

1
3 ON THE SYMBOLIC MEANINGS OF
5 SOUVENIRS FOR CHILDREN
7

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13
15 **ABSTRACT**

17 *This paper explores the symbolic meanings that children of elementary*
19 *school age attach to souvenirs from different types of vacation destina-*
21 *tion. Data from interviews and pictorial projectives illustrate the mean-*
23 *ing of souvenirs for children, including how children skillfully use*
25 *souvenirs in their everyday lives and how they interpret souvenirs as*
27 *symbols of people, places, and experiences. More specifically, the inter-*
29 *view data reveal the meanings attached to souvenirs which are possessed,*
31 *including how souvenirs are clearly distinguished from other objects which*
are possessed and how they are used for their contemplation and action
value, for their communicative properties, and to provide continuity across
time and place. In addition, the data from pictorial projectives reveal the
latent motives of souvenir acquisition as well as how different types of
places lead to different types of souvenir choices. Thus, the paper dem-
onstrates the many layers of meaning associated with souvenirs in both
acquisition and consumption processes and provides evidence that the
meanings between children, places, and objects are inextricably linked.

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1 When people travel to the Grand Canyon, Paris, the Bahamas, Disneyland,
 3 or anywhere in between, they are likely to seek tangible reminders of their
 interactions with these places. Tourists want to “put their hands on” some-
 5 thing that gives the travel experience realism and proves that the bearer has
 been there (Graburn, 1977; Stewart, 1984). Gordon (1986, p. 135) explains: QA :1

7 As an actual object, it [the souvenir] concretizes or makes tangible what was otherwise
 only an intangible state. Its physical presence helps locate, define, and freeze in time a
 9 fleeting, transitory experience, and bring back into ordinary experience something of the
 quality of an extraordinary experience.

11 Thus, the function of a souvenir is to capture the essence of this extraor-
 13 dinary experience and bring sacred qualities of the tourist place back to the
 tourist’s home. The souvenir provides the narrative for an individual’s ex-
 15 perience (Stewart, 1984). Like the Star Trek transporter, the souvenir men-
 tally beams the tourist from one location to another; it helps the tourist
 17 cross the boundary from the extraordinary back to the ordinary and vice
 versa. It is the re-entry fee into everyday life (Belk, 1997; Gordon, 1986; van
 19 Gennep, 1960).

Souvenirs, like other possessions, may become special and significant to a
 21 person via self-extension (Belk, 1988), or when they help tell a part of a
 person’s life story (Kleine, Kleine, & Allen, 1995). However, souvenirs may
 23 carry additional sources of meaning. One additional source of souvenir
 meaning may be the emotions and self-meanings associated with a particular
 25 *place* (Belk, 1992; Low & Altman, 1992). Yet another source of meaning
 stems from collective cultural meaning; a particular souvenir (e.g., miniature
 27 Statue of Liberty or Mickey Mouse ears) may be culturally understood to
 represent its associated place. All of these sources of symbolic meaning give
 29 rise to the many-layered meanings of a souvenir.

What about children who acquire souvenirs? Because of the person/ob-
 31 ject, person/place, and place/object meanings captured by souvenirs, they
 offer a potent opportunity for a child to attach individual and/or collective
 33 meanings to a material object. Souvenirs offer researchers the opportunity
 to observe why children acquire, and how they relate to, this kind of sym-
 35 bolic good. For example, to a child, is a souvenir something to acquire and
 have? Something to use and play with? Or do children also associate sym-
 37 bolic, self-related meanings with souvenirs, similar to how an adult might?
 Do children attribute contemplative value to souvenirs? Do children un-
 39 derstand, for example, that something acquired today may evoke nostalgia
 years from now?

1 The purpose of this research is to discover the symbolic meanings children
2 assign to acquired souvenir objects and to explore their understanding and
3 knowledge underlying souvenir acquisition. Our focus is on children's sou-
4 venir choices for three primary reasons. First, and most importantly, we
5 want to begin to understand the basis of the meanings that children attach
6 to souvenirs and determine if souvenirs are a special class of possession with
7 distinctive features. Second, we want to understand what motivates children
8 to acquire objects on their vacations. And, finally, we want to understand
9 the role that these objects play in the everyday lives of these child consum-
10 ers.

11 The paper begins by reviewing relevant theoretical frameworks. After the
12 research methodology used to discover the nature of the relationship be-
13 tween children, souvenirs, and vacation destinations is explained, the results
14 of interviews and pictorial projectives from a sample of 22 children (ages 8–
15 13 years old) are presented. The discussion includes conclusions about chil-
16 dren's symbolic use of souvenir possessions and offers some ideas for future
17 research.

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19 **SOUVENIRS: THEORETICAL ACCOUNTS OF** 20 **SYMBOLIC MEANING**

21

22 The symbolic meaning of a good is not inherent in the material object itself;
23 such meaning is a perception held by a particular person for a particular
24 contextualized object (Kleine & Kernan, 1991). A person may perceive a
25 symbolic meaning for any particular object (e.g., souvenirs, places, experi-
26 ences, events). Individuals' object meanings are socially constructed
27 through shared meanings, personal or vicarious experiences, and rituals
28 associated with particular places and/or goods.

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30

31 *Layers of Meaning for Souvenirs*

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33 The complexity of meanings which child tourists assign to souvenirs can be
34 understood in terms of a triad of three theoretical frameworks: the person/
35 object relationship, the person/place relationship, and the object/place re-
36 lationship. Together these three connections form the basis for the meaning
37 of a souvenir.

38

1 *Person/Object Relationships*

2 Similar to other material goods, the souvenir often achieves sacred impor-
 3 tance to an individual owing to its potency for recalling memorable travel
 4 and vacation events and experiences (Belk, 1992). MacCannell (1976, p. 147)
 5 calls souvenirs status signs, marks of group affiliation, identity badges, and
 6 mementos of rites of passage, “found in every corner of daily life and em-
 7 bedded in every system of information.” As noted by Littrell et al. (1994, p.
 8 3), “Tourists use their souvenirs to reminisce, differentiate the self from or
 9 integrate with others, bolster feelings of confidence, express creativity, and
 10 enhance aesthetic pleasure,” all personal projects of identity development
 11 and maintenance. Thus, souvenirs, like other special possession objects, are
 12 used to help *construct* personal identity, not simply to preserve it (Belk,
 13 1992).

14 Souvenirs are often selected because of what they say about the person.
 15 Tourists at the same site may select different objects, depending upon the
 16 meanings with which they wish to identify themselves (Gordon, 1986).
 17 Graburn (1989) notes that it is the tourist’s chosen style of tourism (his-
 18 torical, ethnic, ecological, recreational, environmental, or hunting and gather-
 19 ing environmental), which determines the type of souvenir which will be
 20 brought home. For example, the “ecological” tourist will bring home pic-
 21 tures and postcards; the “hunting and gathering” tourist will bring home
 22 rocks and seashells; and the “ethnic” tourist will bring arts and crafts. The
 23 implication is that these particular souvenirs *reflect and define the tourist*
 24 *him/herself*, rather than simply the place she/he visited.

25 Adults also routinely use certain possessions symbolically to preserve a
 26 sense of self-continuity via a possession’s meanings that are connected to
 27 people and events in a person’s past (Belk, 1990; Kleine et al., 1995). Pos-
 28 sessions provide physical evidence of prior experiences and meanings
 29 (Grayson & Shulman, 2000). In essence, some souvenir purchases reflect a
 30 kind of *anticipatory nostalgia*, a feeling that someday in the future the sou-
 31 venir object will be useful as a meaningful symbol of a past trip or event.

32 What about children and souvenirs? We know of no research that ex-
 33 amines this particular issue. However, we may infer some things based on
 34 what has been established about children, possessions, and the development
 35 of an understanding of symbolic meaning.

36 The behavior of children as young as toddlers shows that possessions are
 37 not just utilitarian devices. In general, possessions provide the child with an
 38 emerging sense of control and self-effectance over his or her environment
 39 (Furby, 1978, 1980) and helps him or her secure a sense of identity
 (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Furby, 1980). In addition, the

1 ability to recognize *symbolic* meanings for material objects forms in child-
2 hood. Even very young children form symbolic attachments to favorite ob-
3 jects (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Furby, 1978, 1980).
4 The 7–12 year old age period is particularly interesting with regard to the
5 development of material values and symbolic meaning (John, 1999). Child-
6 ren as young as elementary school age have the ability to recognize and
7 decode abstract consumption symbolism (Belk, Bahn, & Mayer, 1982; Belk,
8 Mayer, & Driscoll, 1984). As children move through the elementary years,
9 they move into the stage of abstract reasoning (John, 1999) and develop a
10 greater variety of meanings for their possessions (Furby, 1978). At least by
11 fifth grade, they recognize the social meaning of possessions, for example, by
12 displaying one's achievement to others (Baker & Gentry, 1996). Presumably,
13 these same inferences apply to souvenirs.

14 During the elementary school years children also develop role-taking
15 ability (John, 1999). This ability to see one's behavior the way another
16 person does suggests that a child may have the ability to picture how he or
17 she will view a souvenir in the future, tying in with the idea of anticipatory
18 nostalgia mentioned above.

19 Through what mechanism might children learn about souvenir purchas-
20 ing? Parents are the primary socializing agent influencing a child's learning
21 about consumption (John, 1999). Moreover, parents socialize children via
22 various family rituals. For example, Belk (1979) observed that parents act as
23 socialization agents via gift giving to their children. Other family rituals,
24 such as birthday parties, teach children ritual how-to's, including the use of
25 specific goods and services for use in a ritual setting (Otnes & McGrath,
26 1994). Applying these observations to souvenirs, we note that family va-
27 cations and trips often include ritual behaviors that may include souvenir
28 purchasing.

