



No. 18 (June 1990)

## PENSEZ A VOS ENFANTS!

\*\*\*\*\*

Reproduisez ce document, distribuez-le autour de vous. Affichez-le et, surtout, UTILISEZ-LE. Il y va de votre santé.

## THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR CONTEMPORARY LEGEND RESEARCH

FRENCH SCHOLARSHIP ON RUMOR:  
An Annotated Bibliography

Véronique Champion-Vincent  
Centre National de la  
Recherche Scientifique  
54, BD Raspail  
75270 Paris Cedex 06  
FRANCE

Jean-Bruno Renard  
Groupe de Recherche sur  
l'Imaginaire  
Université Paul-Valéry  
Route de Mende - B.P. 5043  
34032 Montpellier Cedex 1  
FRANCE

[Authors' note: The following bibliography is limited to the 20th century, both for the publication dates of the studies and also for the dates of the incidents studied. This list therefore contains no references to historical studies, even though these may be very useful for finding analogs to recent events or for uncovering the roots of collective memory. We refer interested scholars to historians of the mentalities (J. C. Schmitt, J. Berlioz, J. Ceard, J. le Goff, S. Kaplan) and to scholars of collective panics (G. Lefebvre, J. F. Revel, A. Farge, J. Delumeau). We have also omitted all general literature on traditional folklore (P. Sebillet, P. Saintyves, A. Van Gennep).

Some of the studies analyzing rumors were written by sociologists or social psychologists (J. N. Kapferer, E. Morin, M. L. Rouquette). Others study unorthodox contemporary beliefs, or the modern "imaginaries" [imaginaires], discourses mixing fact and fantasy.]

ACKERMAN, Werner, Renaud DULONG, and Henri-Pierre JEUDY.  
Imaginaires de l'insécurité [Imagines of Insecurity].  
Paris: Librairie de Méridiens, 1983. 120 pp.

Beyond--and beneath--aggressions, muggings, and robberies, insecurity is expressed through discourse mixing fact and fantasy. The ideology of insecurity reflects the break-up of traditional social links.

ASKEVIS-LEHERPEUX, Françoise.  
Les Superstitions.

Paris: Presses Universitaires de France [Que sais-je],  
n.d. 128 pp.

Description of sociological and psychological components of superstitions, defined as beliefs that run counter to religious orthodoxies (traditional superstitions) or to scientific orthodoxies (modern superstitions).

BARLOY, Jean-Jacques.

Les survivants de l'ombre. Enquête sur des animaux

mystérieux [Survivors of the Shadow: Investigation into Mysterious Animals].

Paris: Arthaud, 1985. 267 pp.

A general outline of zoological enigmas: the Beast of Gévaudan, the Loch Ness Monster, Yeti/Bigfoot, mystery cats, etc.

BARTHEL, Gérard, and Jacques BRUCKER.

La grande peur martienne [The Great Martian Fright].

Paris: Nouvelles éditions rationalistes, 1979. 230pp.

A skeptical psycho-sociological approach to the wave of flying saucer observations that swept France in 1954.

BARTHES, Roland

Mythologies.

Paris: Seuil [Pierres vives], 1957. 269 pp.

Translation: The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies.  
New York: Hill and Wang, 1979. 151 pp.

Stimulating approach to the imaginaries of French society in the 1950s, through a semiotic analysis of new trends in publicity, fashion, and consumer goods. Analyzes the media's manipulation of social and economic issues and how they constitute the "bourgeois culture." Like urban legends, these little mythologies of daily life carry an implicit moral.

BOLTANSKI, Luc, Yann DARRE, and Marie-Ange SCHILTZ.

"La dénonciation" ["Denunciation"].

Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales 51 (1984):3-40.

Statistical and stylistic analysis of 275 letters of denunciation sent to Le Monde from 1979 to 1981, conducted with the aim of establishing a grammar of protest that would help interpret other acts of protest, both individual and collective, that follow the same rules.

BONAPARTE, Marie.

Mythes de guerre [War Myths].

Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1946. 184 pp.

Psychoanalytical approach to rumors circulating during World War II. Note the "corpse in the car" story, a variant of the "Vanishing Hitchhiker."

BONNET, Serge, and Antoine DELESTRE.

"Les chaînes magiques" [The Magic Chains].

The superstitious practice of circulating chain letters presents analogies with rumors circulating through anonymous xeroxed flyers.

BROU, Jean-Louis, and Michel MEURGER.

Les félins-mystères: sur les traces d'un mythe moderne  
[Mystery Cats: On the Trail of a Modern Myth.]  
Paris: Pogonip, 1984. 36 pp.

The two authors research the "phantom feline" case of Noth, in Creuse, a depopulated rural district in the center of France. This semi-fantastic event is interpreted as expressing fear that an untamed nature is returning, a fear linked to the desertification of the region.

Cahiers de littérature orale

Special issue: Paroles Urbaines [Urban Speeches].  
Vol. 24 (1988). 246 pp.

Bacou, Mihaela, and Brunhilde Biebuyck. "Je vous salis ma rue. Des murmures parisiens [Hail Street and Walls].

Bacou, Mihaela, Brunhilde Biebuyck, and Véronique Champion-Vincent. "Les marabouts s'affichent" [African Diviners' Posters].

Champion-Vincent, Véronique. "Les légendes urbaines, rumeurs du quotidien, objet d'étude pluridisciplinaire" [Urban Legends: Rumors of Daily Life, Object of Cross-Disciplinary Study].

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. "L'étude du folklore en milieu urbain" [The Study of Folklore in an Urban Milieu].

Lindenfeld, Jacqueline. "Paroles rituelles sur les marchés urbains en France [Ritual speeches in Urban Markets in France].

Paquin, Thierry. "Paroles contestataires. Manifestations estudiantines de novembre-décembre 1986" [Speeches of Confrontation: Students' Demonstrations in November-December 1986].

Reumaux, Françoise. "Un rite oral urbain, la rumeur" [Rumor, an Urban Oral Ritual].

Ricard, Alain. "En ville, des histoires de famille. Le concert-party au Togo" [In the City, Family Stories: The Concert-Party in Togo].

Wachs, Eleanor. "The Crime-Victim Narrative as a Folkloric Genre."

CAMPION-VINCENT, Véronique.

"Les histoires exemplaires" [Exemplary Stories]  
Contrepoint 22-23 (1976):217-232.

Transmitted as true anecdotes, mainly by word of mouth but also through the media, exemplary stories are a specific genre of oral literature. Like the proverb or myth, the exemplary story carries an implicit message that reveals its deep meaning.

-----  
"Complots et avertissements: 's légendes urbaines dans la ville" [Conspiracies and Warnings: Urban Legends in the City].

Revue française de sociologie 30 (1989):91-105.

An analytical scheme--faraway causes, triggering event,

legendary tale, implicit moral--is applied to four series of urban rumors/legends in France: children's abductions (Paris, 1750), poisoning rumors during the cholera epidemic (Paris, 1832), white slave trade (France, since 1950s), dangerous animals hiding in exotic products (France, since 1970s).

DAUZAT, Albert.

Légendes, prophéties et superstitions de la Guerre [War Legends, Prophecies, and Superstitions].  
Paris: La renaissance du livre, 1920. 283 pp.

A well-known French grammarian and linguist presents and analyzes irrational beliefs that appeared during World War I.

DOMENACH, Jean-Marie.

La propagande politique [Political Propaganda].  
Paris: Presses Universitaires de France [Que sais-je], 1973. 128 pp.

One aspect of political propaganda is the manipulation of rumors, whether they are spontaneous or planted.

EKAMBO, Dwasenge Ndundu.

Radio-trottoir: une alternative de communication en Afrique contemporaine [Pavement Radio: An Alternative Media in Contemporary Africa].

Louvain-la-Neuve: Cabay [Questions de communication], 1985. 244 pp.

The media are severely controlled by officials in contemporary Africa. However, the people listen to and trust only the unofficial news, transmitted orally by "pavement radio." The analysis draws on original research conducted in Zaïre.

Le genre humain

Special Issue: La rumeur [Rumors].  
Vol. 5 (1982). 126 pp.

