PLAY AND GAMES IN SOUTHERN HARBOUR
A PERFORMANCE ORIENTED STUDY OF CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES IN A NEWFOUNDLAND OUTPORT COMMUNITY

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Play and Games in Southern Harbour
A Performance Oriented Study of Children's Activities in a Newfoundland Outport Community

by

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Abstract

This is a study of the performance of games and play among the children of a Newfoundland outport. Based on fieldwork with children aged between seven and thirteen years, the thesis explores children's games through a performance-centred approach to folklore. Other previous performance oriented studies have been taken into account in the analysis, and a performance-centred approach for the study of children's play and game activities is suggested.

A detailed discussion of the fieldwork experiences and methods used while dealing with the raw materials in the context of the community of Southern Harbour is given in Chapter Two. Chapter Three describes the play and game activities that were collected during fieldwork; it also suggests a classification system derived from the features of the play and game activities of the children. Chapter Four presents a performance model and deals with the relationship of performer and audience in the context of children's play activities.

Since children are less accessible to adults for a performance centred approach, this thesis tends to fill a niche in present possibilities

for future research on the performance elements of children's play and game activities in folklore.

Poem

Mary Dalton

delf and the children's games

his notebook and his listening ear
make a door, ajar:
along its slant of light
slopes away
green gravel, green gravel
your grass is so green
grandmother gray
london's bridges, falling down
ringing 'round rosies
all falling down

statues
giant's steps
here we go
paddling in the duck's water

go in and out the window
  in and out the window
go in and out the window
as we have done before

red, blue jackets flapping
calls echoing down the years
the children careen
into the duck's water
away from grandmother
gray, the falling bridges

time's dark horizons,
all misting and blurring,
turned arches, exultant,
in their cathedral of play

Reprinted by permission from Mary Dalton from Tickle Ace, 16 (1988): 73.

for Eva

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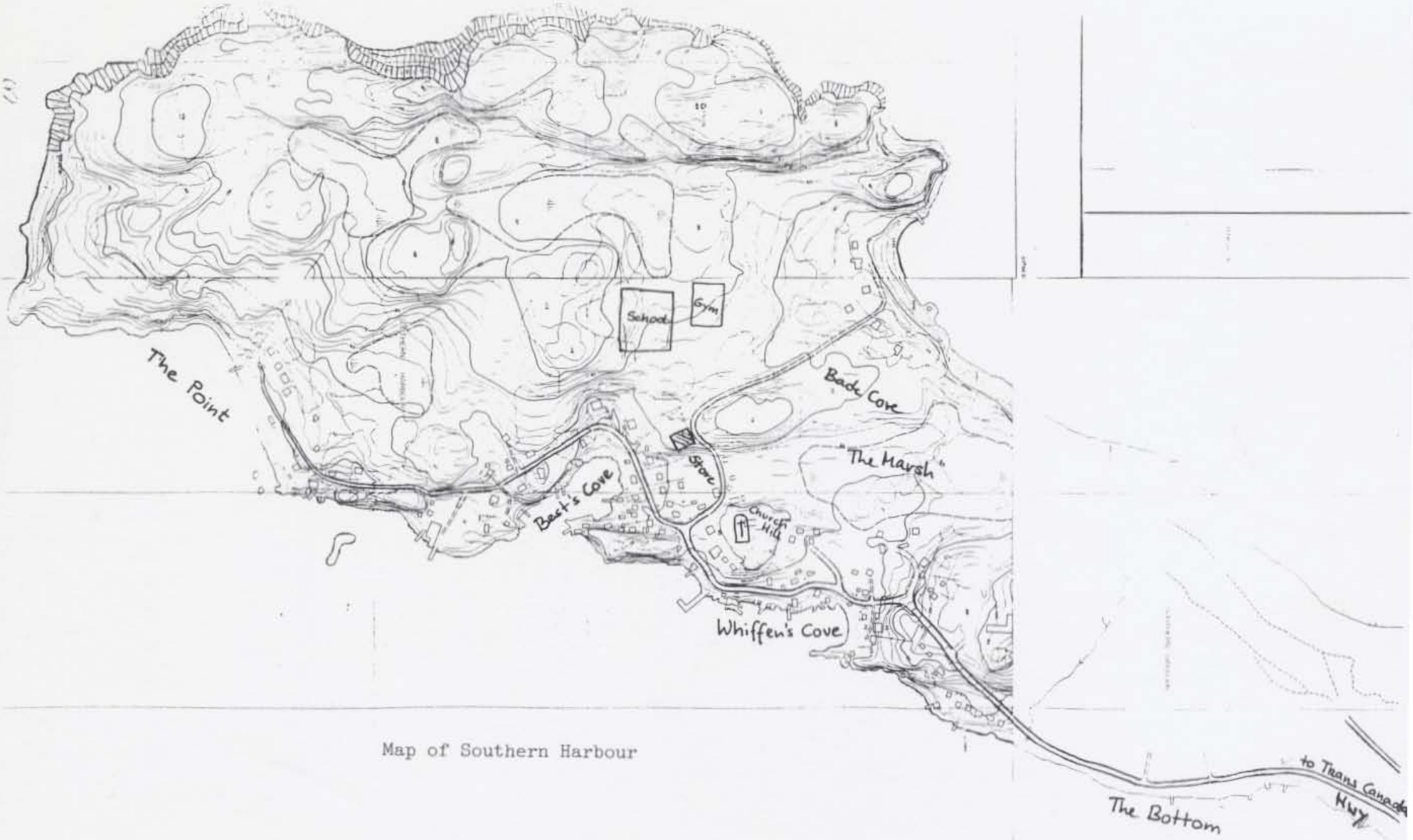