29

Person/Place Relationships

30 A well-rounded representation of the meaning of souvenirs includes the
31 connection between the person and the place a souvenir represents. Ac-
32 cording to Low and Altman (1992, p. 5), place is "space that has been given
33 meaning through personal, group, or cultural processes." The symbolic
34 meaning of place is often based on a person having actually visited a lo-
35 cation, but also an individual may possess a special shared meaning learned
36 from others for a place before going there. Thus, the meaning of a particular
37 place is layered with personal and collective associations.

38 Familiar places are satisfying because they permit control, mastery, cre-
39 ativity, serenity, or security and provide opportunities for defining one's self

1 and connecting the self with others (Low & Altman, 1992). On another,
larger level, public places draw attention to community or cultural symbols
3 and meanings and permit us to link with one another and to create cultural
meanings, leading to individual, group, or cultural esteem and pride (Mill-
5 igan, 1998).

To children, special, familiar places afford security, social affiliation, cre-
7 ative expression, and exploration opportunities; thus, places support healthy
self-development in children (Chawla, 1992). Children form healthy attach-
9 ments to places as they learn to balance the maintenance of the familiar with
the developmental pull to expand their world outside of the home, into the
11 neighboring community and beyond. Identification with special places offers
children a sense of continuity with places of the past or people, past and
13 present; such opportunities are critical to emotional well-being (Cooper
Marcus, 1992). Natural places are especially potent environments for place
15 identification to occur (Cooper Marcus, 1992). Place attachment typically
has been examined by evaluating the relationship of a person to a particular,
17 intimately familiar place. It is an empirical question as to whether tourist
places would elicit similar types of attachment.

19

Object/Place Relationships

21 The object/place relationship is one in which a particular souvenir (object)
represents, symbolizes, and/or makes tangible a particular place. For ex-
23 ample, O'Guinn and Belk (1989) found that souvenirs acquired at Heritage
Village, home of the PTL ministry, were symbols of the site and its leaders.
25 Several other studies document the importance of souvenirs as representa-
tions of places visited (e.g., Gordon, 1986; Graburn, 1989; MacCannell,
27 1976; Stewart, 1984).

The perception of what a souvenir stands for may be shared with others.
29 We share culturally based perceptions that certain objects are typical sou-
venirs from particular places (e.g., you bring home a shell or sand from a
31 beach, a t-shirt from one of the Hard Rock cafés, or a teddy bear from an
amusement park). People visiting some travel destinations have more
33 choices than others. For example, a visitor to the Grand Canyon National
Park can choose from a wide variety of items ranging from inexpensive
35 souvenirs to costly Native American style pottery or artwork.

The perceived connection between a place and an object may be personal,
37 as well. A visitor to San Francisco could bring home a piece of pottery and
another could bring home a Christmas ornament. In addition, visitors to
39 Heritage Village bought handbags, cosmetics, and items they could have
purchased anywhere, but they bought them because of their origin in this

1 sacred retail site (O'Guinn & Belk, 1989). Though none of these items has
any *collective* meaning specific to the destination, it does demonstrate an
3 association between the object and the place. However, the issue of object/
place connection lies in how the souvenir stands for the place in question,
5 not how it stands for the tourist. Souvenirs are the markers of the site which
they are meant to bring to mind, and they help people keep society in order
7 within one's consciousness (MacCannell, 1976).

To summarize, our understanding of the meaning of souvenirs as con-
9 sumption objects is based on research with adult subjects. We undertook the
present study to explore children's meanings for souvenirs they possess and
11 their understandings about purchasing them. The study's methodology is
described next.

13

15

METHODOLOGY

17 Through the use of interviews and pictorial projectives, we provide evidence
that the meaning children assign to souvenirs comes from a variety of
19 sources. Because of the complexity of souvenir meanings and paucity of
research about the meaning of consumption for children (John, 1999), we
21 employed two different exploratory methods. We anticipated that the two
techniques together would give us a richer understanding of souvenir mean-
23 ing than either method would on its own. Semi-structured interviews bring
to light the autobiographical and other meanings that children have for
25 souvenirs they possess. Pictorial projectives elicit meanings for imagined
souvenir acquisitions; the responses lead to observations about the chil-
27 dren's general knowledge and understanding about souvenir acquisition.

29

Sample

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33 Twenty-two children between the ages of 8 and 13, who could recall ex-
periences from their previous vacations, comprised our convenience sample.
Empirical findings show that by second grade children's understanding of
35 consumption symbolism is significant, and by sixth grade the ability to make
inferences about people based on their possessions is nearly fully developed
37 (Belk et al., 1982; Mayer & Belk, 1982). This suggests that the sample
includes children who have an increased ability to think abstractly about,
39 and understand symbolic meanings of possessions, whose knowledge-
processing skills are increasing, and who have formed/are learning fairly

1 sophisticated scripts about acquisition behaviors (John, 1999). Thus, our
sample includes children whose relationship to possessions can be symbolic
3 as well as instrumental and who are in a stage where adult-like person/object
relations begin to emerge.

5 The children were selected through a snowball technique, starting with
children who were known by the interviewer. In fact, the knowledge that
7 their friends had participated in this study was a big incentive for subsequent
children to participate. The children were also compensated for participa-
9 tion through sincere appreciation expressed by the interviewer and from
feeling special for having an adult's undivided attention for over an hour.

11 Both the child and his/her parents were told that the study was about his/
her vacations and the things they may have acquired while on a trip. Parents
13 were also told that the child would be asked about things she/he might
collect; however, the data on collecting not specifically related to souvenirs
15 are not used in this particular interpretation, other than to highlight the
children's general acquisitive nature.

17 Each child and one parent or guardian signed a participant release form.
The study was conducted during the summer months and many of the
19 children had just returned from a vacation or were soon going on one. The
children, who are all from the south central United States, had taken mul-
21 tiple trips within their state and most had traveled out of state and for
reasons other than to visit family. Only one informant, the youngest child,
23 did not know what a souvenir was. He was told that it was "something that
you get on a trip and take home with you that you can touch."

25 More detailed information on the children, who represent a convenience
sample, is provided in Table 1. As Table 1 shows, an equal number of males
27 and females participated. Most were Caucasian, from middle-class families,
and between the ages of 10 and 12. All of the children recalled recent trips,
29 but a few could not remember or did not get any souvenirs. The table
includes a brief description of each child's most recent trip. Destinations
31 included locations around the continental United States including theme
parks, beaches, various cities, national parks, camp grounds, or a ranch.
33 Even when the purpose of a trip was to visit family, tourist behavior, such as
souvenir buying, was often part of the trip experience.

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Interviews

39 The children were interviewed for 30–45 min. To establish rapport, as well as
to preserve the child's anonymity, the interviewer asked the children to

Table 1. Description of Informants.

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| Imaginary Name | Age | Sex | Description |
|----------------|-----|-----|--|
| Sara (13) | 13 | F | Lives with mother and a sister; her father and step-mother live nearby; has her own room at both homes; likes to swim and watch movies; collects hat boxes, dolls, and snow globes; recent vacations to Alabama and a nearby ranch, does not remember getting any souvenirs |
| Crystal (1) | 12 | F | Lives with mother and younger sister; parents recently divorced; has her own room; her mother owns and operates a pet store; she collects animal objects and both her parents have animal things, though they do not collect them, however, both parents are collectors of other things; recent trips to Arizona, where she took pictures, and Las Vegas, where she bought stuffed animals |
| Kelli (2) | 12 | F | Lives with parents and 20-year-old sister; has her own room; takes dancing, tennis, and cheerleading; collects rocks and pins, all of which are packed away; recent trip to a water park, where he bought a mug and a t-shirt; frequently vacations in Colorado, where he gets mugs, t-shirts, and rocks |
| Renee (6) | 12 | F | Lives with parents; middle child with brothers; likes to swim and play softball; collects sea shells and softball dolls; last vacation in Louisiana to visit family and attend a beauty pageant; brought souvenirs from the pageant |
| Paige (21) | 12 | F | Lives with parents, younger sister, younger brother, and pets; collects precious moments and sunflower things; recent vacation to a water park, where she bought a t-shirt |
| Taylor (4) | 11 | F | Lives with parents and an elder brother; has her own room; likes to play with her dog and the computer; collects cherished teddies; recent trip to Ohio to visit family, got a Hard Rock t-shirt |
| Michelle (8) | 11 | F | Lives with parents, an elder brother, and an elder sister; shares room with sister; plays sports and loves the computer; collects rocks; her sister and mother both collect; recent trip to New Jersey to visit family |
| Christina (9) | 11 | F | Lives with parents and two younger sisters; likes to read and play on the computer; collects coins, but her parents do not collect anything; recent trip to Connecticut and brought home pictures; also |