Delacampagne, Christian. "A propos des cagots et de quelques autres peuplades non moins énigmatiques" [About the Cagots and Other Peoples Just as Mysterious].

Detienne, Marcel. "La Rumeur, elle aussi, est une déesse" [Rumor, too, is a Goddess].

Deutsch, Emeric. "Anatomie d'une rumeur avortée" [Anatomy of an Aborted Rumor].

Flemm, Lydia. "Bouche bavarde et oreille curieuse" [Chattering Mouth and Curious Ear].

Hocquard, Emmanuel. "Des nuages et des brouillards" [Of Fogs and Clouds].

Jacquard, Albert. "Comme chacun sait l'intelligence est à 80% génétique, c'est scientifiquement démontré" [As everyone knows, "Intelligence is 80% Inherited, It's Scientifically Proven"].

Lacouture, Jean. "Bruit et Information" [Rumor: Noise and Information].

Paty, Michel. "Des rumeurs d'incertitude" [Rumors of Uncertainty].

Poliakiov, Léon. "La course de l'Antéchrist" [Antichrist's Course].

Pomian, Krzysztof. "Samedi 19 décembre 1981, à 17 heures: Varsovie" [Warsaw: Saturday, December 19, 1981, 5 p.m.].

GIRARDET, Raoul.

Mythes et mythologies politiques [Political Myths and

Mythologies].

Paris: Seuil [L'univers historique]. 1986. 254 pp.

Study of recurrent myths in French ideological history:  
The Golden Era, the Savior, Unity, Conspiracy.

GLWCZEWSKI, Barbara, and Jean-François MATTEUDI.

La cité des cataphiles. Mission anthropologique dans les souterrains de Paris [The Cataphiles' City: An Anthropological Exploration of Paris's Underground].

Paris: Méridiens Klincksieck [Sociologies au quotidien], 1983. 246 pp.

A study of the urban nomadic "cataphiles" (i.e., lovers of catacombs) that roam clandestinely through the 170 miles of ancient quarries that undermine Paris below the metro and sewers. (In the 18th and 19th centuries, these quarries were used to rebury the dead from urban cemeteries that were emptied for hygienic reasons: hence they are called catacombs.) The authors invite readers to dive into the subterranean imagination: forgotten and buried memory, dream-like experiences. Cataphilia draws on mythical roots.

GRITTI, Jules

Elle court, elle court, le rumeur [The Rumor Goes Round and Round].

Paris/Ottawa: Stanké [Au-delà du miroir], 1978. 226 pp.

Defined as "fantastic collective tales," rumors should be studied from three complementary approaches: semiotics, psychology, and sociology. The author analyzes many examples, often from France, and studies the media's role in elaborating and disseminating rumors. UFOs are approached as "visionary rumors."

HEUYER, Georges.

Psychoses collectives et suicides collectifs [Collective Psychoses and Suicides].

Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1973. 128pp.

A psychiatric approach that places rumor in regard to hysteria and collective psychoses.

JAKUBOWSKI, Albert.

"Le Ragot" [Rumor].

Esprit 5 (1981):141-145.

Gossip is a neighborhood rumor that involves a value judgment (sometimes positive, usually negative) about individuals. The themes of gossip are work (lazy/industrious), family (good/bad form), sex (deviant/normal) and illness (sick/healthy).

JEUDY, Henri-Pierre.

La peur et les media. Essai sur la virulence [Fear and the Media: An Essay on Virulence].

Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1979. 160pp.

Escaped prisoners, enraged animals, contamination through viruses (this book predates the AIDS era)--all these fears are linked in this book, which emphasizes the media's role in an upsurge of the archaic collective fear of contamination.

-----  
La Panique [Panic]

Paris: Galilée, 1981. 161 pp.

Study of a little-known form of collective behavior.

KAPFERER, Jean-Noel.

Rumeurs. Le plus vieux média du monde [Rumors: The Oldest Media in the World].

Paris: Seuil, 1987. 320 pp.

Presents a transactional theory of rumors that are neither mysterious nor extraordinary. These unofficial, parallel, uncontrolled pieces of information are transmitted because they conform to a social logic and fulfill a useful role. They allow people to express "their" truth in opposition to the establishment's viewpoint. The book includes a panorama of rumors in specific areas: crime, celebrities, the workplace (factories and offices), marketing and finance, and politics. Rumor control techniques are also discussed.

LECERF, Yves, and Edouard PARKER.

L'affaire Ichernobyl. La guerre des rumeurs [The Chernobyl Affair: A War of Rumors].

Paris: Presses Universitaires de France [Politique d'aujourd'hui], 1987. viii + 392 pp.

The negative consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster have been grossly exaggerated. This "falsification" is caused by anti-nuclear activists whom the authors denounce as conspirators and bitter intellectuals who resent a society that does not grant them the status they believe that they deserve. Anti-nuclear activists are presented as Machiavellian: they obscure the truth (i.e., the harmlessness of the French nuclear industry), deliberately ignore the greater danger of chemical pollution, and infiltrate the media to spread their erroneous ideas. However, these activists are also naive and manipulated by the superpowers as well as by the oil industry.

MEHEUST, Bertrand.

Soucoupes volantes et folklore [Flying Saucers and Folklore].

Paris: Mercure de France, 1985. 191 pp.

An enlightening comparison of traditional legends and contemporary accounts of "abductees."

MEURGER, Michel.

De l'ogre au rat blanc. L'insolite alimentaire dans la rumeur [From Ogre to White Rat: Strange Food in Rumor].

Paris: Pogonip, 1988. 16 pp.

Motifs of cannibalism and adulterated food play a large part in xenophobic and racist rumors. The author stresses the permanence of these motifs in popular literature since the Middle Ages.

MORIN, Edgar, et al.

La rumeur d'Orléans [Rumor in Orléans].

Paris: Seuil, 1969. 255 pp. [New edition with additional material on rumors in Amiens.]

Classic study of a rumor that accused Jewish owners of stylish clothes of abducting young women for the white slave trade. The work stresses that adolescents' imaginations and their ambivalent attitudes toward

sexuality helped make the rumor explode. It also analyzes the counter-processes that marked the end of this crisis in Orléans.

PERRAULT, Gilles.

"Quand court la rumeur" [When Rumors Go Round].  
Autrement 94 (1987):78-82 [Special issue on "Denouncing"]

Political and social life is fed by rumor, insidious and evil. The article attacks the concept of disinformation, especially as used against the left.

POLIAKOV, Léon,

La causalité diabolique [Demonic Causality].  
Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1980. 256 pp.

Analyzes the social process of "scapegoating" by which a group--Jesuits, Jews, or Freemasons, for instance--is designated as responsible for the mass population's problems.

POUCHELLE, Marie-Christine.

"Sentiment religieux et show business: Claude François, objet de dévotion populaire" [Religious Feeling and Show Business: Claude François as the Object of Popular Devotion].

In Jean-Claude Schmitt, ed., Les Saints et les Stars. Le texte hagiographique dans la culture populaire [Saints and Stars: The Hagiographic Text in Popular Culture], 277-297. Paris: Beauchesne, 1983.

Describes a posthumous cult to a teenage idol that closely resembles the American cult surrounding Elvis. Manifestations include pilgrimages, relics, miracles, and spiritualism.

RENARD, Jean-Bruno.

"Le merveilleux et l'homme contemporain" [Wonders and Contemporary Man].

In Michel Meslin, ed., Le merveilleux. L'imaginaire et les croyances en Occident [Wonders: Imaginaries and Beliefs in the West]. Paris: Bordas, 1984.

In the modern world, wonders are more scientific than religious. The supernatural has changed into the paranormal. Scientific imaginaries attribute to scientists the magical powers of yesteryear's sorcerers.

-----  
"La para-archéologie et sa diffusion dans le grand public" [Para-archeology and Its Diffusion among the General Public].

In L'archéologie et son image [Images of Archeology], 275-290. Juan-les-Pins: APDCA, 1988.

Analysis of para-archeological legends: disappeared peoples and continents, superior knowledge of ancient peoples, and ancient astronauts. Such beliefs are more frequent among educated classes.

-----  
Les extraterrestres. Une nouvelle croyance religieuse? [Extraterrestrials: A New Religious Belief?]

