

NEOS

A PUBLICATION OF THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH INTEREST GROUP

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 2

OCTOBER 2015

ADVISORY BOARD UPDATE

ACYIG First Solo Conference A Success! Looking Ahead

Rachael Stryker (CSU, East Bay; ACYIG Convener)

On March 13-15, 2015, ACYIG held its first solo conference on the California State University, Long Beach campus. We are happy to report that it was one of the most successful ACYIG conferences to date! Over 90 presenters provided papers and workshops to about 120 attendees. Our presenters came from six countries and over thirty universities, colleges, and worksites. They included practitioners and scholars from more than ten disciplines, with an excellent mix of professionals and graduate students (about 3:2).

I'd like to offer deep gratitude to several people who made the ACYIG Conference so special. First, a huge shout-out to ACYIG Board Members Heather Rae-Espinoza and Cindy Dell Clark for all of their hard work. They set an example of how to run an intellectually-rigorous, yet

fun and affordable conference that our group will attempt to replicate for years to come for our solo conferences. I'd also like to thank the CSU Long Beach campus for hosting us. About twenty CSULB departments, offices, and student groups pulled together to generously offer their space, money, and time, setting a true example of how a campus can come together to encourage fine scholarship. Finally, I'd like to thank Dr. Susan Terrio for her wonderful Keynote Address, "Undocumented, Unaccompanied Children and the Politics of Culture." It was standing room only, with approximately 130 attendees.

With such a successful conference under our belts, the Board is excitedly looking ahead to future meetings. Based on last summer's Membership Survey results (2014), the Board voted to move to biennial ACYIG Meetings, which puts our next conference in 2017. We also voted to conduct joint meetings every four years, starting in 2017. The Board is



Whale watching in Long Beach – Even the dolphins came to the ACYIG Conference. Photo by Bill Clark.

looking to expand our options for joint conferences, and we are currently in negotiations with AAA Sections and with campuses that house strong programs in the Anthropology of Children and Youth or Childhood Studies in North America. If you, your department, or your campus would like to help sponsor a joint ACYIG Conference in your city, town, or campus, please email Rachael Stryker at: rachael.stryker@csueastbay.edu.

In the nearer future, please be sure to attend the ACYIG Organizational Meeting at this year's AAA Meeting in Denver. It will take place on Saturday, November 21, between 12:15 - 1:30 pm. This year's meeting will be a brown-bag lunch, so please bring food and drink. Our agenda includes continuing to build Collaborative Research

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AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF CHILDREN OR YOUTH THAT HAS IMPACTED MY WORK

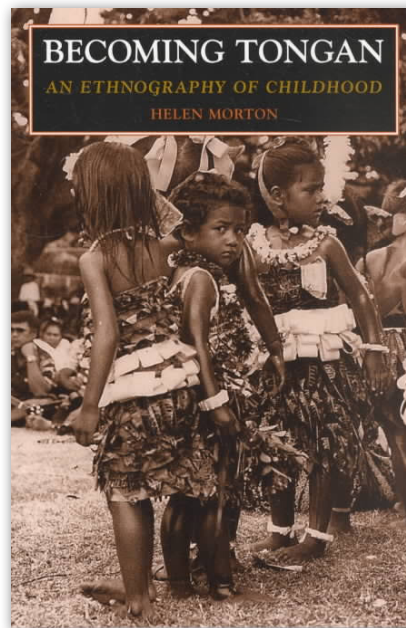
Becoming Tongan and Playing on the Mother-Ground in the Classroom

Robyn M. Holmes (Monmouth U)

There are so many wonderful ethnographies on childhood and children that span across decades and continents. When I was in graduate school in the late 1980s, my doctoral mentor Professor Warren Shapiro recommended that I read as much material on children across disciplines as possible. For that counsel alone, I am forever grateful. I began with the classic studies on childhood including Whiting and Whiting's (1975) *Six Cultures Project* and Mead's (1928; 1954) work in Samoa. These works shaped an early understanding of children and inspired future ethnographers to explore the connection between children's development and culture. More recent works expanded our understanding. These include *The Anthropology of Childhood: Cherubs, Chattel, and Changelings* (Lancy 2015) and *Anthropology and Child Development: A Cross Cultural Reader* (LeVine & New 2008).

Two ethnographies in particular are indispensable to my teaching. The first, Lee's (1996) *Becoming Tongan: An Ethnography of Childhood*, describes how socialization practices and parental beliefs shape the process by which Tongan children construct their cultural identi-

ties. The second, Lancy's (1996) *Playing on the Mother-Ground: Cultural Routines for Children's Development*, illuminates how Kpelle cultural routines and practices shape children's developmental outcomes. I initially read both texts for pleasure and then reread them later to inform my own fieldwork with children in the Pacific Rim. I also realized how relevant they were to my teaching. They are my cultural tool kit and I frequently use them in my classes either alone or in combination.