Table 1. (Continued)

| Imaginary Name | Age | Sex | Description |
|----------------|-----|-----|---|
| Tiffany (18) | 11 | F | been to DC and Virginia, and got charms and shells at the beach Lives with parents, one sister, and three brothers; is the middle child; has her own room; goes to camp every year and brings back souvenirs; collects bumper stickers, stickers, rocks, and bottles; recent trip to San Antonio, where she bought clothes, but no souvenirs |
| Kristen (19) | 11 | F | Lives with parents and younger twin brothers; likes to play sports; she collects coins (so does her father), rocks, goose bump books, and buttons; likes to buy jewelry on vacations; recent trip to New Mexico, where she bought a pin for her shirt |
| Amanda (14) | 10 | F | Lives with parents and an elder brother; has an elder sister that lives away from home; raised in her parents sporting goods business; loves animals; collects t-shirts from places she has been; recent vacation to Girl Scout Camp, brought home a t-shirt and good memories |
| Rob (3) | 12 | M | Lives with parents, an elder sister, and younger brother; has his own room; swims and plays baseball; collects antique key chains; recent trip to Arizona to visit family and to San Diego and Disneyland, bought t-shirts and stuffed animals |
| Robert (10) | 11 | M | Lives with parents and an elder sister; has his own room; likes to build models; collects rocks; recent trip to South Padre, where he got a marionette; also been to Nashville and got a Hard Rock Café t-shirt |
| Tim (12) | 11 | M | Lives with parents and an elder sister; has his own room; plays Nintendo and watches TV a lot; recent skiing trip to New Mexico and did not get any souvenirs; another recent trip to a beach and took some pictures and got a pressed penny |
| Chris (16) | 11 | M | Lives with parents, two elder sisters, and two younger brothers; has his own room; likes to play Nintendo; collects baseball cards and coins; recent trip to Cancun, where he bought t-shirts from Hard Rock Café and Planet Hollywood |
| Johnny (17) | 11 | M | Lives with parents and younger sister and all of them collect things; has his own room; collects Garfield things, key chains, pins on vacations, and dogs; last "big" vacation to Canada and |

Table 1. (Continued)

| Imaginary Name | Age | Sex | Description |
|-------------------|-----|-----|---|
| | | | Glacier Park in Montana, where he bought a pin, a compass, and a knife and found a fossil |
| John Garrett (20) | 11 | M | Lives with parents, an elder sister, and younger brother; active in sports; collects pencils; recent vacation to Virginia to see family, where he bought postcards and pencils |
| Jacob (5) | 10 | M | Lives with mom and sister; parents divorced, but father lives nearby; has his own room; collects many things including native American artifacts, marbles, bottle caps, baseball cards, stamps, and stuffed animals; recent trip to San Antonio to visit family; and to a water park; does not really like to get souvenirs |
| Wesley (11) | 10 | M | Lives with parents, a younger sister, and several pets; has his own room; likes to look at baseball cards and play with friends and ride his bike; collects baseball cards and rocks; recent trip to Dallas and got a pressed penny |
| Eric (15) | 10 | M | Lives with parents and three elder brothers; collects things he finds (e.g., rocks, feathers, etc.); recent vacation to Disney World, where he bought a Goofy hat, Goofy pez machine, and Goofy soccer shirt |
| Brett (22) | 10 | M | Lives with parents, two elder sisters, and pets; plays basketball; collects cards, marbles, and pencils; recent vacation to a water park, where he bought a pencil |
| Cody (7) | 8 | M | Lives with parents, an elder brother, and an elder sister (“Renee” – #6); used to be home schooled, but his mother has suffered from a rare illness for the last two years; he likes to play and run around a creek; collects little cars, bugs, grasshoppers, and butterflies; had to explain what a souvenir was; last vacation “somewhere” to visit family |

Note: Numbers in parentheses are for identification purposes and refer to the order in which interviews were conducted.

choose a fictitious name. Many found this to be an interesting “game” and giggled with the interviewer as they chose their names and explained the reasoning behind their names. Each interview began with a grand tour question that encouraged the child to tell a little about him/herself, including with whom she/he lives and what she/he likes to do for fun with his/her

1 friends (McCracken, 1988). From there, the interviewer worked from a
2 semi-structured interview protocol; however, probes were used to achieve an
3 in-depth understanding of topics as they emerged from the discussion
(McCracken, 1988; Thompson, Locander, & Pollio, 1989).

5 The interview questions focused on recent vacations and any souvenirs
6 the child may have brought home with him/her. The focus was on why the
7 child had chosen a particular souvenir, where that souvenir now was, and
8 what that object now meant to them. The children were also asked about the
9 kinds of things they might like to collect and why; however, the data are
10 discussed in the present paper only to the extent to which some souvenirs
11 were acquired to be part of a collection.

12 One interview was conducted in a church, but the remaining interviews
13 were conducted at the child's home so that she/he could interact with his/her
14 things to aid his/her recall. Some children were quiet and shy and others
15 were almost like "miniature adults" in telling about their things [interviewer
16 fieldnotes].

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19

Pictorial Projectives

21 After the interview was completed, the children were given four pictorial
22 projectives, designed to help elicit narrative responses from the children and
23 used to discern the children's views of the world and their motivations
(Rappaport, 1942). Pictorial projectives have been successfully applied in
24 other studies attempting to determine the latent motives of consumers, in-
25 cluding ritual grooming (Rook, 1985), gift exchange (McGrath, Sherry, &
26 Levy, 1993), and comparing oneself to models in advertisements (Martin &
27 Kennedy, 1994). In addition, Martin and Kennedy (1994) demonstrate
28 effective use of this technique with children of similar ages to those in the
29 present study.

31 Each child was given the same four drawings of different types of po-
32 tential vacation settings: camping in the mountains or hills, a city street, a
33 beach, and an amusement park. These settings were familiar to the children
(Rappaport, 1942), as their home state includes all four types of destina-
34 tions, three of which are within a two-hour drive. Below the picture on each
35 sheet was the same statement and questions: "You are on a vacation at this
36 place. What kind of souvenir would you want if you went to a place like
37 this? What makes this a good thing to get?" The bottom half of each page
38 was blank for the child to write a response. The task took between 10 and
39 20 min for each child to complete. The children were not given any prompts

1 during this process; however, one child did ask that the researcher write his
2 responses for him.

3

5 **RESULTS: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF** 6 **INTERVIEWS**

7

9 Analysis consisted of organizing the data through a series of operations
10 (Spiggle, 1994), and began with each of the authors reading all of the in-
11 terview transcripts to understand the meaning of souvenirs for children.
12 After the first reading, the authors identified specific examples of the chil-
13 dren's experiences with souvenirs that they believed told part of the "story"
14 of the relationship between the children, the places, and the souvenirs. This
15 resulted in a one-page description of each child's account and an exhaustive
16 list of themes of interest similar across informants. Third, the authors dis-
17 cussed and examined their understanding of the data and determined global
18 themes or categories that would summarize the data. To ensure a thorough
19 and in-depth coverage of the data, the global themes were worked and
20 reworked by comparisons between children and exploring the dimensions of
21 these themes. Next, verbatim comments from the interviews were identified
22 to illustrate the global themes. Thus, using the operational procedures out-
23 lined by Spiggle (1994), five global themes emerged from the data and are
24 discussed below.

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Defining "Appropriate" Souvenirs

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J: We went to this place in Montana. Glacier Park. Then, ah well, I bought some
souvenirs.

I: Really?

1 J: Yeah. At Ft. McLeod I got some pins and a little pocketknife. And at Glacier Park I
 got a kind of little pocketknife as well with a sheath. And we made this little pit stop by
 3 this canyon and I bought a little fossil there.

In contrast, they believe collections are added to over long periods of time
 5 and collecting implies that you actively acquire similar items. Christina (age
 11) considers her shells as souvenirs and not a collection.

7 I don't really call it a shell collection with just the couple of shells that I have To me,
 it's latched to something that over a long period of time it's added to. I've gotten most of
 9 my shells from just two different occasions.

11 Similarly, Paige (age 12) usually gets a rock when she goes to a park. While
 she has assembled numerous rocks, she considers them as trip mementos,
 13 not collection items.

15 I think they are just like to bring home and have a souvenir to remember it by, but I do
 not COLLECT them.

17 These children have collections of hat boxes, pencils (670 of them), marbles
 (300–400 of them), McDonald's toys, t-shirts, stuffed animals, figurines,
 19 baseball cards, bottle caps, tea sets, porcelain dolls (15 of them), snow
 globes, rocks, and seashells. The children consider themselves to be collec-
 21 tors, except for one boy who, by his own definition, is not collecting any-
 thing at present, though he has a large sports card collection. Another boy,
 23 Eric (age 10), collects things, but he says, "Not many people I know collect
 that much I've found." The rest of the children seem to be aware of and
 25 influenced by other people, including friends and/or family, who collect. An
 observer might perceive that a particular souvenir is part of a collection.
 27 However, the children tended to have rules for distinguishing souvenir ob-
 jects used for collection purposes from those souvenirs used for recalling a
 29 place.

The children also make a distinction between "stuff" and souvenirs that
 have special meanings attached to them. Tiffany (age 11), who had returned
 31 the week before from a vacation to a nearby city and amusement parks,
 reveals a distinction.

33 I didn't really bring home any souvenirs, but I did get some clothes from a shopping
 trip Oh, but we did get some pictures, maybe those could be our souvenirs.

37 Several other children mentioned that clothes bought on vacations are not
 really souvenirs. They are able to distinguish between an object used as a
 souvenir versus an object that was merely purchased and has no special
 39 meaning or place identification. Kristen (age 11) explains the differences
 between some of her pieces of jewelry.

1 I: Do you consider your necklaces or your rings souvenirs or just gifts you buy yourself?

3 K: It depends. Some say, some have like a symbol that I know, like a shell on it. One time I got shell earrings so I knew – I thought of Galveston when I wear them.

5 I: So some of them are souvenirs?

K: Yeah. And some are just fun to get.

7 The children demonstrated their beliefs that there is a relationship between a
9 souvenir and the place from where it was acquired. Sara (age 13), who was
11 one of the few children who did not seem to care about getting souvenirs,
13 clearly understands that a souvenir is tied to its associated place.