Paris: Cerf [Bref], 1988. 127 pp.

Mythological and sociological approach to beliefs in UFOs

and extraterrestrials. Includes a catalog of UFO legends, discussion of ancient astronauts, UFO crashes, governmental secrets, etc., and a study of ufological religious groups.

RESZLER, André.

Mythes politiques modernes [Modern Political Myths].  
Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1981. 230pp.

Political and social thought is dominated by imaginary constructs: progress, decadence, new society and new man, heroes, individual (charismatic leaders or saviors) or collective (the elite, party, proletariat, race, or people). The work discusses continuities with ancient myths of devils, bandits, and the Wandering Jew.

REUMAUX, Françoise.

"Paroles privées sur la voie publique" [Public Speeches in Public Spots].  
Sociétés 10 (1986):12-14.

Gossip and rumors weave the net of social communication and mend the splits--real or imaginary--of the group.

-----  
"Rumor et Opinio."

Cahiers internationaux de sociologie 86 (1989):12-14.

Discusses the evolution of the word "rumor" from its Latin origins and its relationship to public "opinion." Stresses the close links between rumor and folklore.

RICHE, Daniel, and Jean-Luc FROMENTAL.

"Les légendes urbaines" [Urban Legends].  
Métal hurlant 69 (1981):68-75.

Overview of American urban legends of the 1960s and 1970s.

ROUQUETTE, Michel-Louis.

Les rumeurs.  
Paris: Presses Universitaires de France [Le Sociologue], 1975. 128pp.

A cognitive and psychological theory of rumors

-----  
"La rumeur comme résolution d'un problème mal défini" [Rumor as Resolution of an Ill-Defined Problem].

Cahiers internationaux de sociologie 86 (1989):117-122.

A cognitivist approach.

SAUVY, Alfred.

Mythologie de notre temps [Mythologies of our Time].  
Paris: Payot, 1971 [orig. 1965]. 238 pp.

De la rumeur à l'histoire [From Rumor to History].  
Paris: Dunod, 1985. 324 pp.

The terms "myth" and "rumor" designate commonly accepted but false propositions and affirmation is the realm of spontaneous social and economic thought. These two books aim to describe and disprove these "popular fallacies."

Terrain

Special Issue: L'Incroyable et ses preuves [The Unbelievable and Its Proofs].

Vol. 14 (1990). 176 pp.

An original approach to unorthodox beliefs through understanding the internal logic that bases them at individual and collective levels.

Boreau, Alain. "L'église médiévale comme preuve animée de la croyance chrétienne" [The Medieval Church as Living Proof of the Christian Faith].

Charuty, Giordana. "De la preuve à l'épreuve" [From Proof to Trial].

Claverie, Elisabeth. "La Vierge, le désordre, la critique" [The Virgin Mary: Disorder, Criticism].

Contreras, José, and Jeanne Favret-Saada. "Ah la féline, la sale voisine" [The Bad Neighbor].

Lagrange, Pierre. "Enquêtes sur les soucoupes volantes" [Investigations into UFOs].

Latour, Bruno. "Quand les anges deviennent de bien mauvais messagers" [When Angels Become Poor Messengers].

Lenclud, Gérard. "Vues de l'esprit, art de l'autre" [Delusions Belong to the Other].

Pouchelle, Marie-Christine. "Les faits qui couvent, ou Claude François à contre-mort" [Smouldering Facts: Claude François in Counter-Death].

VAN GENNEP, Arnold.

La Formation des légendes [The Shaping of Legends]  
Paris: Flammarion, 1910. 326 pp.

Describes different genres: the legend tells history; the conte [folktale] ignores history; the myth predates history. Discusses social functions of legends and laws governing their making, transmission, and changes.

VAX, Louis.

La séduction de l'étrange. Etude sur la littérature fantastique [Seduction of the Weird: A Study of Fantastic Literature].

Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1987 [orig. 1965]. 314 pp.

A classic book about weirdness: definition, causes, motifs and themes, relationship to reality and belief.

VOLKOFF, Wladimir, ed.

La désinformation, arme de guerre [Disinformation: A Weapon of War].

Paris/Lausanne: Julliard/L'Age d'Homme, 1986. 274 pp.

Several papers about communist and anti-communist propaganda and state-controlled information.

And Trot to the East:

Legends about the Driving-Direction of the Berlin Quadriga

Sigrid Schmidt  
Wildefüer Str. 28  
D-3200 Hildesheim  
WEST GERMANY

The most famous landmark of Berlin is the Brandenburg Gate. It was built 1788-1791 by C. G. Langhans and crowned by the "Quadriga," a chariot driven by four horses bearing the goddess of victory, sculpted by G. Schadow (1789-1794). The gate forms the architectural closing of the city's former main street, Unter den Linden, at the westernmost part. During the last decades, it became the sad symbol of the

partition of Berlin, for the Wall was built quite nearby. Though the Gate belonged to East Berlin, residents were not allowed to approach it because it belonged to the border region. West Berliners saw it close up, but could not pass the Wall.

The Quadriga on top has been the condensation of the symbolic values connected with the Gate. Thus Napoleon's troops took the sculpture to France in 1807, and in 1814, after Napoleon's defeat, it triumphantly returned to Berlin. During World War II, it was destroyed, but in 1958 it was restored from surviving plaster casts. When the Gate was reopened on November 9, 1989, it represented the opening of the Iron Curtain. Then attention focused not only on the building but also on the legends connected with it.

In the weekly paper Die Zeit (No. 4, 19 January 1990:67), Stefan Berkholz reported his investigations on a current legend. A few days before the opening of the Wall, a taxi driver told him: After the opening, "East Berlin" will repair the Quadriga, which badly needs restoration, and then will put it up in its original position, i.e., facing again to the west. Berkholz traced numerous sources for this legend: that the Quadriga, now looking to the east, originally faced the west.

1) When the Quadriga was repaired after World War II, the Soviets tricked the Allied Forces and turned it to the east (published by  taz on "the day before Christmas," 1989). A reader commented a few days later that this was a popular false report of the Cold War.

2) At the climax of the Cold War, in September 1956, the East Berlin Communist Party paper Neues Deutschland stated that when the Quadriga was returned from France in 1814, it was placed facing east; formerly it had faced west.

3) In January 1961, the Morgenpost reported that (in 1794) the "completely naked" goddess Victory was erected in the wrong direction, facing west and showing her "golden backside" to the Royal residence in Unter den Linden. The art historian W. Arenhövel pointed out in 1982 that this was completely in contrast with Antique and Prussian taste. Berkholz: "Another two legends."

4) An acquaintance told Berkholz that it was the Nazis who turned the Quadriga around, and the Communists only turned it back to its right position.

5) In 1930, Werner Hegemann, in Das steinerne Berlin [The Stones of Berlin], described Schadow's sculpture and added that an "ineradicable but false legend" claimed that before Napoleon's visit it had faced west, not east.

6) As early as 1912, Lieutenant-Colonel Siefert wrote a pamphlet against this "ineradicable legend which still is kept by the people." After a study of many old pictures and particularly the notes of Langhans, the Gate's builder, he came to the conclusion that the Quadriga never was turned around.

7) Siefert pointed out (and Berkholz verified) that the legend first appeared in 1864. Then Julius Friedlaender published Gottfried Schadow, Aufsätze und Briefe, nebst einem Verzeichnis seiner Werke [Essays and Letters, with a Catalogue of his Works] for the centenary of the sculptor's birth. This work contained an inventory of Schadow's sculptures compiled by the painter Heinrich Wittich, which was "printed without alterations." Wittich wrote that originally the Quadriga faced west, but when it was returned from Paris, the goddess of victory was placed entering the city eastward.

Nobody traced Wittich's sources. But his statement went into numerous professional and popular publications. Berkholz mentions that the press has tried again and again to counter the legend, but to no avail. The present Berlin

monument commissioner has been flooded with phone calls from people who have bet on the "right position" and ask for his judgment. They often are disappointed to hear the truth.

After 125 years, the legend is still alive and will probably flourish even more when the Quadriga is taken down for the next restoration.