Map of Southern Harbour

Chapter One • INTRODUCTION

The Approach

In recent decades folklorists have moved away from the collecting of items and attempts to trace their origins and dissemination toward functional, contextual and performance oriented approaches. This not only entails a movement away from looking at children's folklore from a vertical angle but also a move toward a better understanding of the actual process of the flow of information among the children and their peers on their own level. Earlier scholars have not been very successful in moving alongside the children in a horizontal manner, for example Iona Opie writes:

> The old routine - stand at the side of the playground and ask the children what they're doing. Posing as the village idiot. They teach me how to play marbles. They teach me terribly vulgar stories, or children's versions of these stories, which tend to be a little vague, as they don't quite understand them.[1]

Given Opie's devotion to the subject of children's folklore it is strange that she feels it necessary to strike this note of condescension.

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1 Iona Opie, "Playground Person," The Children's Folklore Review XII:1 (1989): 3.

I think that the key to the study of children's lore lies in uncovering the various processes that make the dynamics of the children's play and game sessions. Knowledge of these will allow the researcher to understand more of the culture and folklore *of* children, a concept that has been expanded by Bausinger:

> Was Kinderkultur ausmacht, ist oft weniger eine Sache des Texts als des Kontexts. Nicht die Herkunft der Elemente ist entscheidend, oft auch nicht der spezifische Inhalt, sondern der Sachverhalt, daß tatsächlich ein eigener Horizont vorhanden ist, in dem sich auch das von außen Kommende verwandelt. In diesem Horizont geraten die Inhalte - auch die schwergewichtigen und aggressiven - in ein Feld der Levitation, werden frei für zusätzliche Bedeutungen und für die Verkettung mit anderen Inhalten in freier Assoziation.[2]

My first step toward writing a thesis with a performance centred approach to the play and game activities was my article "'You're out, you're out': Hopscotch in Harlow, Essex."[3] In the essay I show, by the

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[2] Bausinger, 14. Translation: The essence of children's culture is less a matter of texts but rather that of contexts. Not the origin of the items is important, not even its particular contents, but the fact there indeed exists a separate horizon in which external influences undergo a metamorphosis. In this horizon even more emphasised/stressed and aggressive contents move into a field of levitation and become free for additional meaning and interlink with other contents in free association.