I don't think I'm a real like attachable person to like vacations, so I usually don't do that
[bring something home].

15 Taylor (age 11), who had just returned from visiting her grandmother in
Ohio, talked to the interviewer about her souvenirs from her trip.

17 Taylor (age 11): I brought home a Hard Rock t-shirt.

I: A Hard Rock Café t-shirt?

19 T: And a gigotech.

21 I: Okay. And what made that t-shirt or that gigotech, either one or both, why was that
special to you?

23 T: Well my Grandma gave me the gigotech. I don't know why I got the Hard Rock shirt,
because Hard Rock is such a good place to get souvenirs.

25 Several other children mentioned Hard Rock Café or Planet Hollywood as
27 *places* associated with getting souvenirs. Other children mentioned that if
they did not go to certain types of places, they were less likely to get sou-
29 venirs. For example, Christina (age 11) had just returned from Connecticut
where she and her family had visited. She said they “didn't bring home any
31 thing other than photographs because we didn't go to a lot of tourist at-
tractions.” This suggests that the children make a definite association be-
33 tween souvenir objects and the places they are acquired. Thus, if a child
traveler does not go to *tourist* attractions, then *most* types of souvenirs are
35 not likely to be acquired; however, photographs may still be taken and
considered as souvenirs.

To acquire a souvenir, the children would have to consider the place to be
37 a tourist attraction. Jacob (age 10) and Chris (age 11) say that they would
not want to get souvenirs from places they go to a lot (e.g., the mall in a
39 nearby city). These places would no longer be tourist attractions to them.
This belief is consistent with Stewart's (1984) inference that people do not

1 need souvenirs for repeatable experiences. However, in contrast, other children
2 talk about places they go every year and bring back souvenirs. For
3 example, Tiffany (age 11) goes to camp every year and always brings back
4 souvenirs. Similarly, Brett (age 10) goes to a state park every year and also
5 brings home souvenirs. Thus, these children clearly perceive their annual
6 trips as visits to a tourist attraction. Thus, the perception of being a *tourist*
7 may be more important than whether one perceives the experience is re-
8 peatable in determining whether a souvenir will be desired or purchased.
9 There is something about these places of annual visits that distinguish them
10 from ordinary places kids visit (e.g., the mall). Something extraordinary
11 about the place seems to help define associated objects as souvenirs.

Children sometimes mix the sacred and profane (see Belk, Wallendorf, &
12 Sherry, 1989 for a review). For example, some children will purchase a
13 seashell and use it for similar purposes as one that is found. That is, they mix
14 discovered shells with commodities, like the purchased shell, using both to
15 symbolize a sacred experience. For example, Wesley (age 10), Kristen (age
16 11), and Amanda (age 10), all like to get shells or rocks when they go on
17 some trips, but they find some and buy others and then they mix them
18 together. They have other rules for acquisition and souvenir preferences
19 based upon color, size, or texture, but the means of acquisition does not
20 appear to be a major influence on children's definition of what is an "ap-
21 propriate" souvenir.

22

23

24

Using the Souvenir for its Action Value

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26 The children wanted many of the souvenirs they have, because they were
27 able to *do* something with them, and many souvenirs fulfilled that need.
28 They used their souvenirs for discovering, learning, demonstrating achieve-
29 ment, playing, exchanging, and wearing. Robert (age 11) enjoys collecting
30 rocks because that helps him "discover the differences between places."
31 Similarly, Jacob (age 10) bought a Kachina doll on a trip, because his Dad
32 had been at some Indian cliffs and brought him a war shield, so now he is
33 interested in Native American artifacts. Thus, for Robert and Jacob, ac-
34 quiring these souvenirs helped them learn more about the meaning of ob-
35 jects and how these objects related to the places they were acquired.

36 Souvenirs can also be used to demonstrate achievement in accomplishing
37 things that are collectively understood as unique or special. Many of the
38 children revealed how finding a full sand dollar is special, because unbroken
39

1 ones are hard to find. Jacob (age 10) relates his excitement with finding an
arrowhead, which is difficult.

3 In the morning when I got up he said, '[Jacob] this lady came to me last night and said if
5 you want to find some arrowheads to go down the nature trail.' Well, I believed it
because I was little and I said, 'Okay Daddy, can we go down the nature trail.' He said,
7 'Yeah, that's what I was planning to do this morning.' So, I remembered what he said
and remembered that the way down had some flat rocks. And, so I looked down on the
9 rock and the rock was like a bluish color and I could see this outline of a gray and white
arrowhead. And I was like whoa! And, I had been looking for arrowheads other places
that weekend but I hadn't found any, but I finally found one.

11 "To have a souvenir of the exotic is to possess both a specimen and a
trophy" (Stewart, 1984, p. 147). Sand dollars and arrowheads are used as
13 evidence of the children's abilities and competence and increase their status
in the eyes of others. To demonstrate achievement, however, this type of
15 souvenir has to be related to the *place* in which it was found and it also has
what the object signifies must be evident to others.

17 The children, particularly the boys, seemed most appreciative of souvenirs
with which they could play. Brett (age 10) enjoyed playing with a whip he
19 got from a camp, but, "it got thrown away, in the trash, cause I popped my
sister with it." John Garrett (age 11) relates how he enjoys the realism of one
21 of his souvenirs:

J: We went to the Science Museum. That's when I got the lizard.

23 I: Oh, you got a lizard from there? And why did you choose this lizard?

25 J: Because it's pretty cool.

I: Oh really? How does it work?

27 J: You squeeze him.

29 I: You squeeze him? It's pretty neat. It looks kind of real.

J: That's what my Mom thought. I threw it at her and she went 'Ahhhhhh'!!!

31 As the following conversation reveals, Robert (age 11) also enjoys playing
33 with the souvenir from his trip:

I: Can you tell me about your trip to South Padre?

35 R: Well, it wasn't the best weather for it so I was kind of cold. But me and my Dad still
had fun. And my sister and Mom they stayed mostly in the hot tub. We stayed in a
37 condo. And, we went to Mexico one day and I got a little marionette.

39 [later]

I: Did you say you named it?

1 R: Yes, I named it Pedro.

3 I: Pedro? He's cute. He's what? About a foot tall? And you can kind of move him around?

5 R: I'm not good at it.

7 I: Well it probably takes practice. [later] What about this marionette makes it special to you? I mean why did you decide to buy this?

9 R: I thought it was really neat and I had never seen one in real life. I'd seen one on TV and stuff and I always wanted one.

11 I: Oh.

13 R: And so and I guess part of it is I'm into acting and you know this is kind of like changing my voice and things and can make it sound.

15 I: And what do you think about when you see this in your room?

17 R: I just think about our trip.

19 I: Do you?

19 R: And I hope we go again.

21 Robert has personalized his souvenir by naming it, but his souvenir, like Brett and John Garrett's, seems to reflect who he is and what the souvenir will *do*, as opposed to where he was when the souvenir was acquired.

23 Another action behavior seen only in the boys was their desire to trade or exchange their souvenirs with their friends. When Brett (age 10) looks for souvenirs, he likes to find pencils because, "they are just kind of cool and besides people trade you a lot for them." Thus, the trade, or exchange, is the action to which he looks forward.

29 Compared to the girls in our sample, the boys were clearly more action-oriented in their use of souvenirs. The girls tended to focus more on the contemplation value of souvenirs. Similar findings appear with adult samples concerning special or valued possessions (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Dittmar, 1992). For example, Dittmar's (1992, pp. 126–136) results reveal that men and women prefer different objects and relate to them differently. The men in her sample valued action-oriented possessions for their instrumental value, while the women preferred more sentimental objects that served relational and connecting purposes. For the children, wearing apparel souvenirs may be an exception. Both girls and boys had t-shirts and caps for the expressed purpose of wearing them. Though the t-shirt meets functional needs, the communicative properties of the t-shirt are also important, as revealed in the next theme.

1 *Using the Souvenir for its Communicative Properties*

3 Similar to adults, children use souvenirs for their communicative value to
4 self and others. Souvenirs are self-gifts (Mick & DeMoss, 1990), which the
5 children view as symbolic because they are useful for self-communication.
6 When the children were asked why they had chosen particular souvenirs,
7 they all responded by saying that they liked these things. Rob (age 12)
8 bought a Goofy doll and a Goofy shirt last year at Disneyland because “I
9 like Goofy and I think he’s funny.” This particular Goofy has the number
10 “15” on it, because that was Rob’s soccer number. Though other people
11 would not recognize it, Rob knows that the 15 personalizes Goofy and
12 makes it his.

13 Souvenir acquisitions also seem to help these children work through and
14 determine their taste and preferences. Jacob (age 10) recently returned home
15 from an art show where he had bought animal pieces to make a necklace
16 that said “save the planet.” This was his own idea and the animals “caught
17 his attention because they had movable parts.” Thus, as Belk (1992) sug-
18 gests, the souvenirs help these children *construct* their identities. Identity
19 construction is an essential purpose for adult’s special possessions (Belk,
20 1992; Kleine et al., 1995). Here, we find evidence that souvenirs serve similar
21 self-developmental purposes for children.

22 The children speak about souvenirs almost as if they can hear them talk-
23 ing to them. Chris (age 11) likes his Hard Rock Café and Planet Hollywood
24 t-shirts because they say “Cancun” on them. Sara (age 13) says she usually
25 likes to get t-shirts because she likes them to say where she’s been. As the
26 children talk about them, it is apparent that the souvenirs remind them of
27 whom they are and where they have been. A conversation with Kelli (age 12)
28 demonstrates this point:

29 K: My last vacation was probably to [XX], which is a water park and it’s somewhere
30 around [XX]. It’s really fun. We go there with my aunt and uncle. That’s just a yearly
31 trip that we take during the summer.

