

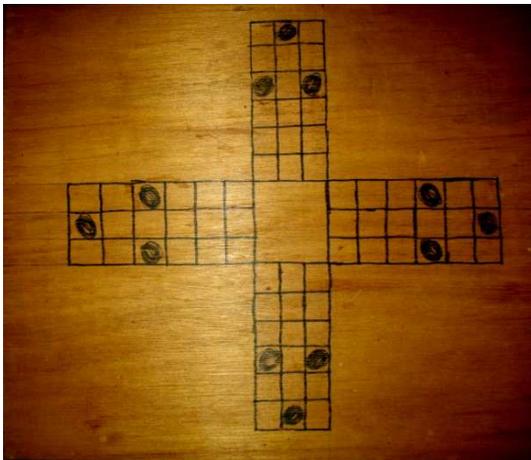
COUNTRY, REGION AND GENRE OF ITEM: Lauren RaShae Jennings, 23, Female
 United States of America, Tompkinsville, KY – Folk Game White, Scotch-Irish, American
 English
 Bowling Green, KY
 September 22, 2009

COLLECTED BY:

This item was collected by Myles W. Oliverio on the evening of September 22, 2009 at the private residence of RaShae Jennings in Bowling Green, KY. This collection was delivered orally and recorded by hand.

DESCRIPTION OF ITEM:

This item of folklore is a game, primarily diagnostic of rural South Central Kentucky and Northern Tennessee. The game “Luazi” has been played in RaShae Jennings family for over 80 years. Lauren RaShae Jennings is the fifth generation to play the game. The game begins with a large board usually three feet square. A large cross is drawn on the board and the four sides of the board can be used for a maximum of four players. Inside the cross are small squares that provide room for the game pieces. Each player is given a set number of tokens (usually coinage, most popular being a dime). The coinage is usually returned to the owner but variations of the game exist where the coinage is used as a wager, winner taking all. The procedure of the game is to roll two dice and the resulting number dictates how many square spaces the player can move. To win, a player’s coins need to move all the way around the board until they reach the center of the cross. However, the player’s coins can be bumped off by other player’s coins if the square is already occupied with another player’s coin. Each player has a “safe” zone where other player’s coins cannot be knocked off, indicated as the solid black circles below. These are designated spaces on the board that do not allow other players to remove the pieces. The typical game runs about 20-30 minutes.



“Luazi” game-board. The majority of the game-boards consist of homemade patterns and designs. In this example from the Gordon Ridge area in Tompkinsville, Monroe County, KY, the design is drawn in a cross with permanent marker on the back of ¼ inch wood paneling.

Myles W. Oliverio
 Bowling Green, Warren County, Kentucky

CONTEXT:

This game is found within a below-medium income home in rural Kentucky. The game typically is played in an “after-supper” setting in the evening or during a socially casual time during the day. Members of an immediate family or friends are usually those who choose to play and all ages can play it although children typically play with an adult. The game is one of deceit, chance and aggression. An aggressive player can easily make this game more competitive, but emotions and personal attachment does not go farther than a curse word or a frown. There are frequently rematches or “winner plays” matches where a person who wishes to join after a game has already begun plays the “winner” of the first match.

INFORMANT AND AUDIENCE INTERPRETATION:

The players all seemed to enjoy the game, and are all satisfied after playing one round. The origins date back over four generations, although it is unclear where this particular version received its start. Players often see themselves carrying on a tradition when playing the game.

COLLECTOR’S INTERPRETATION:

Luazi is a very interesting game. It shares the same principles of other local or passed-down folk games, which all have a commonality: each is played as a tradition. Many members of the family play the game because it is not only entertaining, but familiar as well. This board game may be a variant of the ancient-Indian game of Pachisi or Ludo. The cross form found in these games is very similar to the version collected on September 22nd.

COUNTRY, REGION AND GENRE OF ITEM:
United States of America, Tompkinsville, KY – Sign Superstition

Nelli Copas, 85, Female
White, Scotch-Irish
English
Tompkinsville, KY
October 10, 2009

COLLECTED BY:

This item was collected by Myles W. Oliverio on the evening of October 10, 2009 during an in-person interview. The item was delivered orally and was recorded by hand.

DESCRIPTION OF ITEM:

This folk term was first discovered by accident during a weekend trip to Covington, KY. While visiting the newly built home of Dr. Shaun Jennings, Ms. Copas uttered the phrase “I have an itch in the bottom of my foot, I must be coming to new land.” There are different variations of such beliefs as a simple internet search will reveal, however the exact origins of this text remain relatively unknown, although there is speculation that it is a culmination of various foreign and ethnic backgrounds. The superstition is comprised of the formula *if a then b*. If there is an itch on the bottom of the foot, then the person will visit an area for the first time.

CONTEXT:

This sign superstition is supposed to alert the belief-beholder that he/she is entering “new” land (in the context meaning that the land has never been visited by that person before). The belief seems to share similar elements of superstition, such as brooms or utensils (such as forks and knives) falling on the floor preceding company or an itchy nose preceding some kind of altercation.