#### EARLIEST ACCOUNTS OF CONTEMPORARY LEGENDS IN RUSSIA\*

Dionizjusz Czubala  
ul. Ostrogórska 33/285  
41-200 Sosnowiec  
POLAND

Sandy Hobbs recently asked about early research on contemporary legends (FN 15:2). Finding the term used in American fiction as early as 1924, he wondered how early writers and scholars were aware of this genre of folk narrative. I would like to answer this appeal.

I have proof of very early interest in contemporary legends by Russian and Soviet scholars. But I want to begin with terminological problems. If we all accepted the English term "contemporary legend" or "urban legend," we would solve such problems. Unfortunately, each nation has its own terms, and both in Polish and Russian there are major differences in genological terminology.

Thus the English term "contemporary legend" comprises, in whole or in part, the Polish terms legenda [legends], podania [tradition, something "handed down"], opowieści wspomnieniowe [remembered stories], and sensacje [sensations]; it also encompasses the Russian terms legendi [legends], predania ["handed down" traditions], byliski [true stories, "happenings"], skazi ["sayings" from skazat' "to say"; cf. German Sagen], rasskazi [stories, from rasskazat' "to recount, narrate"], spletni [gossip, scandals], and tolki [rumors, beliefs, from tolk "meaning" or "sense"].

To present the earliest interests in contemporary legends in Russia, I would have to write separately about each genre of folk prose and when they originated. These terminological differences surely need more precise differentiation, but my aim for now is different.

Several years ago, I dedicated several months to studying Soviet folklorists during my research work in Kiev. Concentrating on skaz and rasskaz [roughly, "modern memorates and fabulates"], I found that Soviet folklorists formulated their theories in the 1920s. During those years, the students of Mark Azadovski and Yuri Sokolov went into the countryside to document the skaz. The first publications from this research appeared in the 1930s, the most famous collection being that of Mirer and Borovik.<sup>1</sup> Since then, Soviet folklorists have produced an immense literature on skaz and rasskaz, which I have discussed in my own work.<sup>2</sup>

Here I want to concentrate on another category of folkloristic phenomena, the spletni and tolki [gossip and rumors]. The first notice of them that I found was written by P.A. Viazemskii (1792-1878), a Russian poet of ducal origin, a defender and theoretician of romanticism, and an author of critical articles and writings that document the age. Among the last, he stated: "Collect all the silly rumors, fables, non-rumors, and non-fables that have been spread through the streets and houses of Moscow because of cholera and other reasons. A chronicle of great interest will appear. In skaz and rasskaz the spirit of the nation is hidden. Because of the rumor and noise they cause, I can be sure that they are powerful, and the field is barren. This

is our oral literature. We need a stenographer to collect them all."<sup>3</sup>

Nikolai Dobroliubov (1836-61), a folklorist, was even more conscious of this kind of literature. That prominent Russian thinker, journalist, and literary critic dedicated a small article to slushki ["things heard," or rumors]. He wrote that oral stories about contemporary events contain certain truth and show the spirit of the nation and its folk, along with its dreams, disillusionings, and lies. Rumors, he observed, are born quickly and quickly go into oblivion, replaced by new rumors, so it is very difficult to record them. But later he adds, "They are not merely numbers and letters, neither archival information nor dead men. Epitaphs? No, they are life with its swift events, sufferings, delights, disillusionings, passions in all its beauty and truth. A week of such life can teach us more than seven volumes of statistics."<sup>4</sup>

The first purely scientific article about contemporary legends in Russia dates from 1934. S. N. Chernov, the author, came across a "pearl" in the judicial archives in Moscow, a notebook recording rumors and sensations from 1825-26. It was written by a peasant named Fyodor who served as a footman. He found himself in conflict with his master and sued him in court. Unfortunately for Fyodor, his master introduced his notebook as evidence of his servant's unfaithfulness. Fortunately for folklorists, the court filed away this document in the archives, where it lay for years.

Significantly, Chernov writes that studies of rumor had begun only recently. I could not find the other works cited in his article, but the material must be folklore because the title [Rumors from 1825-26: Folklore and History] says so. In his analysis, Chernov concluded that such rumors reveal the mood of the society from which they come. Later, he states that they are political means, but he doubts their usefulness and admits that they can lead people astray.<sup>5</sup>

After Chernov's article, no one discussed gossip or rumor in a new way for some time, even as skaz and rasskaz were subjects of a growing literature. Probably research was banned by censorship. More recently, the topic has emerged again, as scholars found rumor and gossip useful to illustrate certain theses. Some Russian folklorists have postulated a "pyramidal" conception of how folk narratives develop. At the base of this pyramid we have true events. From it gossip and rumor spring. The third, higher form of narrative includes skaz and rasskaz, while the fourth can contain podanie (traditions) and baika (fables).

N. M. Fed is the active proponent of this theory. In a 1977 article, he attempts to show the influence of oral traditions on literary skaz. The first part of his article uses rumors and sensations from the beginning of the 19th century, and from him we learn that many reports of rumors from the streets survive in the archives of the Tsar's police. Two examples show the legendary nature of these traditions: Fed's story #7 states that Tsar Alexander I (who died suddenly on vacation in November 1825) "was given some kind of drink, and finally died. The body turned black and could not be shown to the people. So a wax cast was made, and inside it, he was buried. The coffin weighed 80 puds [nearly 3000 pounds or 1310 kg.--ed.] and was made of lead." And in his story #7 we read that the tsar did not actually die, but was sold to Spain by his opponents. The whole affair is a mystery.<sup>6</sup>

Further study of the international counterparts of contemporary legends will help scholars understand their history and place in the development of national heritages.

\* This article was translated by Anna Wolska of the English Language department of the University of Sosnowiec.

1. S. J. Mirer and V. N. Borovik, Revoliutsiia. Ustnyie rasskazy rabochich o grashdanskoi voinie [Revolution: Working People's Narratives about the Civil War] (Moskva/Leningrad, 1931).
2. Dionizjusz Czubala, Opowieści z życia. Z badań nad folklorem współczesnym [Stories from Life: Studies in Contemporary Folklore] (Katowice, 1985):25-38.
3. P. A. Viazemskii, Zapisnie Knizhki [Notebooks] (Moskva, 1963):201-202.
4. N. A. Dobroliubov, "Slushki" [Rumors], Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenia [Complete Works] (Moskva, 1937):4,429-430.
5. S. N. Chernov, "Slushki 1825-1826 godov. Folklor i istoria" [Rumors from 1825-26: Folklore and History], In S. F. Ol'denburg, K piatidesiatiletiiu nauchno-obshchestvennoi deiatel'nosti 1882-1932 [Fifty years of scientific public work, 1882-1932], 565-584. Leningrad, 1934.
6. N. M. Fed. "Literaturnii skaz b sootnoshennii s folklornoj traditsie" [Literary skaz compared with folk traditions], in Folklor. Poeticheskaja sistema [Folklore: Poetic System], 242-274. Moskva, 1977

[Editor's note: the rumors mentioned in Czubala's last paragraph must be quite old and internationally distributed; yet they remain lively in tradition. When the American president Warren G. Harding died suddenly on vacation in 1923, it was widely rumored that he had been poisoned by his wife, who knew that he kept a mistress in the White House, or by his political associates, who feared what Harding might reveal about a series of corrupt political deals then beginning to unravel in the press. And more recently, Gail Brewer-Giorgio, in her gossip book Is Elvis Alive? (New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1988), records the belief among many of Elvis Presley's fans that his coffin was unusually heavy because it contained a wax figure of the singer, along with air conditioning to keep it from melting. In fact, rumor held, Elvis was alive and well in seclusion somewhere.

Further work with Russian spletni and tolki responding to Gorbachev's reforms and the move toward democracy might be revealing, as would study of anti-Soviet rumors in the West. In addition, linguistic work on the exact semantic fields covered by Russian and Slavic terms for narratives would seem productive, after the controversial findings of W. F. H. Nicolaisen on "German Sage and English Legend," in Gillian Bennett and Paul Smith, eds., The Questing Beast, 79 ff. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988)--BE.]

