar as the father has asked for his daughter's hand in marriage. But one difficulty with this literal approach is: why should the daughter be punished for the father's crime? On the other hand, if we assume this might be an instance of projective inversion, then the father's wish for the daughter is in fact an expression of the daughter's unconscious wish for the father. This would explain why it is the daughter, not the father, who is punished. Hands are commonly used in initiating masturbatory fantasy and therefore they might provide appropriate 'sinning' objects to be punished.

The rationale for the punishment of the girl is also relevant to the fate of Cordelia in Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Critics have been troubled by Cordelia's death. In the majority of the literary versions of the plot, Cordelia takes her own life. *King Lear* is derived ultimately from "Love Like Salt" (tale type 923) which in turn is an abridged version of a major form of the Cinderella cycle, namely tale type, 510B, The Dress of Gold, of Silver, and of Stars (Cap o' Rushes). As in tale type 706, The Maiden Without Hands, an apparently lecherous father wants to marry his daughter. But if this father-daughter incest is a projective inversion of a daughter's sexual desire for her father, then the 'original' sin is Cordelia's and Lear truly is "a man more sinn'd against than sinning." From this perspective, Cordelia's triumph over her dead mother and her two sibling rivals for the final exclusive attention of her father is a punishable offense. Incidentally, the adaptation of this projective inversion (tale type 510B) by Shakespeare means that *King Lear* is a girl's fairy tale told from the father's point of view.

In some versions of tale type 706, the maiden's hands are miraculously restored, sometimes through the intervention of the Virgin Mary herself. In the present context, it is worth remarking that the Virgin Mary could be construed as a religious projection of a young girl who is impregnated by a heavenly father. Christian mythology, of course, has an Oedipal projection to go along with the Electra projection. A hero who is born of a virgin mother may represent the Oedipal ideal. As Rank observed, a virgin mother means that one's father did not succeed in gaining sexual access to one's mother. Moreover, the doctrine of consubstantiation claims the son and the father are one, the begotten is the begetter. Through this projection, one is doubly protected: one's mother is virgin, and one is in some sense

interchangeable with one's father. According to this argument, Christian mythology is an ideal projection for European family structure, containing as it does both Oedipal and Electral components. For those who are skeptical about viewing mythological beings as projections of human beings, I might mention that it is not only in Christianity that one finds explicit references to god the father, among other kinship terminological parallels. The ruling god of the Roman pantheon was *Jupiter* whose name includes "piter," surely cognate with one of the most widespread Indo-European roots, namely the one for father, including Sanskrit "pitar-" and Latin "pater."²⁹

Let me give an additional example of projective inversion from modern American legend. The gist of the legend is a report that Negro youths have castrated a young white boy in a public bathroom. Like all legends, it is told as true, and in fact several years ago (1969) it was reported repeatedly by telephone to various police stations in San Francisco. The legend's sudden popularity was almost certainly related to the discussion of the bussing of school children in San Francisco to achieve desegregation. Now historically one may ask which race has castrated which race? It is surely whites who castrated blacks as punishment for actual or imagined crimes. But in this exemplar of urban folklore, through projective inversion, the whites have metamorphosed their own fears of the stereotyped superphallic Negro male into a form where their victim becomes the aggressor. The wish to castrate black males is projected to those males who are depicted as castrating a white boy. This makes it possible to blame the black victim for the crime the white would like to commit. Just as in the myth of the birth of the hero, the wisher can through projective inversion punish in fantasy not himself but the victim of his aggression. It is the evil parent (king, giant) who is guilty, not the child. It is the black who is guilty, not the white.

It was no mere coincidence that the increased circulation of the legend in the San Francisco Bay Area occurred at the same time bussing was being discussed. This raises, once again, the question of the interrelationship of historical event to folkloristic projective fantasy. Some scholars tend to feel that historical and psychological approaches are mutually exclusive, but I believe this to be a serious error. Frequently a historical event may rekindle an old projection or inspire a new one. It has been suggested, for example, that the elephant joke cycle of the early 1960s might be related to the rise of the Civil Rights movement of the same period. Elephants, like blacks, are associated

by whites with African origins. In the joke cycle, elephants were typically described in terms of color "Do you know why elephants are gray? So you can tell them from bluebirds" and in terms of making phallic leaps down from trees upon unsuspecting victims "Why do elephants climb trees? To rape squirrels." The Civil Rights movement aroused longstanding fears among whites that the superphallic militant Negro male might assert himself with respect to former white oppressors. As mentioned in the analysis of the previous legend, castration, symbolic or literal, is one solution. How do you keep an elephant from charging? Take away his credit card. How do you keep an elephant from stampeding? Cut his 'tam peter off.³⁰