32 I: What kinds of things do you do there?

33 K: We go on the rides. They have a bunch of water rides. And we just spend a lot of time
34 together and have fun.

35 I: Do you usually buy souvenirs when you go to places like this?

36 K: Sometimes, yeah, you can buy mugs. You can buy different shirts. They have a gift
37 shop there in the park so we can go there and get different stuff.

38 I: Do you know where those things are now?

1 K: I'm not sure.

3 I: You don't know for sure? When you buy a t-shirt or a mug, those are the two things
that I noticed that you said you might look at or you might buy, what attracts you to
that kind of thing? What makes you want that?

5 K: It's just something to tell you that, like, I've been there and I know what it's like and
so if you have any questions you can ask me, like, if it's fun or something. It's just
7 something to be proud of that you'd wear.

9 I: How did you decide what souvenir to get?

11 K: Ummm.

I: Is there anything that pulls you one direction or the other.

13 K: Not really. I just wanted something little just to show everybody that I went there for
the summer or something so I got it.

15

The conversation with Kelli demonstrates that souvenirs are used not only
17 to communicate with oneself, but also used to communicate to others about
where you have been or what you have accomplished. Many of the children
19 provide evidence for this point. Rob (age 12) thinks other people like to look
at the shirts he gets from places he has been. Taylor (age 11) likes to wear
21 her Hard Rock t-shirt because then everybody knows that she has been to
Hard Rock (in Ohio). Taylor also has a t-shirt from Planet Hollywood in
23 Phoenix. Someone asked Amanda (age 10) about a t-shirt once, so now she
likes to collect t-shirts from all kinds of places.

25 By wearing their t-shirts, the children are sharing their experiences with
others. The t-shirts seem to be a sign of status. When the name of the place is
27 stamped on it, people recognize that they have been there. Pins also are
acquired to enhance status, as this conversation with Kelli (age 12) dem-
29 onstrates:

31 K: Whenever I go on trips I just like to pick one out. Sometimes like back in Colorado I
like to collect pins also.

33 I: Writing pens?

35 K: No, like pins you put on your shirt. And we collect those and we put them on our ski
jackets when we go skiing so we can show that we've been to those places like Keystone
and Breckenridge and all those places in Colorado.

37

I: So, do you display them anywhere or where do you keep them?

39 K: I have them in my jewelry box. I just keep them there until we go skiing. Then, I put
them on my jacket.

1 As long as other people recognize what the t-shirt and pin mean, these
souvenirs would link the wearer to a place. That linkage is used as a signal
3 about who that person is and the object seems to be more about the place
than the person. However, when other people do not recognize the linkage
5 between the person and the souvenir, such as with animal beads or the
reference to number 15, then the object seems to be more about the person
7 than the place. Jung also made such a distinction when he noted the differ-
ence between a sign, a relatively known thing, and a symbol, a relatively
9 unknown thing that would mean more to the person (Turner, 1967, p. 26).

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Using the Souvenir to Provide Continuity across Time and Place

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Even at this age, children have a sense of how souvenirs provide continuity across time and place. They realize that souvenirs can be mementos that elicit nostalgia and recollection of autobiographical experiences. This suggests that the children clearly value souvenirs for their contemplation value. The contemplation value of souvenirs is reflected in their ability to help an individual achieve a deeper understanding of him- or herself through conscious reflection (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981) and to preserve a sense of self-continuity (Belk, 1990; Kleine et al., 1995).

Several of the children talked about how their souvenirs were able to transport them back to previous times. For example, Christina (age 11) bought a key for her charm bracelet on a trip to Virginia Beach and now she thinks about the trip when she looks at the key. Similarly, Brett (age 10) went to a state park and got a shirt with the park's name on it because "it shows that I have been there" and it "reminds me of where I have traveled."

The children seem to need that tangible reminder to understand the totality of their experiences. Those souvenirs that they see or touch on a regular basis and/or those which are part of something in addition to the experience (e.g., collectibles) seem to have more readily accessible memories; however, two of the children said that *memories*, which are intangible, also could be souvenirs. In addition, though they do not necessarily know where their souvenirs are, they know what they *were* and what they represented, as this conversation with Chris (age 11) demonstrates:

C: We went to Destin, Florida two years ago. It was fun.

I: What did you do while you were there?

C: Me and my Dad went snorkeling and we swam.

1 I: At the beach?

3 C: Yeah.

5 I: Did you bring home any souvenirs from there?

7 C: Uh-huh. We bought some jars filled with Destin sand and they had little fish shells in them.

9 I: Do you know where that is?

11 C: No. I don't know.

13 This tangible reminder links Chris to his past experiences, even though he does not currently know where the souvenir is.

15 After acquiring a souvenir, the children may make judgments about how long they will keep it. If they get bored with the souvenir or begin to consider it as junk, they get rid of it and move on. However, if a child perceives the souvenir might be worth something in the future (e.g., maintaining a positive memory or monetary value), he or she will hold on to the item. For example, Tiffany (age 11) says it is important to keep pictures “because they help you remember important moments, ones you won’t remember 20 years from now without the picture.” This reflects that some souvenirs are cherished possessions with stronger indexicality (Grayson & Shulman, 2000); other souvenirs are not cherished because they are readily discarded as unimportant or boring.

27 Some children also seem to use their souvenirs to link them to other people, similar to how adults use certain special possessions to make tangible a relationship (Kleine et al., 1995). Souvenirs facilitate memories the children made with their family, and, at the same time they may facilitate memories of other special people in their lives. Wesley’s (age 11) Great Grandfather used to feed gorillas, so when Wesley went to a zoo, he spent a “few hours” with his Dad watching the gorillas and he bought a stuffed gorilla. Now, when he plays with his gorilla, he thinks of his grandfather and his experience at the zoo. He is relating the experiences of his grandfather to this souvenir and he seems nostalgic for the experiences of his grandfather (or maybe just his grandfather’s stories). Baker and Kennedy (1994) refer to feeling nostalgic and associating objects with the experiences of someone else as simulated nostalgia. Wesley seems to be transferring his grandfather’s experiences into this souvenir and using the souvenir to help relive this time in his mind.

1 *Acquiring Souvenirs as Part of Rituals or for Collections*

3 These children understand the consumption rituals surrounding vacations,
5 including the routine acquisition of souvenirs. These rituals provide con-
7 tinuity across vacation experiences. When Kristen (age 11) goes on vaca-
9 tions, she usually looks for necklaces.

7 K: Usually I look at the necklaces. I've got a bunch of those and rings.

9 I: Rings? Like jewelry?

11 K: Yeah.

11 I: Do you consider your necklaces souvenirs or just gifts you buy for yourself?

13 K: It depends. Some have like a symbol that I know, like a shell on it. One time I got
15 shell earrings so I knew – I think of [nearby beach] when I wear them.

15 Clearly, some of Kristen's necklaces are connected to previous experiences
17 and other times. Her buying of necklaces also reflects a ritualistic acquisition
19 strategy of looking for necklaces. Wesley (age 10) also has a ritualistic ac-
21 quisition strategy. He went to a zoo on one vacation and "got a penny that
23 you put in a machine and prints the [zoo's name] on it." Now, Wesley
25 always looks for penny pressers in other amusement places, because he
27 wants more of those. He currently has four pressed pennies.

23 Kristen and Wesley do not consider their necklaces or pressed pennies to
25 be collections, but John Garrett (age 11) has a ritualistic acquisition strategy
27 of buying pencils on his vacation, because he collects pencils. John Garrett
29 now has "over 670 of them." He has collected these pencils for two years,
31 but has not collected all of them because he started his collection with his
33 grandfather's collection, which contained "about 530 of them and so some
35 are real old."

31 The children also use different acquisition strategies, depending upon the
33 type of place they visit, as Kristen (age 11) explains:

33 K: I have a bunch of t-shirts and hats that I got [on various vacations] I like getting t-
35 shirts.

35 I: And, what kind of t-shirts do you have? Can you tell me about any of them?

37 K: Ah. One I got has a kind of a lizard coming out of the pocket. And then another one
39 I've got, it's really neat, it's a house and it's snowing and it's got mountains in the
41 background that are in New Mexico. I like that shirt.

39 I: What about when you go to [a beach]? Do you get t-shirts there too?

41 K: Usually I get shells. Like one time I got a whole bunch of shells.

1 Thus, Kristen distinguishes between types of places by associating them with
different acquisition strategies and defining “appropriate” souvenirs differ-
3 ently.

For the most part, unless a souvenir is part of a ritualistic acquisition
5 strategy or collecting, the purchase of a *particular* type of souvenir does not
seem to be planned in advance. Crystal (age 12) got a boot with flowers in it
7 from her last trip to Arizona.

9 I like the boot because it goes with our house. Besides, if it’s over \$10, I won’t get it
unless it’s something I could put in my house and something I could show everybody to
show off. I wouldn’t want it to fall apart too fast.

11
13 Crystal had not planned to buy this boot, but she did think about how long
the boot would last and how the boot related to other objects in her home.
Renee (age 12) had not planned on collecting shells, but she went to the
15 beach on a vacation and started picking up seashells, so now she collects
them. By having the collection, Renee seems to be extending that vacation
17 into her future.