#### JUST IN!

#### SEX AND THE CONTEMPORARY LEGEND

GAY ROOMMATES AND UNETHICAL DENTISTS. A legend expressing widespread fear of homosexuality circulated on many college campuses this spring. The story goes that a student experiencing pain in his anus went to a doctor, who said, "Simply admit it: You are a homosexual." The student denied it, and the doctor explained that his pain had been caused by rectal intercourse. Since the student had no memory of such acts, the two went to his dormitory room to look for clues. Among his roommate's belongings, they found a bottle of chloroform. Confronted with this, the roommate admitted that he had been drugging his partner at night and raping him anally (Courtesy William J. Voelker, Gustavus Adolphus

College, St. Peter, Minnesota, who says that students from South Dakota and Nebraska had also encountered the legend).

G. Legman, in Rationale of the Dirty Joke, Second Series (10.V.3, p. 156), traces this narrative as far back as a reference in Richard F. Burton's "Terminal Essay" in his translation of The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night (London: The Burton Club, 1886). Burton claims that in the mid-19th century, "Shaykh Nasr, Governor of Bushire, a man famed for facetious blackguardism, used to invite European youngsters serving in the Bombay Marine and ply them with liquor till they were insensible. Next morning the middies mostly complained that the champagne had caused a curious irritation and soreness in la parte-poste" (10:203; courtesy Joseph P. Goodwin). Legman found a joke in the Anecdote Americana (Second Series [1934]:70), in which a bellboy is invited to drink champagne with a gay hotel guest, with similar results. Brunvand found another likely prototype in a book of Australian yarns published in the 1970s, in which a sailor goes on leave and after a night of drinking and passing out finds his arse sore (personal communication).

The campus version, however, has been influenced by a variety of other legend types, mainly relating to heterosexual rape through the use of drugging. An allegedly common practice among fraternity brothers is to get their dates so drunk that they pass out, then have intercourse with them. Andrea Greenberg gathered a number of college variants in "Drugged and Seduced: A Contemporary Legend," New York Folklore Quarterly 29 (1973):131-158. Hypnotists or mesmerists were often assumed to use their powers to gain sexual control over women, a belief still current on campuses (See FN 14:5). Dentists were especially suspected of sedating female patients during operations, then raping them. Scott Jackson, the convicted murderer of Pearl Bryan of Greencastle, Indiana (subject of many ballads and legends), was actually accused of doing this. A 1896 paper claimed that while Jackson was assistant to a local dentist, he enticed poor Pearl to the office, drugged her with cocaine, then "ruined" her (see Anne B. Cohen, Poor Pearl, Poor Girl [Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973]:17-18).

Interestingly, this last legend-type may be based on a common side-effect of anesthesia. A correspondent wrote to Joe Graedon, author of a syndicated column, "The People's Pharmacy" (19 April 1990), that she was "sure" that she had been sexually assaulted by her dentist while undergoing IV sedation for oral surgery, even though a hygienist had been present in the room at all times. Graedon admitted that it was possible that some unethical doctors take advantage of sedated patients, but added that some IV sedatives have well-known mental side-effects. The benzodiazepines, in particular, have been associated with vivid sexual fantasies, and he relates an allegedly genuine court case in which a woman took her dentist to court for rape, even though her husband had been present throughout the procedure and in fact testified that nothing extraordinary took place in his sight. Graedon cautioned women to insist on having a third person present during all operations involving sedation, but concluded that actual rape was "very unlikely."

BIBLES AND BREECHES. In the "Dear Abby" column of 5 June 1990, Abigail Van Buren printed a letter from a Texas correspondent that told the story of a young high school graduate from a wealthy family. In this community, it was customary for the parents to give the graduate a new car, and the boy and his father had spent months looking at various models. On the eve of his graduation, however, his father instead handed him a gift-wrapped Bible. The boy was so disappointed that he threw the Bible on the floor and left home, not returning until he heard of his father's death. As

he looked through his father's possessions, he came across the Bible, opened it, and found a cashier's check for the exact amount of his dream car's purchase price. This story must be a well-travelled exemplum, and Van Buren cannot resist drawing the obvious moral from scripture: "A foolish son is a grief to his father" (Proverbs 17:25).

Several years previously I heard a ribald parody of this story told by a comedian on a New Year's Eve live production of "The Johnny Carson Show" (NBC): A husband and wife wonder if they still love each other, so before Christmas they ask each other for their dream present: the wife wants a mink coat; the husband, a new boat. On Christmas morning, the wife is disappointed to find only a plain house dress, and she drops it on the floor in disgust. The husband receives simply a pair of pants, and angrily he throws them into the air, where they catch on the chandelier. Suddenly he notices a piece of paper in the pocket and finds that it is a gift certificate good for the boat he wanted. Inspired by this, the wife searches through the dress and likewise finds a gift certificate for a mink coat. So she picks up her dress and he pulls down his pants . . . "and though it's been said many times, many ways . . . Merry Christmas."

PREGNANT LEGAL CASES. According to the Italian newspaper La Stampa, an insurance agent wanting to show the absurdity of some claims for compensation publicized the following "genuine case": A couple in an automobile parked at Naples' "Love Park" were engaged in lovemaking when the car was struck by another from behind. They sued the other driver, not only for the damages to their car, but also for the cost of a wedding, since afterwards the woman was discovered to be pregnant. [Tom Torok, "Car-crossed lovers," Philadelphia Inquirer (10 June 1990):3.] As Brunvand has pointed out, "legal horror stories" have become a popular type of urban legend, especially the well-travelled tale of the man trying to use a lawnmower to trim his hedges. See Choking Doberman 160-162 and Mexican Pet 164, 167-168.

But this particular story is apparently much older; G. Legman has traced an analog as far back as 1907. He prints a version collected in New York in 1952, in which a French lawyer defends himself against the assertion that all French law cases are about sex by relating the following case: His client was in love with a girl who did not want to lose her virginity. He promised to stop when he got to her maiden-head, but the girl's mother surprised them and angrily gave the man a kick in the rear. The girl became pregnant, and the man sued the mother, claiming that she was the father of the child. "It has no sex element at all," the French lawyer concluded. [Rationale of the Dirty Joke 8.1.5 (p. 467).]

#### LEGEND UPDATES

CRAIG SHERGOLD. Appeals to send get-well cards to 10-year-old Craig Shergold continued to circulate through the US this spring, despite appeals from the English family to stop (see FN 16:10). Shergold, a victim of a rare form of brain cancer who lives in Carshalton, Surrey, had received more than 1½ million cards by November. On April 5, 1990, a variation of the original appeal appeared on American computer networks, requesting people to send cards to Craig c/o "Children's Wish Foundation, Atlanta, Georgia." This appeal gave April 15 as a deadline, adding, "This is such a small task for us to accomplish for a precious little seven year old [sic]. Let's put a smile on Craig's little face with a get-well card and let him know we all truly care by sending him a card as soon as possible." This provoked an extraordinary flurry of international exchanges over computer nets, many Americans calling the appeal a hoax based on its similarity to earlier

"Little Buddy" appeals, many Brits insisting that the appeal (though now closed) was legitimate.

Many informal projects sprang up in response to the CWH appeal, though. At Michigan State University a sophomore organized his dormitory floor into a card-making project. Construction paper and markers were set up in the study lounge for students to make their own cards. One student commented, "It's time to care for someone else, so why not do it." ["Dying boy fulfills his dream," (East Lansing, MI) State News (13 Friday 1990):3. Courtesy Kim Dyer.] Children's Wish Foundation appeals were still circulating in American newspapers as late as 9 May, when a request from an (untraced) "Don Hipp of the Dallas Division, Support Services Office" was printed in the Hazleton Standard-Speaker.

A revealing perspective on this phase of the appeal came from Leonard Abbey of Georgia Tech's Research Institute. Abbey attempted to contact the Children's Wish Foundation but repeatedly found their lines busy. On checking with local media sources, he found that this foundation used automatic dialing machines and a "boiler room" set-up to elicit donations from as many good-hearted people as possible. In fact, they had been accused by local media of using an unusually small percentage of the money collected for the benefit of children. Abbey also noted that the same organization had used similar "sick child" appeals several years in a row, giving various names and scenarios, presumably to generate mailing lists to use later for contribution appeals. He concluded, "I now realise what makes me feel uneasy about this organization. They are doing something which makes ME feel good, not something which makes a sick child feel good."