In the same way, I believe it is possible to show historical roots for other recent American folkloristic phenomena. For example, the spate of "dead baby" jokes in the early 1970s provides a challenging instance. What's red and hangs from the ceiling? A baby on a meathook. What's red and sits in the corner? A baby chewing on a razor blade. It is never easy to make sense of nonsense, but that does not mean that nonsense is meaningless. These jokes told by post-pubertal adolescents may reflect simple sibling rivalry, but that would not explain why this particular cycle became so popular in the early 1970s. Sibling rivalry, after all, has presumably always existed. I would hazard a guess that new techniques of contraception (including the pill) and especially the liberalized laws governing abortion have generated more discussion (and guilt) concerning the "murder" of babies. Contraception and abortion measures may have encouraged a higher incidence of sexual activity among teenagers and this might also account for the expression of literally murderous wishes that babies be eliminated.

Perhaps a more graphic example of the connection between historical events and folkloristic fantasy is "streaking." Streaking consists of one or more persons running naked through a public place. Is it only coincidence that it became a national phenomenon during the Watergate political scandal of the 1970s? I would argue that streaking is a projective protest against the Watergate coverup. Whatever individualistic exhibitionistic impulses streaking may have fulfilled, it also served to emphasize the demand that Watergate details be uncovered or disclosed publicly. Accordingly, it might be possible to say that streaking is in part a ritual literalization of a metaphor. It is certainly interesting that once the Watergate coverup was stripped away, streaking stopped.

Whether or not a particular joke cycle, legend, or public ritual de-

rives from a historical impetus is not crucial for the present argument. The issue is whether or not there is a projective aspect to the collectivized forms of fantasy we call folklore. If there is such an aspect, then I believe there are important implications for semiotics which, as I have noted previously, tends to concentrate upon rules, formulas, binary paradigms, and the like. If one examines the gamut of semiotic studies which have been made thus far, one can see that the projective aspect has been almost totally ignored. For example, one of the finest examples, in my opinion, of semiotic analysis is Paul Bouissac's insightful descriptions of various circus acts. In his essay "Poetics in the Lion's Den: The Circus Act as a Text," Bouissac analyzes the constituent elements of a lion act performance. He even describes some of the many standard tricks as metaphorical, e.g., the lion walks in the center of the ring to be ridden by the man, or the lion straddles two stools allowing the man to bend under him and carry the lion on his shoulders. Bouissac's analysis is fine as far as it goes.³¹ My point again is that semiotics seems to stop with description, classification, and typology whereas description, classification, and typology ought to be beginnings not ends. Circus acts, like zoological gardens, involve man's attitude towards animals and towards animality—including human animality. Part of the thrill and pleasure in circus and zoo is the implicit struggle of man versus animal. The animals are caged and kept in check, just as man's own animal nature is supposed to be. Yet there is always the possibility, the danger, or the risk, one could call it, that the animal will escape the bonds of man or, to put it metaphorically, that emotion and passion will escape the bonds of reason.³² One of the techniques used to keep the animal or animality in check, consists of requiring the animal, in this case, a lion, to perform human acts. In terms of projective inversion, one is tempted to suggest that although men would like to yield to "animal" desires and to perform animal acts, this is not a guilt-free wish. Hence, through inversion, it is pretended that animals would like to be like humans. The more human the behavior performed by the animal, the more complete the projective inversion. The inversion is hinted at by such tricks in which the animal is first ridden by the man and then later is carried by the man. The latter trick would appear to reverse the normal roles of man and beast. Whether or not my particular analysis of a lion's act in terms of projection is valid, the issue, it seems to me, is the necessity of adding a consideration of projection to conventional semiotic analysis.

In my view, psychoanalytic semiotics could be applied to a wide variety of phenomena, folkloristic and otherwise. One could, for example, imagine such a study of the bullfight. But besides studying the structure of the bullring or the social hierarchy of the various participants, one could also perceive the matador versus the bull as a projection. It is not just man versus animal, culture versus nature, but a projection of traditional male rivalry in Spanish (and other Mediterranean) cultures. In a homosexual battle of masculinity, it is critical just who penetrates whom. If the matador penetrates the bull properly, then the bull becomes feminized (as symbolized by having one or more of his extremities (tail, hoofs) cut off as trophies.)³³ As a projective drama, the bullfight is a ritualized cognate of ordinary verbal dueling as found among adolescent youths. In fact, we have similar ritual behavior in American culture.