As Otnes and McGrath (1994) suggest, these rituals are an important
19 venue for learning about certain consumption norms and expectations. The
informants, particularly the older ones, tend to believe that spending money
21 frivolously on a vacation is okay, but not for “every day.” The informants
are living the “childishness” often used to describe adult’s souvenir buying
23 (Gordon, 1986). It is okay to buy junk, but only when one is on vacation.
Moreover, these children, with the exception of the youngest child, have
25 learned to attach memories to tangible objects, which they can possess,
rather than imprinting the memories in their minds without the aid of the
27 tangible souvenir. Such consumption rituals are likely to become part of
their repertoire of post-liminal rites like those observed at Heritage Village
29 and described by O’Guinn and Belk (1989).

A characteristic that makes souvenirs *cherished* is if they are associated
31 with behaviors such as ritual behaviors or collecting. For example, during
the interview process at times it was difficult to keep children talking deeply
33 about their souvenirs, because all they wanted to do was talk more about
their collections. Their collections seemed more *magical* (Belk, Wallendorf,
35 Sherry, & Holbrook, 1991). John Garrett (age 11) provides an exception as
he says his pencils, which he identifies as a collection, are not that special –
37 “they are just from where I go and what I do.” John Garrett’s interpretation
may be tied to the fact that the collection was passed down from his grand-
39 father. This finding empirically demonstrates Stewart’s (1984) suggestion
that souvenirs are magical because they bring the past to the present; how-

1 ever, it is a “failed magic.” Souvenirs can only be a sample of one’s ex-
3 periences and not an example as a collection is. That is, a souvenir only
reflects one point in time in a person’s life, but a collection represents the
5 culmination of a person’s experiences. Thus, it seems that a souvenir cannot
be *sacred* or *magical* unless it is associated with rituals, a collection, or
7 intensely personal experiences or meanings, such as a pilgrimage (Belk et al.,
1989).

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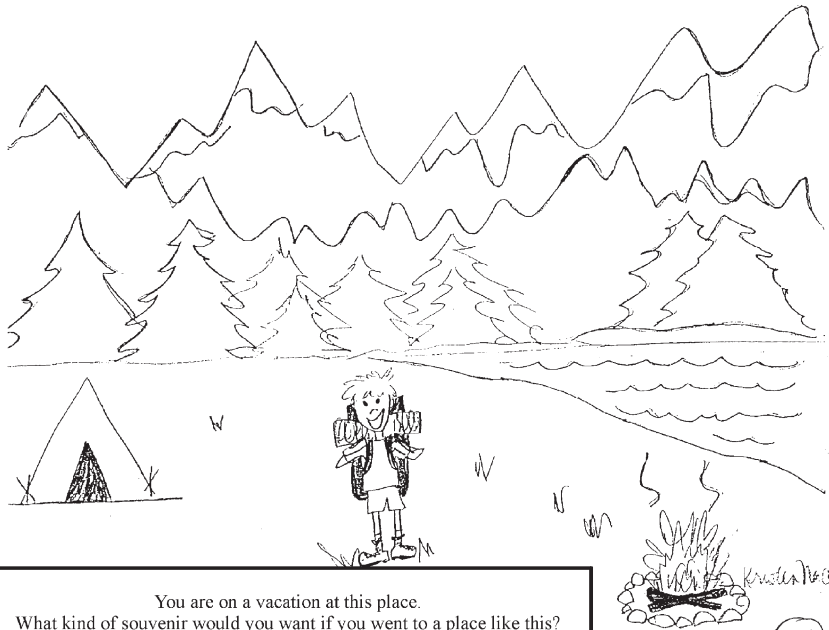
11 **RESULTS: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF** 13 **THE PICTORIAL PROJECTIVES**

The purpose of the pictorial projective methodology was to elicit narratives
15 that would reveal motives, knowledge, and understanding about souvenir
acquisition. To analyze the pictorial projectives (please see Exhibit 1
17 through 4 for example), content analysis procedures prescribed by
Kassarjian (1977) and Kolbe and Burnett (1991) were followed. This pro-
19 cedure provided a means by which to compare systematically, across vaca-
tion destinations and types of souvenirs, the motives for acquisition. The
21 content analysis categories were initially developed, pre-tested, and refined
by two of the authors. The authors began by listing each of the souvenir
23 objects listed on the 88 pictorial projectives (22 children × 4 different pic-
torial projectives). Some children listed more than one souvenir on each
25 picture, resulting in a total of 123 souvenir objects.

After this list was developed, the authors developed content codes to
27 describe associations with each of the 123 objects. The first step was to code
each *object* ($n = 123$) with respect to age of the child, gender, and type of
29 place represented in the picture (amusement park, beach, city, or camp).
That is, the *object*, as opposed to the child, was used as the unit of analysis.

31 Judgments were then made about what the appropriate content categories
were for understanding the latent motives for acquisition and the meaning
33 of each souvenir object. Working independently, two of the authors made
judgments on the type of action the child would take to acquire the object
35 (take or buy), for whom the souvenir would be acquired (self or others), and
whether the child associated this picture with their previous experiences (yes
37 or no). Then, the relationship between the object and child was determined
by identifying if (a) the object is the start or part of a collection; (b) the
39 acquisition strategy is “typical” of vacation experiences or indicative of a
ritual; or (c) the object is a transitory, necessary part of the experience.

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You are on a vacation at this place.
 What kind of souvenir would you want if you went to a place like this?
 What makes this a good thing to get?

#8 Michelle (11)

Rock from on the
 lower mountain
 So I remember ~~the~~ where
 I went when I'm old

Exhibit 1.

Each souvenir object also was classified into the souvenir typology, initially conceptualized by Gordon (1986) and further refined based upon these empirical results. This typology includes pictorial images (e.g., snapshots, photographs, postcards), pieces-of-the rock (e.g., part of the whole such as shells or sand), cultural icons (e.g., manufactured objects which are

1 replicas or representations of the culture such as a miniature Statue of
Liberty or sombrero), generic markers (e.g., souvenirs that make reference
3 to a particular place because they are inscribed with words, but if it were not
for the place's name, it could be representative of anywhere), and other (e.g.,
5 things that tend to have more to do with the person than the place or
vacation experience).

7 The final content category identified the latent motives for acquiring the
particular souvenir (remembering, communicating, having, adding, neces-
9 sary part of experience, finding, using, and long lasting). Multiple motives
were allowed. The most motives associated with any one object were three;
11 however, most objects only had one motive association. The two authors
arrived at a 94 percent agreement for 772 codes. Discrepancies were resolved
13 and content descriptions were refined.

Subsequently, two independent individuals were recruited and trained to
15 code the pictures. To establish intercoder reliability, comparisons were made
between these individuals and the authors' original codes (Kassarjian, 1977;
17 Kolbe & Burnett, 1991). Based upon 772 judgments, reliabilities for the
three-coder pairs were 0.92, 0.89, and 0.88, all exceeding Kassarjian's (1977)
19 recommended threshold of 0.85 for content analysis. Discrepancies between
the three coding pairs were resolved and then the results were analyzed and
21 interpreted.

As Table 2 shows, the children mentioned 123 souvenir objects. Items
23 included t-shirts (22.0 percent of objects mentioned), rocks (17.9 percent),
shells (17.1 percent), photographs (4.1 percent), stuffed animals (4.1 per-
25 cent), postcards (3.3 percent), hats (2.4 percent), hotel soap (2.4 percent),
candy (1.6 percent), earrings (1.6 percent), hotel stationery (1.6 percent), key
27 chains (1.6 percent), and numerous other items. The average number of
objects mentioned per child was 5.6, with half listing exactly one per lo-
29 cation and two children (Kristen and Tiffany, both age 11) mentioning 13
and 11 objects across the four pictorial projectives.

31 To understand what these objects mean in relation to the child and to the
place depicted, the content categories were analyzed. Interestingly, females
33 mentioned 55 percent of these objects, even though the number of boys and
girls participating in the study was equal. Some places also elicited a greater
35 number of objects than others. The beach scene elicited the largest number
of souvenirs (26.8 percent of objects), followed by the amusement park (25.2
37 percent), the city (25.2 percent), and the camp (22.8 percent).

These objects would be bought (50.0 percent) or taken (50.0 percent).
39 Males and females were not likely to differ on method of acquisition; how-
ever, the type of place affected whether taking or buying would be an ap-

Table 2. Souvenir Objects Associated with Places in Pictorial Projectives.

| Souvenir Object | Times Mentioned | Percentage |
|---------------------|-----------------|------------|
| T-shirt | 27 | 22.0 |
| Rock | 22 | 17.9 |
| Shell | 21 | 17.1 |
| Photograph | 5 | 4.1 |
| Stuffed animal | 5 | 4.1 |
| Postcard | 4 | 3.3 |
| Hat | 3 | 2.4 |
| Hotel soap | 3 | 2.4 |
| Candy | 2 | 1.6 |
| Earrings | 2 | 1.6 |
| Hotel stationery | 2 | 1.6 |
| Key chain | 2 | 1.6 |
| Animal-shaped bead | 1 | 0.8 |
| Cartoon character | 1 | 0.8 |
| Cheap rose light | 1 | 0.8 |
| Clam | 1 | 0.8 |
| Cup | 1 | 0.8 |
| Drink umbrella | 1 | 0.8 |
| Fish | 1 | 0.8 |
| Fossil | 1 | 0.8 |
| Hotel pen | 1 | 0.8 |
| Hotel towel | 1 | 0.8 |
| Model airplane | 1 | 0.8 |
| Pen | 1 | 0.8 |
| Pencil | 1 | 0.8 |
| Pennant | 1 | 0.8 |
| Pocket knife | 1 | 0.8 |
| Roller coaster cart | 1 | 0.8 |
| Sand | 1 | 0.8 |
| See-through leaf | 1 | 0.8 |
| Shampoo | 1 | 0.8 |
| Snow globe | 1 | 0.8 |
| Softball doll | 1 | 0.8 |
| Squashed penny | 1 | 0.8 |
| Stick | 1 | 0.8 |
| Towel | 1 | 0.8 |
| Toy | 1 | 0.8 |
| Total | 123 | |

Note: The 22 child informants projected the type(s) of souvenir they would like to acquire at four different types of generic vacation destinations: mountains, beach, amusement park, and city. Some children listed multiple objects for each vacation place.