Meantime, the real Craig Shergold continued to respond to chemotherapy and was well enough in March to spend three weeks in Florida, a trip paid for by Red Watch firemen from Croydon. While there, he fulfilled a second wish by visiting Disney World and was granted a wish by Cinderella's Fairy Godmother when she singled him out during a parade of Disney characters. According to his parents, Craig replied, "There's only one wish I could hope for and that's please God, I get better." His mother, along with others who had been told Craig's story, broke out in tears, but told reporters, "Mine were tears of joy because Craig has been showing such amazing recovery that I knew this was meant to happen. It was a moment of magic." Craig was also specially invited into the dressing room of Mickey Mouse.

When the family returned to England in April, Craig, tanned from sunbathing, could now get out of his wheelchair for short walks and had even been swimming in the hotel pool. In addition, despite warnings from doctors that chemotherapy and radiation might have killed hair follicles, the boy had grown a full head of hair. By this time, 7½ million cards had arrived for him in England, and perhaps 2½ million were still on the way. Craig's mother commented, "We can't say for sure he's cured, but we're convinced he's now on the mend. It was the cards that lifted him spiritually. We saw the change. They gave him courage to keep fighting." [Kim Bartlett, "Miracle of 10M Letter Craig," The Sun (10 April 1990):1, 4-5; "Trip is magic for Craig," Croydon Advertiser (13 April 1990). Courtesy Mike Heaney, Bodleian Library, Oxford University, and John Kingston, AI Applications Institute, University of Edinburgh.]

FREEDOM "TRIP" REVISITED. Last December (FN 16:9) we noted that the communist newspaper Neues Deutschland reported that an East German visiting Budapest in September was given a "funny-tasting" menthol cigarette. He lost consciousness and woke up on a bus bound for Austria. After the German borders were opened last winter, Neues Deutschland quietly retracted the story, admitting that it was "Tatarenmeldung"



[Tartar information]. Confronted by East German TV reporters, the allegedly abducted man, Hartmut Ferworn, conceded that the story was totally invented. ["'Neues Deutschland' entschuldigt sich," Hildesheimer Allgemeine Zeitung (6 January 1990). Courtesy Sigrid Schmidt.]

SOVIET UFOs AND CRIMELORE. Tass reported that on March 13 a woman in Ulyanovsk had seen a strange point of light in the sky. Calling neighbors, they all witnessed a UFO that shot out a fiery ray in what seemed to be signals, then lit up from inside, looking like "something like a river vessel with windows." After making a sweeping maneuver, the "riverboat" faded into a glowing spot, then vanished. Recalling the Voronezh incident [FN 16:6] a Western diplomat commented, "Russians are by nature deeply religious people and are now desperately looking for something to believe in." The Russian agency, however, responded only, "Tass never jokes." (David Zimmerman, "Latest Soviet sighting: 'Riverboat from space,' Reuters release, 17 March 1990.)

Soviet filmmaker Stanislav Govorukhin recently published an article in Sovetskaia Kultura decrying the rise in crime experienced in Russia. He related a series of encounters: neighbors who had saved all their lives to buy a car, then had it stolen 15 minutes after they had parked it for the first time; a cameraman who had his wallet stolen, then had the crook call him on the phone and offer to return his documents for more money; a series of "hit-and-run room burglaries." He also mentions seeing photos of 11-12-year-old girls with heavy make-up; "they are prostitutes . . . recruited for the rich 'sheiks' in Central Asia." "The wave of crime is rolling over the country," he says. "The streets of our cities smell of it. The thieves, the muggers, the killers are right on our doorstep." [Jack Anderson and Dale Van Atta, syndicated column, 24 February 1990.]

#### EYE ON SATANISM

CULT "SURVIVOR" BOOK WITHDRAWN. Harvest House Publishers, a Christian press, has stopped publishing Lauren Stratford's Satan's Underground: The Extraordinary Story of One Woman's Escape and has called in all copies of it from book stores. The book described the author's involvement in a satanic cult and her eventual break for freedom. Reporters from Cornerstone, an evangelical Christian magazine, were disturbed by inconsistencies in her account and made efforts to verify her story. Failing to do so, they confronted Stratford, who admitted that she had fabricated the account. [Anson Shupe, "Pitchmen of the Satan Scare," Wall Street Journal (9 March 1990). Courtesy Phillips Stevens, Jr.]

ANOTHER "SATANIC" CORPORATION. In May, news reports noted that the American sportswear company Liz Claiborne Inc. was said to be in league with the devil. A rumor circulating across the country held that the corporation donated part of its profits to devil worshippers. Sarah Patterson, the company's public relations manager, stated that "There's absolutely no truth to these rumors." The company has experienced a 42% increase in profits, making more than 164 million dollars last year. ["Devil of a Rumor," Austin [TX] American-Statesman, 4 May 1990. Courtesy Sylvia Grider.]

MORE SIGNS OF THE BEAST. In Deer Park, a neighbor of Houston, Texas, residents complained when the number of their voting precinct was changed to "666." On 3 April, the city council unanimously passed a resolution asking that the precinct be renumbered, "so that all voters may enter the precinct and vote freely." The county clerk knew of no case in which a precinct was renumbered simply because "people didn't like it," but officials agreed to ask the US Justice Department to change it to Precinct 673. During the primary

elections on 10 April only 15% of normal voters turned out, some reluctantly, noting that the voting booths were located on 13th Street. [Bill DiSessa, "Voting in Precinct 666 less than spirited," Houston Chronicle (11 April 1990):6A and personal communications courtesy Randy Allison.]

Rumors among some religious Russians that Gorbachev might be the Antichrist (FN 17:11) find an analog in American fundamentalist Robert Faid's book Gorbachev: Has the Real Antichrist Come? He applies sixteen "Antichrist indicators" drawn from Revelation and finds that fourteen of them fit the Russian leader exactly. His birthmark, for instance, forms "a red dragon" with a tail hanging over marks "representing stars" above his right eye; in Revelation 12:3-4, the devil appears as a dragon casting stars to earth with his tail. Faid also finds that the numerical values of the letters in Gorbachev's name add up to 666 in Greek, Hebrew, and Russian. He advises Christians to be prepared for a grim future, including the tattooing of "the mark of the beast" on the hand or forehead of all who want to buy or sell goods. This mark, Faid predicts, could even be "the series of bars utilized in the Universal Products Code [UPC] already in place in most supermarkets." [Joplin (Missouri) Globe (29 October 1988):6A.]

A persistent rumor in America holds that the UPC already includes an electronic code for the numbers "666." On 19 October 1989, a guest on the TV evangelist program "Praise the Lord" claimed to have received a letter from the code's designer in which he admitted that he had incorporated a "666" in all UPC's. Some versions of this belief include a "complex formula" that allows believers to uncover the hidden "666" [See Michael Keith, "The Bar-Code Beast," Skeptical Inquirer 12:4 (Summer 1988) and the letter from Jeffrey Hukkanen in SI 14:3 (Spring 1990):332.]

This rumor has become part of apocalyptic UFO lore as well, in a simplified form. According to an anonymous "Conversation between Researchers" in the November 1989 issue of the Nevada Aerial Research Group Newsletter (pp. 21-23), if you look at any UPC, you will see two thin lines on each side and two thin lines in the middle that extend down below the other bars. Each of these pairs of lines represents the number "6" so the whole system is based on a "666." The next step is to give every person a card with a personal identification number (PIN) containing "666" and force us to use it for all monetary transactions. This system, allegedly, has already been implemented by Israelis in occupied Palestine and will be extended world-wide by 1992. The final step will be to tattoo the PIN onto peoples' wrists, so that it could be scanned by lasers in stores, or else to imbed a microchip with the same information into one's skin. This system, according to the "researchers," will usher in 7½ years of control by "the beast", after which a nuclear holocaust followed by plagues will destroy most humans. Luckily, the Fatima prophecy (now confirmed by extraterrestrials' time-travel devices) shows that Jesus will return in 2011.