[3] Delf Maria Hohmann, "'You're out, you're out': Hopscotch in Harlow, Essex." Talking Folklore 7 (1989) 39-54.

means of a performance analysis, how a new oicotype of the game Hopscotch develops during a play session among children from Newfoundland and England. In this article I develop a model in order to demonstrate how the various interdependencies of particular moments and the negotiating of rules among the participants in the session further the flow of the performance among the children. Whereas the model in the article is mainly concerned to show the establishment of a new version of the game as a result of the performance, I shall attempt to foster this idea in this thesis in Chapter Four and show which elements dictate the flow of the children's behaviour within their play sessions, and in and out of play and game situations during their performance. This has already been recognised by Huizinga as he acknowledges the fact that:

> Ieder spel kan te allen tijde den speler geheel in beslag nemen. De tegenstelling spel - ernst blijft te allen tijde een zwevende.[4]

Expanding Huizinga's argument about *zweven* (to float), Mihaly Csikszentmil... yi picks up the idea of "flow" as

> an action [that] follows upon action according to an internal logic that seems to need no

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[4] Johan Huizinga, Homo Ludens, (Haarlem: H.D. Tjeenk Willink & Zoon N.V., 1952) 9. Translation: Any play (game) can at any time completely absorb the player. The contrast between play and seriousness remains floating.

> conscious intervention by the actor. He experiences it as unified flowing from one movement to the next, in which he is in control of his actions, and in which there is little distinction between self and environment, between stimulus and response, or between past, present and future.[5]

Situations in the above sense were common among the children of Southern Harbour not only when playing by themselves but also in groups. The play ending situations become relevant as they function as a linking element between a previously exhausted play situation and a new one. This may occur within the frame of a particular ongoing game (see my account of "Balance" later in this thesis) or as an indicator for the participants to begin an entirely new game.

In order to capture a play or game activity, and its various flow elements, as completely as possible I had to be almost omnipresent whenever the children engage in any form of activity, which is almost impossible to accomplish as a single fieldworker. Undoubtedly, in my case, my presence altered the children's behaviour to a certain degree; I did not find, however, that they felt disturbed in their activities but

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[5] Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Beyond Boredom and Anxiety, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1975) 36.

rather were enticed to perform their games for me. In my case what I have named the *psychological slope* between adults and children seemed to be diminished during my presence.[6] The children sensed that I was interested in listening to them and sharing their actions from their point of view instead of considering them as hangaroundabouts or a "nuisance," as they were frequently referred to by the adult members of the community. Instead of creating induced fieldwork situations in the way Goldstein suggested,[7] or requesting the children to perform a particular game which I knew from the literature, I let them perform their activities whenever and in which manner and place they wanted. No or few restrictions on any levels of their actions seemed to be the only way to enable me to record the ongoing flow of performance, the major aspect of this thesis. It seemed that from the level of mutual communication as a participant observer, I gained the status of an *honorary child* among them, which allowed me to record the children without giving them the feeling that there was an intruder in their peer group from whom they had to protect themselves.[8] Having achieved this

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[6] The problem of the *psychological slope* has been discussed in Chapter Two.

[7] Cf. Kenneth Goldstein, A Guide for Fieldworkers in Folklore (Hatboro: Folklore Associates, 1964) 87-90.

[8] The term *honorary child* was suggested to me by my thesis supervisor Dr. Martin Lovelace.

privileged position I was able to see the children's games evolve and observe their movements within and in and out of play and game activities which enabled me to develop a model of the children's play and game performance.

In Chapter Two I introduce the reader to aspects of fieldwork and my experiences in the field in the Newfoundland outport community of Southern Harbour, Placentia Bay. I discuss the community's reaction to my presence, my method of conducting fieldwork with the children, and in particular my attempts to reduce the children's suspicion about an adult being interested in their activities.