1 appropriate action [$X^2(3, 1) = 49.17, p < 0.001$]. Not surprisingly, the majority
of souvenirs from the amusement park and city would be purchased and
3 from the beach (e.g., Exhibit 3) and camp would be taken. Only three
souvenirs were to be acquired for someone other than the respondent. That
5 is, most of the souvenirs were self-gifts (Mick & DeMoss, 1990).

Twenty-two percent of the objects mentioned were associated with pre-
7 vious experiences that the children had at similar types of places. Younger
children were less likely than older children to associate the object and place
9 with their previous experiences [$X^2(8, 1) = 16.86, p < 0.05$]. This suggests
that the older children are beginning to understand the complex and sym-
11 bolic relationship between objects, places, and their previous experiences.
The children in our sample are in a developmental stage where they have
13 developed the ability to form abstractions from concrete occurrences (John,
1999).

15 The object was related to the child by determining if the souvenir was to
be part of a collection (13.9 percent of the objects); was typical of a rit-
17 ualistic buying strategy, such as always buying t-shirts when on vacation
(4.9 percent); or was just a necessary part of the experience (81.1 percent).
19 This demonstrates that the vast majority of objects would be acquired be-
cause buying a souvenir is one of the things you *do* when on a vacation (e.g.,
21 Exhibit 2). Thus, the souvenir is almost like evidence in a trial; it is evidence
that you have been there. It “authenticates the experience of the viewer”
23 (Stewart, 1984, p. 134).

As Table 3 illustrates, the type of vacation destination or place has a
25 significant relationship with the type of souvenir object the child will want to
get [$X^2(12, 1) = 85.47, p < 0.001$]. When the objects were classified into the
27 typology of souvenirs, most objects listed were classified as a piece-of-the
rock (36.6 percent), followed by generic markers (30.9 percent), cultural
29 icons (18.7 percent), pictorial images (8.1 percent), and other things, which
had to do more with the person than the place (5.7 percent).

31 Most souvenirs classified as generic markers come from an amusement
park or city. Similarly, most cultural icons come from an amusement park
33 or city. Pieces-of-the-rock come from beaches and campus, while pictorial
images are associated with camps for most. It may be that the children
35 associate the out-of-doors camp environment with picture taking to capture
part of the essence of the place and experience. From an adult perspective, it
37 may seem to be unremarkable that rocks come from camps, shells from
beaches, stuffed animals from amusement parks, and t-shirts from places
39 that have shopping opportunities; however, it is notable that the children
have developed knowledge about what kinds of things are available at



You are on a vacation at this place.
 What kind of souvenir would you want if you went to a place like this?
 What makes this a good thing to get?

#4 Taylor (11)

I would get a hard rock t-shirt. Cause hardrock is the place to get souvenirs.

Exhibit 2.

different places. As John (1999) describes, children in the age range of our sample have already formed relatively sophisticated shopping scripts. That is, they understand how to acquire goods and from where to acquire them. Our data are consistent with relatively sophisticated children who have already begun learning the rules about what one can acquire and from where. A significant relationship between souvenir type and use connection to the object (ritual, collecting, or part of the experience) demonstrates that children have different uses for different types of objects [$X^2(8,1) = 21.70, p < 0.01$]. Souvenir objects classified as a *piece-of-the-rock* (e.g., shells from the beach or rocks from the camp) or *generic markers* (e.g., t-shirts with a

Table 3. Type of Souvenir by Place.

| Type of Souvenir | Description | All Places | Amusement Park | Beach | City | Camp |
|-------------------|--|------------|----------------|-------|------|------|
| Piece-of-the-Rock | A natural part of the whole (e.g., rocks, shells, sand) | 36.6 | | 55.6 | | 44.4 |
| Generic marker | Inscription references a particular place, but could be representative of anything (e.g., key chains) | 30.9 | 39.5 | 15.8 | 42.1 | 2.6 |
| Cultural icon | Manufactured or handmade object that replicates culture (e.g., sombrero) | 18.7 | 47.8 | 4.3 | 39.1 | 8.7 |
| Pictorial image | Images of place (e.g., postcards, snapshots, sketches) | 8.1 | 30.0 | | 20.0 | 50.0 |
| Other | Things that have more to do with the person than the place or vacation experience (e.g., collectibles) | 5.7 | 28.6 | 14.3 | 57.1 | |

Note: Report reflects percentage of 123 objects mentioned on pictorial projectives. Typology of souvenirs modified, but originally based upon Gordon (1986).

place name) were more likely to be a part of a collection or a typical pattern of acquiring souvenirs on vacations than the other types of souvenirs. The majority of *generic markers* (e.g., t-shirts with a place name), *pieces-of-the-rock* (e.g., shells), and *cultural icons* (e.g., replicas of the site) were seen as just part of the experience. It seems that children need the objects inscribed with the place name, that replicate the culture, or that provide an image of the place, because acquiring a souvenir is something that you *do* on vacation to tangibilize the experience and make it real. This shows how expectations for what the souvenir will *do* affect the type of souvenir desired. Their tourism style including ritual acts, collecting, or doing as part of the experience, affects what is acquired. Graburn (1980) also found effects of tourism style (e.g., hunting and gathering tourist versus ecological tourist, etc.) on the type of objects acquired. The children seem to know that certain

1 objects come from certain locations and what one does or can do varies
2 from one type of location to another. This suggests that the children's
3 knowledge base includes travel scripts or schemas.

4 Table 4 describes the significant relationship between souvenir type and
5 motivation [$X^2(28,1) = 68.19, p < 0.001$]. The two most predominant motives
6 for acquisition across all objects are (1) to acquire an object that serves
7 as a reminder of the event (e.g., Exhibits 1 and 3) and (2) to get something to
8 possess (e.g., Exhibit 2). As John (1999) discusses, these children have the
9 ability to imagine themselves in their future roles and imagine how they will
10 view the souvenir. Thus, the children are evidencing the ability to anticipate
11 the future memento value of the souvenir item.

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You are on a vacation at this place.
 What kind of souvenir would you want if you went to a place like this?
 What makes this a good thing to get?

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*I would try to find sand dollars. They would remind me
 of my trip to the beach.*

Exhibit 3.

1 Pictorial images and cultural icons (e.g., replicas of the place) are impor-
 2 tant to children because they facilitate the memory of the event and they
 3 give them something tangible to have. The children enjoy acquiring pieces of
 4 the rock (e.g., seashells) because the part of the environment they take with
 5 them is something they can have and something with which they can begin,
 6 or add to a collection. Generic markers (e.g., t-shirts) are important to the
 7 children because they help them remember, communicate their experiences
 8 with others, and give them something to take home. They are motivated to
 9 acquire a piece of the rock because such an acquisition is a necessary part of
 10 the trip experience and also helps them discover something interesting about
 11 the place. The kids are most likely to use or play with cultural icons (e.g.,
 12 Exhibit 4).

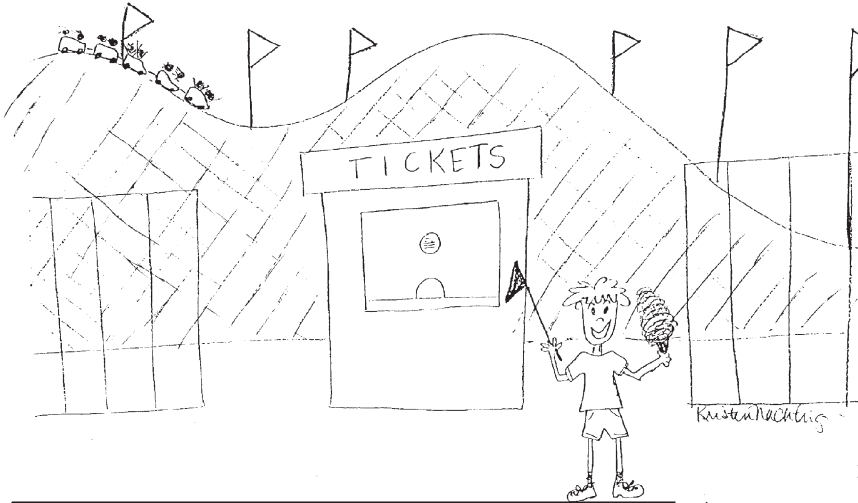
13 A significant relationship exists between the child's sex and motive for
 14 acquisition [$X^2(7,1) = 30.68, p < 0.001$]. Females want souvenirs to remem-
 15 ber or to add to a collection, whereas males are more focused on acquiring
 16 souvenirs to use, to discover or learn something, or because getting some-
 17 thing is a necessary part of the experience (e.g., Exhibit 1 versus Exhibit 4).
 18 These results are consistent with research that shows similar gender differ-
 19 ences in adults' meaning for special possessions (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochb-
 20 erg-Halton, 1981; Dittmar, 1992).