One of the most common gestures, obscene or nonobscene, in the United States consists of giving a rival or enemy the "digitus impudicus" better known in folk parlance as "the finger." There are endless variations in style and technique to "flipping the bird," as it is termed in California, but the overall impact of the insult is the same. Yet I suspect that relatively few Americans have ever thought about precisely what the gesture signifies. It is enough to know that to be the addressee of such a gesture constitutes sufficient grounds to reply in kind or to engage in a physical fight. A whole host of lesser public phallic gestures share a similar import—I refer to sticking out one's tongue or thumbing one's nose, often termed the Shanghai gesture.³⁴ The words which, as often as not, accompany the gesture make the meaning fairly clear, e.g., fuck you, screw you, up yours, etc. Strangely enough, even professional students of obscenity appear to have missed the underlying semiotic significance of this gesture cum locution. Since the famous four-letter word refers to a pleasurable act, Sagarin in *The Anatomy of Dirty Words*, argues that to tell someone "go fuck yourself" as an insulting order is absurd. He quotes Albert Ellis to the effect that it would be more appropriate to give the command "go unfuck yourself."³⁵ What Sagarin and Ellis seem not to understand is that the basic gesture signifies that the addressee is a passive homosexual. To be the recipient of the phallic finger is to assume the 'female' position or role. The idiom "to put someone down" reflects the winner's stance while "to get the shaft" reflects the loser's. When an opponent is urged to carry out the act all by himself, passive homosexuality is coupled with implied imaginary masturbatory be-

havior. I might also mention that the present analysis of this extremely common gesture would explain why the word "ass" can refer both to a woman's genitals (as in "a piece of ass") and to the buttocks area—of a male (as in "I'm going to kick your ass").

For those who think that such types of symbolic phallic fighting are unusual, I would call their attention to the existence of comparable ritual phenomena in many other cultures. In the cockfight, a Balinese version of which was so admirably analyzed by Geertz, handlers attached spurs consisting of "razor sharp, pointed steel swords, four or five inches long" to the legs of their cocks with the hope of annihilating the cocks of their opponents.³⁶ From the point of view of symbolic projection, the cockfight is isomorphic with kite-fighting in which men attach broken glass to their kite strings and then once the kites are aloft, the men maneuver so as to sever the kites of their rivals.

The possibility of identifying projective isomorphisms in folkloristic fantasies opens up a new dimension in the study of folklore. Folkloristic phenomena which may be historically unrelated may nevertheless share a common projective structure and function. For example, I earlier alluded to George Washington as our founding father. Why do we Americans have founding fathers and no founding mothers? In the various recountings of the "birth" of our nation, we invariably find references to forefathers and founding fathers. This reflection of male chauvinism goes back to Old World folkloristic projections, which not only consistently deny women's role in procreation, but in fact insist upon depicting men as fulfilling the role singlehandedly.

In a "man's world," women themselves are defined in terms of men. Before marriage, a girl is in theory a "virgin," a term evidently derived from the Latin word for man (*vir*).³⁷ If to be married, a woman gives up her maiden name which is, of course, her *father's* name, and exchanges it for her husband's name. At her wedding, she is pronounced "wife" in the phrase "man and wife." Wife is a term like woman which is defined in relationship to man, e.g., with man. (It is theoretically possible for the pronouncement to have been "man and woman" or even "woman and husband.") The linguistic derivation of "woman" from "man" is also literally expressed in mythic projective form as in the creation of Eve from Adam's rib. But the irony is that even though woman may derive from man, man in fantasy tries to become a womb-man, that is, a man with a womb. In an Old Testament setting

where the most famous bosom belongs to Abraham, it is no surprise to learn of Noah's construction of a womb-like ark which floats in a flood for approximately nine months. Similar examples abound in classical mythology. One might mention the sowing of dragon's teeth to produce all-male offspring, or the marvelous creation of Athene from the brow of Zeus, making her truly a literal brainchild of the male. The bolstering of male egos via folkloristic projections continues in modern America. A rotund Santa Claus delivers gifts down our chimneys, the very same chimneys through which male storks deliver the babies they *carry*! Perhaps an even more striking male usurper of female procreativity is the Easter Bunny, who delivers eggs! These various and sundry folkloristic projections are clearly not historically related—there is no connection between the stork as the bringer of babies and the Easter Bunny. But from the perspective afforded by psychoanalytic semiotics, they may be seen as sharing common projective content.