In my child development and cultural psychology courses, I always include Lancy's and Lee's work on cultural routines and their connection to developmental outcomes. This sets the foundation for topical discussions. I combine Lancy with Lee's material on disciplinary practices and physical punishment, which always leads to a lively dialogue on how culture shapes childrearing practices. Many of my students find foreign the Tongan connection between physical punishment and love, especially when they've read that parents don't teach alternatives for inappropriate behavior. This helps facilitate a discussion on universal and culturally situated definitions of child maltreatment. Using their

personal experiences, students identify with the disciplinary practices their own caregivers used and this moves the conversation in the direction of how these practices reinforce cultural values.

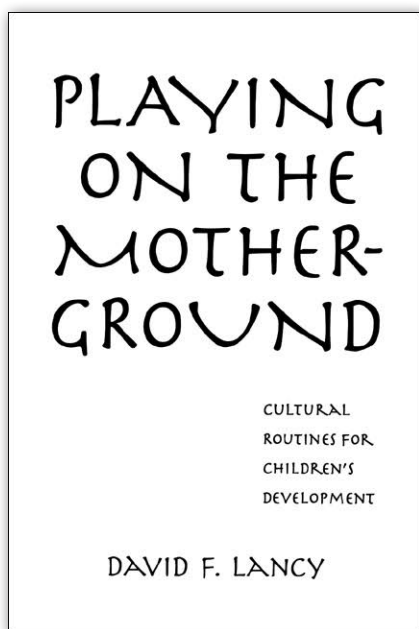
For example, physical punishment is a typical Tongan disciplinary practice. Many students question why Tongan children are obedient when they receive punishment yet behave aggressively with their own peers. This carves a path to Tongan views of children, what 'becoming Tongan' means, and how socialization processes help produce competent Tongan adults. Obedience, respect, and self-regulation of behavior and emotions are core Tongan cultural values, and punishment practices reinforce these values. In my classroom, we draw connections among these values and daily interactions, such as babies receiving encouragement for behaving aggressively, and children participating in the punishment of other children.

We also discuss how parental behaviors and everyday child care practices connect to the preferential treatment of children. Students compare their family dynamics to those in Tonga. They recognize common patterns such as family favorites and differences in that Tongan children who become *pele*, or the favorite, might be given special food or clothes. My students find it interesting that the favorite child is often a girl, as they connect with material learned in other courses that reinforces the preferential treatment of boys in many cultures. They find it difficult to reconcile girls as favored, yet likely to suffer a beating from a husband.

Additionally, I combine Lancy's and Lee's works in my children's play and folklore courses. We discuss how playgroups and play forms reflect and reinforce cultural values. For example, Kpelle children typically play outdoors in mixed aged groups and near but not with adults. My students note how play in contemporary

America has moved indoors as a result of technology, lack of play space, and safety concerns. They draw upon their own childhood experiences in which they played outdoor games in large groups, and note that many children today play by themselves or with just one child in a formal play date.

Lancy's *Playing on the Mother Ground* has generated more dialogue than most any other work I assign. Students identify with the power of observational learning and can relate their own play experiences to why Kpelle children imitate adult activities in their make-believe play. This concept makes students think critically about how people socialize their children to become competent adults, either through informal or direct means. The conversation almost always moves to parental attitudes toward play and how these shape children's play behaviors and routines. Most students are surprised to learn that parents in many cultural groups neither play with their children nor support play. This takes us full circle to discussions about how culture on many different levels shapes children's activities and development.



With the growing interest in childhood studies, increasing globalization, and

the importance placed upon acquiring cultural competency for contemporary students as a work (and life) skill, ethnographic works on children and childhood such as Lee's and Lancy's answer the call to help students think critically about children's social realities and lived experiences.

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Mary Ellen Goodman's Race Awareness in Young Children and Its Effect on My Work

Richard Zimmer (Sonoma State U)

In the aftermath of World War II, many academicians asked the question: Could Nazi Germany have happened in the United States? They focused on racist attitudes and submission to authority. Their answer was simple: Yes. Looking at Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (2004[1951]), Adorno et al.'s *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), and Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice* (1949), it was clear that tolerance of diversity was and is a fragile thing, easily swept away by economic hardship and political expediency. Moreover, racial prejudice and racism started early, as Goodman found in *Race Awareness in Young Children* (1952).

I ran across Goodman's work when I attended university in the 1960s. I was concerned about when racial prejudice first developed among children. Goodman, a cultural anthropologist of childhood, had wanted to know when children became aware of racial differences, so she asked four-year-olds whom they would invite to their houses and with whom they felt comfortable. In her initial research, she found that her informants had very clear ideas about racial awareness and racial preference.

I was startled. Idealistically, I had always thought that one was taught to be racist. The song from the musical *South Pacific* sums it up well: "You've got to be taught to love and hate..." And the song mentions that you had to be taught "...from six or seven or eight." Now Goodman was telling me that all this started earlier. To add to my astonishment, she wrote in a later forward (1964) that her sub-