#### MISCELLANY

FOLKLORIST/HIB ENCOUNTER DESCRIBED. At a March meeting of the Archaeus Project in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Peter Rojcewicz, folklorist at the Julliard School of New York City, admitted that his research into anomalous phenomena had begun with a mysterious "man in black" experience in 1980. Speaking to an audience of professionals and scientists interested in the paranormal, he explained that he had previously represented an account of this encounter as a third-person "memorate" collected from another student at the University of Pennsylvania. He did not admit that the

experience was his own "because he was concerned about how people might react to his story."

In the encounter (presented in third-person form in the Journal of American Folklore 100 [1987]:152-153), Rojcewicz was sitting in the University of Pennsylvania library. He was reading a book on UFOs recommended by a professor who thought he should be interested in them as folklore. A gaunt, pale man dressed in a black suit, shoes, and string tie appeared and asked about Rojcewicz's reading. When he told the stranger that he was not sure he was very interested in UFOs, the man screamed back, "Flying saucers are the most important fact of the century." After Rojcewicz calmed him down, the man put his hand on his shoulder, said something like "Go well on your purpose," and left. Rojcewicz, like many other MIB contactees, immediately felt overwhelmed with fear and found that apparently no one else was in the library. He now suspects that he was in an "altered state" somewhere "in the crack" between real life and fantasy.

Rojcewicz noted that many other contactees date major changes in their lifestyles to their meetings with MIBs; some become more successful, but others feel victimized, go into hiding, or become drug users. When asked what a good defense against MIBs might be, he responded, "Laughter. If they ask you why you're laughing, tell them, 'Rojcewicz told me to do it,'" adding, "When you confront evil, don't feed them your fear." [Gordon Slovit, "Encounters with 'Men in Black': fact or fantasy?" Minneapolis Star-Tribune (24 March 1990):1E, 5E. Courtesy Linda Milligan.]

FENG SHUI [CHINESE GEOMANCY]. A paper delivered by Charles F. Emmons of Gettysburg [PA] College at the recent Popular Culture Association meeting in Toronto includes a number of legends about the strength of feng shui beliefs in contemporary Hong Kong. Feng shui is a system of magic that involves quasi-scientific observations of landscape and architecture to help people choose houses and design business places to harmonize with natural environmental powers. It is, for instance, important to situate main entrances along lines of good luck. One large bank designed its front door so that it cut off the sharp corner of the building, allegedly to look like a fish's mouth sucking in customers and money. On the other hand, a radio station, advised that its main entrance was unlucky, sealed it off entirely, forcing employees to enter through an adjacent parking lot.

Architectural designs also have feng shui implications. The same radio station has several concrete structures on its roof, said to look like coffins. Employees say that one of them will eventually die for each "coffin." And when the Western-owned Hongkong and Shanghai Bank was overshadowed by a new 70-story People's Republic Bank, triangles covering the new bank's sides were said to be casting bad luck on the Western bank, a bad omen for the Chinese takeover of the city later this decade. ["Hong Kong's Feng Shui: Popular Magic in a Modern, Urban Setting," unpublished paper.]

MYSTERY ILLNESS PANIC IN YUGOSLAVIA. On 19 March, small numbers of ethnic Albanian children in Pristina, the capital of the ethnically divided province of Kosovo, began reporting to hospitals with unexplained symptoms of weakness, difficulty in breathing, chest pains, dry mouth, and fainting. During the next two days, eighteen children were affected, but on 22 March 352 more people, mostly between the ages of 16 and 18, were hospitalized, and on 23 March 240 more were admitted with similar symptoms. Representatives of the Albanian opposition claimed that an unknown chemical was being poured or sprayed in classrooms, but a medical team examining the victims could find no trace of poisons. Albanians claimed that the Slavic-controlled medical team had not examined the event impartially, and ethnic violence broke

out in the streets of Vucitrn, near Pristina. At least ten Slavs were hospitalized after being beaten by ethnic Albanians. [AP report, 24 March 1990.]

#### STOP ME IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS

LEGENDS IN THE TABLOIDS. Shortly after Boris Smiegel, 39, and his mistress, Greta Hegley, checked into a motel near Salzburg, Austria, they were surprised by the man's furious wife. Freda Smiegel, 36, a technician at an adhesives laboratory, was carrying two buckets of fast-drying experimental superglue, used in building suspension bridges. Before the two could react, she doused both of them with the glue, which instantly forms "a bond stronger than steel." Thick walls kept motel personnel from hearing their screams. When they were discovered the next morning, they were transported to a Salzburg hospital, where they were separated in a five-hour operation. Smiegel, deserted by his lover, is now being sued for divorce by his wife. [Sun (11 July 1989):35.]

Marianne Kosse, 29, from near Arles, France, began suffering from an odd illness: "No matter how much I ate," she said, "I kept getting weaker and weaker, as if I was being deprived of food." When her physician, Dr. Giles Lebideux, found a circular mass in her stomach, he feared a cancer and immediately decided to operate. Once into the stomach, however, he watched in horror as a four-pound [1.8 kg.] frog jumped out onto the operating room floor. Afterwards, Kosse recalled that a few months before she had swallowed a tadpole from a nearby pond on a dare during a birthday party. [Sun (12 December 1989):15.]

A British AIDS counselor warned that infected playboys at Spanish resorts had formed a cult devoted to giving the disease to vacationing girls. He said that in two cases British girls, after a holiday affair in Spain, were given little farewell gifts to carry with them onto the plane home. The packages contained a small wooden coffin inscribed with "Welcome to the death club. Now you've got AIDS." The two girls are said to be undergoing three months of testing to see if they have in fact caught the disease. [Sun (6 March 1990):5. Courtesy Alan Mays.]

According to European tabloids, Liberace's ghost has become attached to a West German banker who used to be one of his fans. "He's a real pest," the banker complained. "He's always re-arranging my clothes because he says they're too boring." Liberace's apparitions, witnessed by several visitors to the banker's house, show him grinning and wearing a gaudy, sequined jacket and are usually accompanied by a sickeningly sweet smell of cologne. [Knight-Ridder News Service release, 1 April 1990. Courtesy Sylvia Grider.]

On Saturday, February 3, Tracy Ziegenfuss of Bethesda, Maryland, was driving her 1985 Subaru when it broke down. The local dealership towed it to their lot but left the door unlocked. That night, a homeless drifter named Gilbert Davis crawled inside the car for shelter. The next morning he was found dead on the front seat. The dealership cleaned the seat, but the Ziegenfusses refused to take the car back, claiming that it "still smells of death." Bob Ziegenfuss said that he contacted the dead man's family, saying that he "was sorry about his death and hoped that our automobile provided him a comfortable place to make his transition." [Weekly World News (17 April 1990):39. Courtesy Alan Mays.]

Responding to screams and fearing that a murder was taking place, police detective Adolph Bruger of Brussels, Belgium, burst into the bedroom of Willy and Eva Zeiffer, to find the wife tied hand and foot to the bed and the husband lying helpless on the floor, wearing only a Batman mask and cape. Willy, 47, had been playing sex games with his wife and had

climbed a chest of drawers, intending to leap on top of her wife below. Unfortunately, he missed the bed, shattering one arm and breaking both hands. Police filed no charges, commenting, "Their neighbors have much to gossip about now." Weekly World News (24 April 1990):37. Courtesy Alan Mays.]

Steve Wills, of Galampton, England, was taking a bath, when he heard suspicious noises from downstairs. Thinking it might be a burglar, he jumped from the tub and ran downstairs. There he found a real estate agent showing his house to a family. The agency had sold Wills the house three months before, but one agent apparently had not realized that the house was no longer on the market and had kept a key to the front door. Examiner (19 June 1990):14.]

Russell Moody, a resident of San Antonio, Texas, had gone often to the Shane Road railroad crossing to test a local legend. In the 1930s, a tradition goes, a school bus stalled on these tracks and ten children were killed when a train hit it. Nowadays, if a car stalls on these tracks, the ghosts of these children push it off to save the driver. Moody tested this legend one morning and was surprised to find "tiny handprints and hoof marks in the heavy dew on my rear bumper." The next day, he dusted the bumper with baby powder and tried again; once more the handprints and hoof marks appeared. The legend explained the handprints, but the hoof marks remained a mystery until a psychic was invited to contact the spirits. She learned that the children's ghosts were having difficulty getting some heavy cars to roll, so they had captured a demon, whose strong hooved feet could start the vehicles moving. Examiner (19 June 1990):11.]