There is yet one additional point I should like to make about projection in folklore. I fear I may have implied that viewing folklore as projective material is a mechanical, reductionistic technique. Quite the contrary, for there is great variety in the projective dimensions of even a single item of folklore. One may recall that I began this whole discussion with the statement that folklore means something and that it may mean different things to different performers and to different audiences. To the extent that all artistic creativity is autobiographical, all artistic creativity is projective. Moreover, the way in which individuals interpret artistic creativity is also autobiographically projective. Each age and each individual in an age is free to interpret art, music, and literature anew. And so it is with folklore. It is not simply, then, that folklore as fantasy contains projective material. Each individual who tells a tale or who hears a tale cannot help but project his own personality into that tale. This is why the study of projection in folklore cannot be limited to the text alone. The process of projection also occurs in the very act of communicating an item of folklore.

Let me illustrate the multiplicity of meanings, or the projective potential, of a single text with a final example. This text was related to me in 1964 by a black male informant from Alabama. "Governor Wallace of Alabama died and went to heaven. After entering the pearly gates, he walked up to the door of a splendid mansion and knocked. A voice inside exclaimed, "Who dat?" Wallace shook his head sadly and

said, "Never mind, I'll go the other way." First of all, the item is older than 1964 inasmuch as a similar joke was told during World War II with Adolf Hitler as the protagonist confronted by a voice in heaven with a pronounced Jewish accent. In the present version, the projective aspects include the wishful thinking (for Wallace's death) and Wallace's being sent to hell by his own prejudice. The historical fact of Governor Wallace's having stood dramatically at the door of the University of Alabama to deny admission to black students is also relevant (as is no doubt the context of a black informant telling the joke to a white folklorist). But the joke may function as a projective text for whites as well as blacks. What is understood by individual whites when they hear the stereotyped dialect "Who dat?" Clearly the implication is that a Negro is inside the mansion. But individuals differ markedly as to the identity of the Negro voice. Some think it is God; others think it might be Saint Peter. A few assume it is a doorman or gatekeeper or other menial. The joke itself does not say. I would argue that it is projection on the part of the interpreter in making a judgment as to the identity of the speaker. Similarly, some whites claim they understood from "Who dat?" that heaven is now integrated, while others assumed that heaven has been completely "taken over" by Negroes. None of this is articulated in the joke proper, but it is part of the joke as semiotic text. Folklore is not only projective material, but it allows, if not encourages, projection on the part of participants in the act of communicating folklore. In fact, I would go so far as to argue that if folklore did not provide a socially sanctioned outlet for projection, it would almost certainly cease to exist. The problem in folkloristics is that while we have literally thousands upon thousands of folklore texts recorded—think of all the folktales, folksongs, and legends in print, the projective part of the semiotic text has not been recorded and so it is that we continue to have lore without reference to folk.

If the interpretation or understanding of a folkloristic item also involves projection, then it is perfectly obvious that scholarship in general has a projective aspect. Maybe there are even national characterological tendencies in scholarship just as there are unquestionably individual idiosyncratic biases at work no matter how purportedly objective any scholar claims to be. This means that there could be a personal projective aspect to my present argument that folklore fantasy may be based upon projection. Yet if there is truth in dreams,

then there may be truth in dreams within dreams as well. So whatever my personal need may be to interpret folklore in terms of projection as opposed to listing identifying motif numbers or segmenting folkloristic discourse into elegant syntagmatic or paradigmatic schemata, I would hope that there is notwithstanding some objective validity to the notion of treating folklore as projective material.

From this all too cursory consideration of selected examples of jump rope and nursery rhymes, fairy tales, legends, and rituals, I have tried to show that projection is an inherent feature of folklore. Whether the issue is sibling rivalry, Oedipal or Electral impulses, male envy of female procreativity, or racism, projection offers a guilt-free means of exploring the problem. If semiotics is to become a seminal science of signs and symbols, it must be willing and able to analyze fantasy as fantasy, that is, in terms of projection. For humans, projection provides protection. Folklore, although *collectivized* fantasy, does meet the psychological needs of individuals. Indeed it is literally and figuratively custom-made for the purpose. If projection provides a means of translating inner thoughts into outer expression, then psychoanalytic semiotics ought to try to show from close analysis of such expressions what these inner thoughts are. By this means, psychoanalytic semiotics could become a kind of magic lantern which might afford new illumination for us in our unceasing quest to study and enjoy some of the marvels of the mind of man.