INFORMANT AND AUDIENCE INTERPRETATION:

There remains a belief, particularly with this individual that these sign superstitions hold some validity to them, but merely serves to reassure the folklore holder that such events are upcoming.

COLLECTOR’S INTERPRETATION:

My personal interpretation is that the superstition is a forewarning to the individual that comes across it. In other words, a group of five people cannot all feel their foot itch at the same time (bar astronomical odds) to indicate that such change in travel or land will occur.

Myles W. Oliverio
Bowling Green, Warren County, Kentucky

ANNOTATION:

There are different variations of this text that exist, particularly to itching extremities (hands, feet, nose ect.) all collected independently:

- | | | |
|----|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. | that they will soon walk on strange ground. | If one's feet itch it portends |
| 2. | journey to a new/strange place. | An itching left foot means a |
| 3. | journey to a familiar place. | An itching right foot means a |
| 4. | individual will be traveling (take a trip). | An itch of the foot means the |

Itch Superstitions and Omens. http://www.japach.com/superstitions/itch_superstitions.html
(accessed October 20, 2009).

COUNTRY, REGION AND GENRE OF ITEM:
United States of America, New York, NY – Folk Game

Martin E. Oliverio, 63, Male
White, Italian-American
English, Italian
Murray, KY
November 25, 2009

COLLECTED BY:

This item was collected by Myles W. Oliverio on the evening of November 25th, 2009 at the private residence of Martin E. Oliverio in Murray, KY. This collection was delivered orally and recorded by hand.

DESCRIPTION OF ITEM:

The game “stoop ball” is a game that can be played by one or more people where the object of the game is to throw a high-bounce ball (most commonly a tennis-ball) against a set of steps or stairs leading up to a porch or front door of a building. The name “stoop” ball most likely comes from the stance in which the player must stay in due to the stairs being of a relatively small height. To throw a high-bounce ball at a set of stairs (assuming that the ball does not shoot up high), the player will most likely have to respond to low flying or ground-skimming balls, thus staying in a “stooped” position for a prolonged amount of time. In the variation Mr. Oliverio described, this game is meant to be played non-stop, as in, once the ball is caught by the player it is immediately thrown again. The game is meant to sharpen the short-throw and reflex catching skills of the player.

CONTEXT:

This item of folklore was collected in a one-on-one interview with Mr. Martin Oliverio during an interview with a goal of collecting items of folklore. Upon providing examples of different genres, Mr. Oliverio suggested the game of “stoop ball” as a folk game because it was a learned and shared practice spread by neighborhood youth during his childhood. Mr. Oliverio said the situations where “stoop ball” were played was when there was a lull in activities throughout the day or there was no one around to play with. However, if the conditions permitted, it was possible to play a full fledged game of “stoop ball” (or other variants), but it primarily was most enjoyed, in this case, being played solo. Females rarely played the game. Mr. Oliverio grew up in Pelham Bay, New York in the Bronx Borough. He was a state-award winning baseball player and accredits his winning-pitching abilities to these small games during his childhood.

INFORMANT AND AUDIENCE INTERPRETATION:

The informant chose this item of folklore to share because he felt that it was an enjoyable game, especially for one that is past down from generations of urban youth. In the working class communities of the 1950’s, entertainment for children had to come from a relatively affordable source. Not only was the ball-game stimulating and fun, it provided a way for the community children to play a common game.

Myles W. Oliverio
Bowling Green, Warren County, Kentucky

COLLECTOR'S INTERPRETATION:

I believe that the informant's interpretation is a sound one. I myself have played this game (and variations) and agree that such activities are a popular way for youth to engage in play. I also agree that it provides for an introductory level of sports involving the quick reflexes. My interpretation suggests that, although countless variations of this game exist, it is a folklore text in that it is passed down through generations and different communities.

ANNOTATION:

B.P. *The Big Apple: Stoopball*. April 21, 2008.

http://www.barrypopik.com/index.php/new_york_city/entry/stoopball_stoop_ball/ (accessed November 25, 2009).

COUNTRY, REGION AND GENRE OF ITEM:
United States of America/Italy—Pantomimic Gesture

Martin E. Oliverio, 63, Male
White, Italian-American
English, Italian
Murray, KY
September 28, 2009

COLLECTED BY:

This item was collected by Myles W. Oliverio on the evening of September 28th, 2009 at the private residence of Martin Oliverio in Murray, KY. This collection was delivered orally and recorded by hand.

DESCRIPTION OF ITEM:

This folk term has been used primarily by my father's side of the family, urban in origin from New York City. The question asked often was "a penny for your thoughts?" This is a pantomimic gesture that is expressed by placing a penny or offering a penny to another individual.

CONTEXT:

This saying is usually used during a lull in a social environment, such as a conversation, where one person is seemingly preoccupied by thoughts. Therefore, their attention is elsewhere and not into the social conversation (i.e. a daydream). The second party reaches into their purse/wallet and pulls out a coin (usually a penny) and places it on the table in front of the preoccupied individual. The noise of the penny landing on the table is supposed to be just enough to break the concentration of the individual. "A penny for your thoughts" is then said, prompting the daydreaming individual to divulge in their thoughts for one cent.