Chapter Three describes the play and games collected in the field, and is also an attempt to classify the activities according to previously established classification systems. An attempt is made to show a relation between play and game activities and community values.

In Chapter Four I have developed a model for the performance of children's play activities. The model shows aspects of the actual flow within a play session and points to the necessity of a distinction between the flow in an adult performance and what I found in children's play.

which can only be analyzed in a revised performance approach to children's folklore. Due to my synchronic approach I was not concerned with the quantity of children's games in the community. A complete study that would encompass all major aspects of the play and game repertoire in the community would necessitate an uninterrupted fieldwork period for the duration of one year in order to cover all the seasonal aspects of children's play and game performance. Finally, the thesis finishes with conclusions drawn from this study, and an outlook on possible future studies.

The Community of Southern Harbour

The community of Southern Harbour lies at the north end of Placentia Bay on a peninsula that stretches about 2.5 km into the bay. It is accessible from a turn off on the Trans-Canada Highway about 130 km west of St. John's. The road meanders 2 km through the community beginning at the Bottom, through Whiffen's Cove, Best's Cove and the Point. From a three way crossing below the church which is built on a hill between Whiffen's Cove and Best's Cove, the road leads from Best's Cove past the church, the school, and another building which also

houses the gymnasium of the school, the community library and the office of the town council, to the Back Cove, a newly developed area, that is separated from the community by an area of marshland, locally referred to as "the marsh."

At the time of my fieldwork in the summer of 1987, the community had 742 inhabitants, mainly employed in the inshore fishery. The fish, cod, redfish and mackerel, is processed in the local fishplant, which employs about twenty to thirty women in the high season. People who do not make their living from the fishery work at the nearby oil refinery in Come-by-Chance, and a few are employed in administrative and service positions in Clarenville, the larger settlement in the area. A trucking company also works out of Southern Harbour.

The community is 90% Roman Catholic, but does not have a priest. The church services are held by a visiting priest who covers the spiritual needs of two to three more communities between Arnold's Cove and Norman's Cove.[9]

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[9] Some of the information about the community was communicated to me by Mrs Linda Ryan the town clerk of Southern Harbour.

My first visit to Southern Harbour

My choice of Southern Harbour for the location of my fieldwork came about as a result of chance. In March 1985, a field trip organized by Dr. Wilfred Wareham was to take students of Memorial's Folklore department to Harbour Buffett on Long Island in Placentia Bay. Due to weather conditions the group rerouted the field trip to Mr Jim Traverse's house, a fisherman from Brule on Merasheen Island in Placentia Bay, in Southern Harbour for a good time. During the event, with lots of music being played, a few children knocked on the door and asked me to come out, as they wanted to talk to the person playing the "guitar with the long neck" which in fact was my banjo. The children gave me a tour through the community and introduced me to a number of people we met on our way. The children exchanged addresses with me, and only a few weeks after the field trip I received a letter from them in which they asked me to come for a visit. We frequently exchanged letters, and whenever the opportunity arose I visited them in Southern Harbour. At a later stage, when the time came to decide on a fieldwork topic and location, the children and the community turned out to be the obvious choice for me.

Ages of the Children

I have given the children's ages when I describe the games in Chapter Three. In general the children were between seven and thirteen years old. This by no means indicates that a particular game could not be played by older or for that matter younger children. Older children for example, sometimes engaged in a game when I asked them about it. Wanda-Lee and Gayle comment:

> DMH: So what are they doing over there?
> Wanda-Lee: They're just walking around ...
> DMH: They don't play games like this?
> Gayle: No, they're too old for that kind of stuff. They're fourteen, they're too old.
> Wanda-Lee: When you're thirteen, you're too old for these games.
> DMH: Ya?
> Gayle: I plays them, I'm fourteen.[10]

A Note on the Transcripts in the Text

Three dots (...) indicate a pause in speech during a tape-recorded event [...]. Ellipses are indicated by three dots in a square bracket ([...]), and emic terms used by the children are given quotation marks.

