

festival appearance, a British music critic wrote that Arlo was not “the phenomenal talent he was touted to be” (p. 142). Reineke’s account of the musician’s reaction to this critique is revealing in that Arlo’s responses to these types of reviews have been anything but defensive. In 1974, for instance, when interviewed by a critic from the British music magazine *Melody Maker*, Arlo publicly agreed with an earlier, negative *Rolling Stone* review of one of his albums. Although he had reason to be angry or agitated at this juncture—a time in his life when he did not know whether he had acquired Huntington’s disease, the genetic disorder that took his father—Arlo Guthrie was in fact humble, honest, and approachable. This demeanor has remained part of his charm as a performer.

Arlo Guthrie: The Warner/Reprise Years enhances our collective appreciation of both Arlo and Woody Guthrie by effectively separating the scion from the legend. As the book illustrates, Arlo has occasionally—and quite memorably—performed songs composed by his father, most notably his magnificent rendition of Woody’s classic topical song “1913 Massacre” on Arlo’s 1972 album *Hobo’s Lullaby*. Nonetheless, as portrayed in Reineke’s book, Arlo stands on his own as a musician and as a man—invariably, to be sure, of a very different nature than his father.

Folklore Rules: A Fun, Quick, and Useful Introduction to the Field of Academic Folklore Studies. By Lynne S. McNeill. (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2013. Pp. xvi + 90, illustrations, notes, index.)

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What is the first and most frequently asked question in a folklorist’s existence? Undoubtedly, it’s “So, what *is* folklore?” Beyond supplying a simple definition in a conversational setting, folklorists in higher education have the added responsibility of illuminating the term, in all its tangled origins and debated variations, for a variety of students over the course of their careers. Lynne McNeill’s *Folklore Rules* is a

guide for folklorists who need to introduce the multi-layered field to newcomers, as well as a compass for anyone at the beginning of a journey into the field.

McNeill explains the impetus for writing this slim volume in the opening section titled “For the Instructor: Why You Want to Use This Book.” Because the majority of folklorists in higher education teach in departments ranging from English to history to communications, they often interact with students who have no knowledge of the basics of folklore study. Whether in freshman composition, Introduction to Folklore, or an upper division course of “Folklore and Fill-in-the-Blank,” the instructor is faced with packing a semester’s worth of introductory information into a few class periods, for the sake of the specialized material that the course must cover (p. xiii). While several tried-and-true introductory textbooks exist, they are best suited to courses with much more room in the syllabus for discussing the basics of the field than that of the average class that a folklorist teaches. McNeill set out to write a concise guide that manages to orient newcomers quickly to academic folklore studies by providing numerous examples, heading off common misconceptions, briefly describing seminal works, and generally welcoming students to the process of stepping back and looking with a folklorist’s lens at themselves, their families, friends, and the world at large.

The four chapters of *Folklore Rules* represent basic building blocks of the field: definitions of folklore, what a folklorist does, types of folklore, and types of folk groups. McNeill begins by explaining the informal nature of folklore, how it expresses group consensus, and the ways in which it is transmitted. Her descriptions of folklore fieldwork and analysis are paired with examples of student work from her own career interacting with new folklore students. The genres chapter follows William A. Wilson’s categories of analysis—things that the folk say, do, make, and believe. The folk groups chapter features a short discussion on the evolving study of folklore in the digital realm.

Some of the outstanding features of this book are the “Want to Know More?” sections that are interspersed through the chapters, and the

“Notes” sections that appear at the end of each chapter. If readers do want to learn more, they will find small clips of annotated bibliographic information describing the major works that could be considered the heavy hitters of the field. While other textbooks might discuss tape-recorded interviews, small forgotten things, and terrors in the night at length, this book references the complexities and nuances of the study of folklore without getting sidetracked. These sections provide just enough information for students to know where to place their next steps. The “Notes” sections provide further clarification of terms, biographical information about notable folklorists and other scholars, and sometimes just entertaining parenthetical statements that uphold the entire book’s conversational, enthusiastic tone. After recounting David Hufford’s work on the connection between what doctors term “sleep paralysis with hypnagogic hallucinations” and what folk belief might call “the Old Hag,” McNeill adds this endnote:

We should wonder why we assume that the medical phenomenon ‘explains’ the traditional belief. . . . Rather than saying that someone experiences the Old Hag because they have sleep paralysis with hypnagogic hallucinations, maybe people experience sleep paralysis with hypnagogic hallucinations because the Old Hag has come to visit. Think about *that* when you’re falling asleep tonight. (p. 64)

Also notable are the kinds of examples McNeill provides to illustrate the work of the folklorist and the attributes that define what a folklorist studies. Most examples plug right into the experiences of undergraduate students. She supplies the example of being engaged to be married as the middle stage of the rite of passage of marriage, discusses multiple genres of campus lore, spends time walking the reader through an analysis of supernatural belief, and dedicates space to the unique creation, transmission, and variation of forms of digital culture. With examples such as these, college students can immediately begin connecting into the thought processes they will need in order to study folklore. In another measure of user-friendliness, McNeill supplies simple def-

initions with concrete examples to explain commonly used terms such as *commodification*, *etic*, and *emic*.

This book truly is for the folklore neophyte, as McNeill’s constant clarifications and numerous examples might seem repetitive to students who have already spent time with classic introductory texts and have a basic familiarity with folklore concepts. McNeill’s book is confidently situated at the portal of academic folklore studies, ready to give directions and concisely explain the rules of folklore, and how folklore rules.

The Art of Play: Recess and the Practice of Invention. By Anna R. Beresin. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014. Pp. 185, introduction, conclusion, acknowledgments, notes, references, index, photographs, 155 children’s paintings.)

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Independent folklorist/educator

Anna Beresin, a folklorist and professor of arts at Philadelphia’s University of Arts, has documented activities related to recess and what she calls “the practice of invention,” in nine public schools in Philadelphia from 2010 to 2012. Her fieldwork notes, renderings of children’s India ink paintings, and photographs by Megan La Mon are interspersed in this field-based study with “interludes”—brief conversations with teaching artists and quotes from scholars concerning play, art, and creativity. She notes in the Introduction that the book pairs narratives with “the examination of the intersection of art and play” (p. 9).

Beresin, who also wrote *Recess Battles: Playing, Fighting, and Storytelling* (University Press of Mississippi) in 2010, co-created a non-profit, Recess Access, a service learning project that donates playground materials to Philadelphia schools. This book seeks to examine the impact of Recess Access on the children who participate and, to some extent, on their schools and teachers. Her focus is to place contemporary children’s folklore, particularly during recess, in the context of what Beresin calls “creative practice” (p. 20).