24 **Table 4.** Type of Souvenir by Motive.

| Motive | All Souvenirs | Piece-of-the-Rock | Generic Marker | Cultural Icon | Pictorial Image | Other |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|-------|
| To remember | 30.9 | 11.1 | 50.0 | 30.4 | 50.0 | 28.6 |
| To possess or have | 30.8 | 31.1 | 15.8 | 26.1 | 30.0 | 69.2 |
| To add to or start a collection | 17.0 | 31.1 | 7.9 | | | |
| To get as part of the experience | 12.2 | 15.6 | 2.6 | 4.3 | 10.0 | |
| To use | 12.2 | | 2.6 | 17.4 | | |
| To communicate with others | 8.9 | 4.4 | 15.8 | 4.3 | | |
| To find or discover | 5.7 | 4.4 | 2.6 | | | |
| To get because it will last | 2.2 | | | | | 2.2 |
| Missing values | | 2.6 | 17.4 | 10.0 | | |

39 *Note:* Report reflects percentage of 123 objects mentioned on pictorial projectives. Missing values reflect that we were unable to infer motives on some stimuli.

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You are on a vacation at this place.
 What kind of souvenir would you want if you went to a place like this?
 What makes this a good thing to get?

#1 Cody


[Faint, illegible handwritten text, possibly a child's response to the survey question.]

Exhibit 4.

In addition, the objects that younger kids desire are less likely to be associated with previous experiences or knowledge [$\chi^2 (28,1) = 16.86, p < 0.05$]. In fact, consistent with their developmental stage (John, 1999) kids seem to start being motivated to acquire souvenirs for nostalgic purposes, or based on previous association, between the ages of 11 and 13.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this project was to explore the symbolic meanings children assign to souvenirs and children's motives and knowledge about souvenir acquisition. Twenty-two children, mostly between 10 and 12 years of age, participated in semi-structured interviews and responded to pictorial projectives. Consistent with research using adult samples (e.g., Belk et al., 1982), the children associated symbolic meanings with souvenirs. Souvenirs were not just things to have, use, or play with, but often represented a special place, a memorable experience, or self-definitional associations. Being part of a self-narrative gives a souvenir personal meaning (Stewart, 1984); the narrative of one's tourist experience includes meanings related to the place, the person, and the particular souvenir object and what it will be used for (e.g., to add to a collection).

The Definition of Souvenirs to Children

The children in our sample had ideas about what makes an object a souvenir. A souvenir is related to a special place one has visited and tangibilizes that experience; it does not belong in the category of profane "stuff," but may carry deeper meaning due to person or place associations. The souvenir comes not from visiting just anywhere, but is associated with a special place that may carry extraordinary meaning. To many of the children, a souvenir is not an everyday thing, but a special possession object that carries autobiographical associations and aids boundary crossings from the ordinary back to the extraordinary. Certain souvenirs acquired sacred meaning to the children due to the object's association with vacation rituals or because the souvenir was to be added to a collection of similar objects (e.g., a shell collection).

The child's self-perception of being a *tourist* when he or she visits a particular place appears to influence whether the child believes a souvenir should be purchased. A souvenir could be something that was either found or bought; it was more important to acquire something from the place and the means of acquisition was irrelevant. Also, the children appeared comfortable mixing the found (e.g., beach sand) with the purchased (e.g., jar to hold the sand) to create a meaningful memento of their trip.

In general, the children's responses revealed that they have developed an understanding of what a souvenir is and what type of souvenir one is supposed to acquire at a particular type of place. The children understand

1 souvenir acquisition to be a part of the vacation script or trip schema. These
2 knowledge structures would be an interesting avenue of exploration in fu-
3 ture research.

5

7

Layers of Meaning

9 Typically, scholars have studied either person–place meanings or person–
10 object meanings. This study demonstrates that for souvenirs, the meaning of
11 the object is understood in the context of the person/object/place meanings,
12 which are inextricably linked.

13 Societies collect tourist attractions and individuals collect souvenirs
14 (MacCannell, 1984). With adults, a souvenir brings larger, collective mean-
15 ings of place home to the individual level, permitting one’s own personal
16 meanings to be mixed with the collective (Stewart, 1984). We found that
17 children also assembled collective and personal meanings into a single ob-
18 ject. Both person–place and person–object meanings become intertwined in
19 the souvenir.

20 Our child participants associated certain kinds of objects with certain
21 places. Prototypical souvenir–place associations include t-shirts from the
22 city, shells from the beach, rocks from camp, or stuffed animals from
23 amusement parks. While these associations may be unremarkable from an
24 adult perspective, it is notable that children also knew this place–object
25 associations.

27

29

Action and Contemplation Value

31 Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) observed that relative to
32 adults, children tend to value possessions for their action potential. Our
33 results suggest, however, that children revere souvenirs for *both* their action
34 and contemplation value. Perhaps, this is because children are capable of
35 understanding that objects may have multiple functional and symbolic uses.
36 While the boys’ souvenir meanings were more action oriented (for learning,
37 discovering, playing, or trading) and the girls’ more contemplation oriented
38 (as mementos and experience markers), both genders had souvenirs for both
39 purposes. These observations are consistent with research about gender
differences and possessions with adults (e.g., Dittmar, 1992).

Communicative Value

1
3 The children we interviewed tended to use souvenirs for their communica-
5 tive value to self. The children nearly always acquired souvenirs for them-
7 selves to possess, not for gift giving purposes. Self-gift souvenirs spoke to the
9 child about “who I am.” When a child is on vacation there may be an
11 increased focus on the self and “my” experience (i.e., the vacation may be
perceived as a self-gift). Or, it may be that, in general, children have a
greater focus on self-cultivation (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton,
1981). Also, children may perceive it to be the role of parents or grand-
parents, not children, to be the givers of souvenirs.

Children also used souvenirs to discover personal tastes and preferences
13 for identity construction purposes. Also, souvenirs often aided mental
15 transport back to travel experiences and served as tangible reminders of
17 where the child has been, or what the child did or saw there, thus serving
autobiographical memory (Stewart, 1984). “When one puts his hands on a
souvenir, he is not only remembering he was there, but ‘proving’ it” (Gor-
don, 1986, p. 137).

19 Souvenir items were sometimes used to communicate symbolically to
21 others. Items such as t-shirts were used as conspicuous signals indicating
23 where the child had been or things the child had done. Public places like
beaches, campgrounds, amusement parks, or city tourist attractions are as-
sociated with souvenirs that have cultural meaning and understanding
among people. Society recognizes that when a person wears clothing dis-
25 playing the name of a place, for example, that person has actually been there
(Milligan, 1998). Children appear to have learned these uses of souvenirs.

Anticipatory Nostalgia

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31 The children who participated in this study evidenced the ability to project
33 themselves into the future and saw the souvenir as a “Star Trek Trans-
porter.” That is, children understand how their extraordinary experience
35 can be saved and relived through the souvenir possession. Nostalgia is fre-
quently reflected in special possessions of adults (e.g., Belk, 1988; Kleine et
37 al., 1995); here we see a clear demonstration that children in the elementary
years are *anticipating* feeling nostalgic about these special times in the fu-
ture. The children believe that one day they will want to go back to these
39 special times and that souvenirs can help take them there. Not surprisingly,
Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) found adults tended to be

1 more past oriented, while children tended to be more future oriented and
2 becoming oriented in relationship to their possessions. Our findings suggest
3 that children comprehend the emotion of nostalgia and realize they have
4 some control over their feelings through the use of certain possession ob-
5 jects.

7

Future Research

9

10 Of interest is how children learn what they believe about souvenirs. Op-
11 portunities exist to explore family-based meanings, how family identity is
12 cultivated via trips and vacations, and how children are socialized into
13 family rituals and pilgrimages to special family locations. How do children
14 learn what defines a souvenir and develop rules and norms about acquiring
15 souvenirs from different kinds of places? Studies with children from less-
16 affluent income groups or who have rarely traveled, along with cross-cul-
17 tural studies could illuminate cultural/subcultural norms influencing chil-
18 dren's socialization about souvenirs.

19 Research about children and special places (e.g., Chawla, 1992; Cooper
20 Marcus, 1992) tends to focus on close to home, familiar places. Further
21 investigation into how children form relationships to distant places they visit
22 infrequently could be of interest in understanding children's relationships to
23 places. Opportunities exist for further exploration into children's meanings
24 for various types of places, ranging from cultural icons and historic places
25 (e.g., Valley Forge, Lincoln Memorial, Statue of Liberty), natural places
26 (e.g., Grand Canyon, White Mountains), or constructed places (e.g., Dis-
27 neyland, Sea World). A typology of children's vacation destinations and
28 their meanings would be a possible contribution.

29 Gender, age, and developmental differences among children regarding
30 souvenir meanings deserve greater exploration. While gender differences in
31 orientation to possessions objects are consistently observed, boys and girls
32 exhibit both contemplation and action orientations toward souvenirs and
33 special possessions. Additionally, the idea of anticipatory nostalgia could be
34 further explored. When do children start understanding the memento value
35 of a good and are able to imagine themselves years ahead looking back?

36 A great deal of children's understanding about souvenirs, their purposes,
37 meanings, and rules for use and acquisition, appear to be learned during
38 childhood. Souvenirs offer a potent opportunity to investigate a range of
39 questions about relationships between children, objects, and meaningful
40 places and to understand consumer socialization and meaning formation.

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| AQ3 | Please provide all the editors name in Belk (1990). | |
| AQ4 | Please provide the vol. no. in Furby (1980), Littrell et al. (1994), and Otnes and McGrath (1994). | |
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