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[10] Tape recorded interview, 2 July 1987.

A Note on the Annotation in Footnotes

The reader may unsuccessfully look for references from Memorial's Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA). Altogether four sources from Southern Harbour are held in the archive, none of which deals with children's play and game activities. MUNFLA, however, houses a vast amount of sources relating to children's folklore, which could explored in future studies. Due to my performance approach I felt it unnecessary to draw on archival sources. The annotations of the play and game activities are based on published sources. Being a native German speaker I was, however, also able to consider published materials I hold in my own library, some of which can also be found in the university library.

Chapter Two • FIELDWORK

COLLECTING AND OBSERVING CHILDREN'S GAMES IN SOUTHERN HARBOUR

First Visit with my Host Family and the School

On May Day 1987 I rented a car in St. John's and drove to Southern Harbour. The main reason for the visit was to meet the principal of Our Saviour King Academy, and the family I intended to stay with during my fieldwork in June and July of the same year. By then the word had been passed around the community that during the summer months a "man" from Memorial University had planned to spend some time researching children's games in Southern Harbour. I decided to first visit my hosting family in a part of the community called the "Bottom" and then met with the principal of the school.[11]

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[11] [See map on page ... .]

The road that leads from the Trans Canada Highway to Southern Harbour is approximately five kilometres long. When I drove into the community I was stopped by a young fellow, aged about 18 years, who asked me for a lift. I suspected that he knew my host family, the Wakehams, and I asked for directions as I was only roughly acquainted with various parts of the community at that time. I also introduced myself to him and briefly outlined my project, hoping he would mention it to his friends. I dropped him off at his house which was only a few hundred metres away from my host's place. I parked my car in their broad driveway and went to the rear entrance of the house. I knocked, but nobody seemed to be at home. I decided to leave a note at the door and proceeded to the school where I was scheduled to meet Mr Traverse, the principal.

The School

I was greeted by the secretary, Ms Rose Whiffen, who regretted that the principal was not readily available as he was in a meeting with a parent. It gave me the opportunity to chat with the secretary for a while,

as she seemed to be rather keen to learn about my future presence in the community.

The meeting with the principal went smoothly and he expressed his full support for my project and the fieldwork I had planned to conduct on the schoolgrounds. He also advised me to seek written permission from the superintendent of the Roman Catholic schoolboard in Placentia.

Mr Traverse introduced me to the other teachers who were on their lunch break in the staff room. Some of the teachers, especially the few who live in Southern Harbour, showed great interest in my project, and almost immediately plunged into a discussion of various games they remembered from their childhood. They described their games to each other, including a debate about various rules applied to individual games. Because the discussion turned out to be very explicit and fruitful I regretted not having my tape recorder at hand. I comforted myself with the thought that I was going to study the play activities of the children in Southern Harbour, in the present context, and not the teachers' childhood reminiscences. I did not make any appointments to

subsequently interview them.[12] In any case, when I returned to the community, most of them were gone for their summer holidays.

When I stepped out of the staff room into the hallway a few students discovered me and immediately questioned me. Among those surrounding me were Wanda Lee and her sister Gayle.[13] The two girls belonged to the group of children whom I had met on my first visit to Southern Harbour, in March 1985, at the party at Jim Traverse's place. I told the children the purpose of my visit and the time of the year that I had planned to come to their community to do my fieldwork, again hoping they would pass the message on to their families and friends.

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12 On the last day of my second fieldtrip in November 1987 I met with one of the teachers, Mrs Rosalind Pinsent, originally from Bell Island, now living in Bellevue, Trinity Bay. She provided me with an interview on games she remembered from her own childhood including a description of how the games were played. The games she talked about were: Hopscotch, Kick the Block, Tiddley Winks, London Bridge, Tug O'War, Illie Allie-O, Tisket or Tasket, Cat and Mouse, Witch in the Well, Giant Steps, Status, Tag, House, Store, Office-accounting, School, Dancers, Skipping, Hand-clapping.