#### HAVE YOU HEARD?

UNEXPECTED RETURNS. Marion Bowman and Sandy Hobbs write: Can anyone help us to establish the legendary status of two stories which have in common the fact that an unexpectedly early return leads to the discovery of a crime? The first appeared in a letter to a popular magazine (My Weekly [3 September 1988]:55):

My daughter-in-law's friends were going on holiday and took a taxi to the airport. At the check-in, they discovered they'd left their flight tickets at home. There was nothing for it but to go back for them, so the husband took a taxi home. Arriving at his house, he was puzzled to see another taxi parked outside. The house door was open, and they caught their earlier taxi driver robbing the house. He already had the TV, video, and several other items in his taxi. The police were called and the thief detained. But what if the people hadn't forgotten their tickets?

The second story has been told in two different version in the West of Scotland:

A woman leaves her car in Lewis's car park in Glasgow. She forgets something so has to come back to the car almost immediately, only to discover the car gone. She rushes to the car park attendant, who tells her that a man came with his seriously ill daughter. He couldn't get his own car to start, but since his was the same make as her car, he tried the keys and found they fitted, so he rushed off to hospital with his daughter and will return the car as soon as possible. The woman is irate and dissatisfied, and she rushes off to find a policeman. When they get back to the car park, the woman's car is there, and the car park attendant goes through the story again. Somewhat mollified, the woman says she is furious, but probably won't take the matter further.

In version 1, the story ends:

The policeman asks her if she is sure the car is exactly

as she left it. A quick inspection reveals four bald tyres instead of new ones. The car park attendant is charged with running a tyre racket.

In version 2, there are two policemen, one old, one young: The older policeman says that although it was wrong to take the car, it was obviously an emergency, so he suggests the woman drop the matter. However, the young policeman asks her to check the car, and the tyre switch is discovered. The older policeman and the car park attendant are eventually charged.

Perhaps significantly, the second version has supposedly been told by a private detective!

We cannot recall having seen these stories in any work on contemporary legend. Somewhat similar to the car park story is Paul Smith's "Make sure you lock your car!" in The Book of Nastier Legends (London: Routledge, 1986):37. This is a rather simpler narrative, in which the car owner merely returns to discover the car engine being removed. It might well have been an ancestor to the one quoted, however.

Address variants to Marion Bowman, Flat G, 45 Linden Gardens, London W2 ENGLAND, or to Sandy Hobbs, Department of Applied Social Studies, Paisley College of Technology, High St., Paisley, Renfrewshire, SCOTLAND PA1 2BE.

#### PUBLICATION NOTES

DIE RATTE IN DER PIZZA. Subscribers who read German will be interested to know that Bengt af Klintberg's important annotated collection of European contemporary legends has now been published as Die Ratte in der Pizza: Und Andere Moderne Sagen und Grosstadtmythen (Kiel: Wolfgang Butt Verlag, 1990). The volume, translated by Markus Bertram, Katja Köhne, and Gerhard Schmitz, includes a forward by Lutz Röhrich and an introduction by Klintberg. Summaries of 100 legends and rumors follow, each accompanied by reports and discussions of the same or similar rumors in North American and Europe.

#### RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

We are always on the lookout for publications on any topic relevant to contemporary legends, especially those in journals or from publishing houses not usually read by academics in the US and Great Britain. Please forward offprints (if convenient) to Bill Ellis, Editor, FN, Penn State-Hazleton, Hazleton, PA 18201 USA. For publications in foreign languages, English abstracts would be appreciated.

Items starred (\*) are housed in a file in the Editor's office and can be made available to qualified scholars for reference. Books and articles from major publishers or standard folklore journals are not normally starred. Threats to Children on the Network News." Perspectives on Social Problems 1 (1989):259-282.

Briggs, Charles L., and Julián Josué Vigil. The Lost Gold Mine of Juan Mondragón: A Legend from New Mexico Performed by Melagufas Romero. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990. [Ethnopoetic transcription of a 2-hour performance of a local legend, with an interpretive essay on its context and poetic structure.]

Ellis, Bill. "Death by Folklore: Ostension, Contemporary Legend, and Murder." Western Folklore 48 (1989):201-220. [Analysis of murder cases with "satanic" elements.]

Evans, Hilary. Alternate States of Consciousness: Unself, Otherself, and Superself. New York: Sterling Publishing Co., 1989.

Hall, Dennis R. "Purity and Danger in American Popular

Culture: C. Everett Koop's Understanding AIDS. Journal of American Culture 12:4 (Winter 1989):99-103. [Applies Mary Douglas's anthropological concepts to the US government's effort to "inform" the public about this virus.]

Hicks, Robert D. "Police Pursuit of Satanic Crime, Part I." Skeptical Inquirer 14:3 (Spring 1990):276-291.

----- "Police Pursuit of Satanic Crime, Part II: The Satanic Conspiracy and Urban Legends." Skeptical Inquirer 14:4 (Summer 1990): 378-389. [Revised two-part version of his essay "Satanic Cults: A Skeptical View of the Law Enforcement Approach," in Satanism in America (El Cerrito: Gaia Press, 1989):A1-A35.]

Kapferer, Jean-Noel. "A Mass Poisoning Rumor in Europe." Public Opinion Quarterly 53:4 (Winter 1989):467-481.

----- Rumors: The World's Oldest Media. Trans. Bruce Fink. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1990.

James, Barry. "France Possessed by the Occult and Irrational." Skeptical Inquirer 14:3 (Spring 1990):232-233. [According to L'Express, French citizens with higher education in science are most likely to believe in the paranormal. From the International Herald Tribune.]

Kaivola-Bregenhøj, Annikki. "From Dream to Interpretation." International Folklore Review 7 (1990):88-96. [Survey of premonitory dreams and dream symbolism in modern Finland.]

Klare, Roger. "Ghosts Make News: How Four Newspapers Report Psychic Phenomena." Skeptical Inquirer 14:4 (Summer 1990):363-371. [Survey of 4 papers' coverage of the paranormal.]

Long, Greg. Examining the Earthlight Theory: The Yakima UFO Microcosm. Chicago: Center for UFO Studies, 1990. [In-depth study of extensive UFO activity in Washington State, with discussion of theories linking UFOs to tectonic strain.]

Rabinowitz, Dorothy. "From the Mouths of Babes to a Jail Cell: Child abuse and the abuse of justice: A case study." Harper's Magazine (May 1990):52-63. [Skeptical critique of a "satanic" child-abuse investigation in Maplewood, NJ.]

Simpson, Jacqueline. Scandinavian Folktales. London/Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1988. [Translation of legends dating from early 19th century to modern times.]

Victor, Jeffrey S. "The Spread of Satanic-Cult Rumors." Skeptical Inquirer 14:3 (Spring 1990):287-291.

FOAftale News is the newsletter of the International Society for Contemporary Legend Research. ISCLR was formed to build worldwide links among legend scholars. It encourages study of so-called "modern" and "urban" legends, and also of any legend that is circulating actively. We invite all who have an interest in this research area to join us. Members receive this newsletter, and ISCLR also prepares an annual book-length publication including the best in contemporary legend research.

To Join, send a check made out to "ISCLR" for \$18 USD to Mark Glazer, Vice President, Department of Behavioral Science, Texas University--Panamerican, Edinburg, TX 78539, USA, or for £10 UK pounds sterling to Sandy Hobbs, Treasurer, Department of Applied Social Studies, Paisley College of Technology, High St., Paisley, Renfrewshire, Scotland PA1 2BE. Institutions wishing to receive FOAftale News may affiliate themselves with ISCLR for the same price.

FOAftale News is now indexed in the MLA Bibliography. Please send queries, clippings, notices, and short research reports (up to 3000 words) to Bill Ellis, Editor, Penn State--Hazleton Campus, Hazleton, PA 18201, USA. I can now accept material on IBM-compatible 3 1/2 inch diskettes (please include information on what software you used). Telephone: 717-450-3026 or 717-788-2021. E-mail: WCE2 at PSUVM BITNET.

#### FOAftale News

Bill Ellis, Editor

Penn State--Hazleton Campus

Hazleton, PA 18201

USA