INFORMANT AND AUDIENCE INTERPRETATION:

The informant believes that this item of folklore is a very friendly, non-invasive method in continuing conversation. By asking the question, "a penny for your thoughts," the informant believes that it then opens a new dialog for conversation—particularly on the thoughts that have so preoccupied the other.

COLLECTOR'S INTERPRETATION:

I agree with the informant's interpretation of this folk speech/gesture. I believe that the one-cent piece is just as powerful as the question being asked. Why not a nickel, dime or quarter? What makes the penny so useful and yet so powerful. Is the cost of carrying the conversation on only worth a penny? In other words, is it because the one individual is so preoccupied with another thought that pressing them for a conversation is only worth one-penny?

ANNOTATION:

Whiting, Bartlett Jere. *Modern Proverbs and Proverbial Sayings*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.

Myles W. Oliverio
Bowling Green, Warren County, Kentucky

COUNTRY, REGION AND GENRE OF ITEM:
United States of America, Aurora, KY – Folk Metaphor

Willette Oliverio, 53, Female
White, Scotch-Irish
American
English
Murray, KY
December 8, 2009

COLLECTED BY:

This item was collected by Myles W. Oliverio on the morning of December 8, 2009. This collection was delivered orally via telephone and recorded by hand.

DESCRIPTION OF ITEM:

This item of folklore is a folk metaphor that spread predominately in the Mid-Western United States throughout the later 1970's and 1980's, and even found sporadic rebirths in the past two decades. "Mr. Goodbar" is a male personality figure that lurks in the bars and night clubs, usually found in the city. The personality is a charming but sinister one, one that can lead to betrayal, deception and danger.

CONTEXT:

"Make sure you don't meet a Mr. Goodbar," or "Don't look for Mr. Goodbar" are a few of the versions that exist that are asked to teenage women prior to going out for the night. It is usually said by a mother-figure as one of the last farewells before the teen walks out the door. It can be in reference to school dates or unisex functions.

INFORMANT AND AUDIENCE INTERPRETATION:

The informant says that telling young women to watch out for a "Mr. Goodbar" is a subtle and contemporary way to offer words of advice before a night on the town. The informant discussed that it was a legend that could be used where both the mother-figure and the daughter-figure can both relate to the same person.

COLLECTOR'S INTERPRETATION:

I agree with the informant that both the mother and daughter figures can relate to a "Mr. Goodbar." In 1976, *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* was released in the US to much popularity and has since become an item of popular culture. In the book written by Judith Rossner, a deaf school teacher protagonist begins to bar hop around town, having multiple relationships with different men and starts to use drugs and is eventually murdered. The book is based on the 1973 brutal murder of Roseanne Quinn in New York City, a "Mr. Goodbar" being the name for the male antagonist personalities. Therefore, by telling young women to "avoid a Mr. Goodbar," they are alluding to a culturally popular antagonist personality that they should be wary of. The name "Mr. Goodbar" may have some reverse meaning, misusing the word "Good" to label something that is truly bad.

Myles W. Oliverio
Bowling Green, Warren County, Kentucky

COUNTRY, REGION AND GENRE OF ITEM:
United States of America, Murray, KY – Folk Metaphor

Martin E. Oliverio, 63, Male
White, Italian-American
English, Italian
Murray, KY
December 7, 2009

COLLECTED BY:

This item was collected by Myles W. Oliverio on the evening of December 7, 2009. This collection was delivered orally via telephone and recorded by hand.

DESCRIPTION OF ITEM:

This item of folklore is a folk metaphor that is used commonly to describe a practice or situation in blunt terms. To “John Wayne it” is a variation of saying something straight-forward, not sugar-coated or elaborated. John Wayne, the popular television actor is well known for portraying characters that were known for “straight talk” or “straight-shooting.”

CONTEXT:

This item of folklore is uttered in many different situations. This metaphor is usually used when the informer possesses a certain amount of information that is important and beneficial for the audience to understand. This can be occupation or recreationally related and can also be used to define the most miniscule of tasks.

INFORMANT AND AUDIENCE INTERPRETATION:

The informant claims that he uses this item of folklore rarely, but when he does they are usually in reference to small labor tasks. It is a metaphor that is not considered inappropriate but he has found that some of the younger generations cannot completely relate to John Wayne as opposed to older generations.

COLLECTOR’S INTERPRETATION:

This item is one of my favorites in that it provides a variation of “straight-talking” that has incorporated elements of popular culture. The actor John Wayne is prominently known for his masculine roles in films, such as cowboys and soldiers. Therefore, the personification of John Wayne is one of strength, boldness and wit. Therefore to “John Wayne it” means that what is about to be said is not dramatized or diluted. People are aware of the popular culture surrounding the name of the legendary John Wayne, and are usually able to connect the importance between the name and a situation.

Myles W. Oliverio
Bowling Green, Warren County, Kentucky