13 Referring to the children by their first names only is by no means intended to be demeaning. Wanda Lee and her sister Gayle Best were among the very few children I knew by their complete names. There were many children present in fieldwork situations so I could not learn all of their full names.

The few adults appearing in this thesis are referred to by their full names and in the manner they were introduced to me. Coincidentally, two adults in the community bear the same surnames: Mr Traverse is the principal of the highschool, and Mr Jim Traverse is a fisherman, originally from Brule, Placentia Bay.

My Hosts: The Wakehams

At an earlier visit I arranged to stay with the family of one of my informants. Unfortunately, the mother of that family had just undergone severe surgery and could only recommend me to Mrs Julia Best the president of the local senior citizens group to help me find accommodation for the time of my fieldwork. Mrs Julia Best kindly passed the word around in the community and Mrs Rita Wakeham agreed to accommodate me during the first part of my fieldwork.

I left the school approximately one hour after I talked to the principal and returned to my host's place at the "Bottom." When I reached the house I noticed a car in the driveway; obviously Mrs Wakeham had returned home. She greeted me at the door and told me that she knew that it was me who pulled into the driveway; the secretary of the school had called her and described the car to her. She asked me into the house where we sat down at the kitchen table. She offered me a cup of tea as well as some freshly baked homemade bread and partridgeberry jam. I explained to her my interest in children's games, and the plans for my field research, and illustrated them with a few

examples from my previous observations of children's play activities. At that time she was still convinced, however, that my main interest was the organized sports games children played in the gym of their school. Mrs Wakeham even referred me to Mr Joe Slaney, the sports teacher of Our Saviour King Academy. Only when I began my actual fieldwork in the community a month later, did she accept that I was interested in the children's daily play activities as she observed my interaction with the children while they were playing outdoors. It seemed that her misconception was due to both a misinterpretation of the term "game" and a preconceived understanding of my research project. By then it was clear to me that somehow in the chain of referrals the idea had grown up that I was interested in the organized sports of the children, rather than in their folk games.

After approximately one and a half hours of conversation with my host, I had to leave in order to drive to Placentia to meet with Mr John Harte, the superintendent of the Roman Catholic School Board for Placentia Bay. The superintendent did not see any problems that could restrain me from conducting my research in the school and on the schoolgrounds of Our Saviour King Academy. Mr Harte posed a variety of questions about my project and also asked about my religious

denomination. I gave him a copy of my thesis proposal. He seemed to be contented with all the information he received from me and with the fact that I was a Roman Catholic myself. During my stay in Southern Harbour I was asked a number of times about my denomination by various community members. It seemed being a Roman Catholic helped my presence to be more readily accepted, as the entire community and the school are Roman Catholic. A few days later I received his official letter of approval to conduct research in the school.

Mrs Rita Wakeham in her house.

Mr Mike Wakeham (†) and Ashton, his grandson.

Fieldwork

I returned to Southern Harbour in the middle of June 1987 to live in the community over the next one and a half months, and in November 1987 to stay for about two weeks. Between my earlier visit and my actual move into the community I visited my own family in Germany.

From Germany I mailed postcards to my host family as well as to Wanda Lee and Gayle and to the president of the local Senior Citizens group, Mrs Julia Best. I not only sent greetings from Germany, but also announced my approximate time of arrival in the community. That way I reminded my acquaintances in Southern Harbour of my future stay and again hoped that they would pass on the word to other members of the community. Indeed, after I returned to Southern Harbour in the middle of June 1987 a few of the children said they knew I was scheduled to return at that time, because Wanda Lee and Gayle had received a postcard from me.

A few days before I left for Southern Harbour I called my host family to confirm my stay with them, and when I mentioned that I planned to come by bus, they offered to meet me at the Trans Canada Highway turn-off to Southern Harbour at the appropriate time. Rita and Mike Wakcham were waiting for me when the bus arrived at the turn-off. They greeted me and helped me to lift my two bags into their car. Mike commented on the weight of one bag which was packed with all my fieldwork tools.

When we arrived at the Wakehams' place, Rita had already prepared lunch for all of us. I was given an extra plate with carefully arranged coldcuts, cheese and some lettuce. During the meal and after the obligatory cup of tea was served, we chatted about various topics such as fishing, boat maintenance, housework and the raising of children. I was then shown to my room where I unpacked my bags. Mrs Wakeham had previously emptied her closet and chest of drawers for my use. The room was on the ground floor next to the bathroom and the kitchen. It connected to a pantry where various canned foods, laundry detergents, a movable washing machine and the winter boots were stored. Mike and Rita usually slept in this room, but they had moved upstairs to leave the room for me. I greatly appreciated the room, since it had a window facing the road from which I was able to see the children's play activities outside.

Establishing Rapport

After supper on the day of my arrival I intended to walk the road in the hope of meeting some children and establishing first contacts with my prospective informants. As I left the house, I saw a little boy by himself in the neighbour's front yard. When I approached him I found

him busy playing with plastic Indian and Cowboy figures on an old oil barrel that was turned upside down. The boy seemed to be deeply involved playing with his figures, because he did not notice me until I stood right across from him at the oil barrel. Despite the fact that I helloed at him as I approached him, he was startled when I repeated my greeting standing in front of him. I asked him what he was doing, whereupon he answered "nothing," an answer that I would hear frequently during my fieldwork when I approached children playing in smaller or larger groups. I asked him more precisely what he was playing and he answered that he was playing "warriors." I then introduced myself to him and asked him for his name. I turned on the tape recorder and recorded the following conversation: [Wind rumble on the microphone cuts out a few seconds of the beginning of the conversation.]

DMH: Are you going to school?
Vincy: No boy, I'm only four.
DMH: Ya?
Vincy: And in the next season, uh, I'm gonna be six.
DMH: Do you play around here?
Vincy: Ya.
DMH: Do you know any other kids up and down the street here, to play with?
Vincy: Only, only when somebody's hangin' around. All I plays with is Whitney.
DMH: Whitney?
Vincy: Like, sometimes with my brothers and sisters. [long pause]
DMH: Too bad, they're gone in.

Vincy: But if, if you want to speak to me dad, I go and get him.
DMH: Sure. See, I'm interested in the kids' games, that's why I'm here.
Vincy: Uh, do you want to talk to me dad?
DMH: Oh no, your brothers and sisters, are they here?
Vincy: Ya.
DMH: They're having supper now, I guess?
Vincy: No, boy.
DMH: What's your name again?
Vincy: Vincy.
DMH: My name is Delf. [The noise of a passing motorbike cuts out part of the conversation.] There's this thing out here painted on the pavement. Did they do that, your brothers and sisters?
Vincy: No. [Long pause.] But if you wants me dad, I go in and get him.
DMH: Oh no, that's fine. Don't worry. I would like the other kids, I guess they're not coming out today. [Pause.] What kind of games do you play when you're out here?
Vincy: Oh, sometimes we plays tag ...
DMH: Alright.
Vincy: or basket ball, or ...
DMH: How do you play tag?
Vincy: Somebody's tryin' to catch you ...
DMH: Ya.
Vincy: If they catches you, you're out.
DMH: Right. [Pause.] How do you decide who is catching who?
Vincy: Uh, that's a hard question.
DMH: Pardon?
Vincy: That's a hard question. [Pause.] Well, we picks on who is different.
DMH: How do you know that?
Vincy: Because, uh, we're all different.
DMH: Ya. You count it out, or what?
Vincy: No, I think, that's in "hide and sneak."
DMH: "Hide and sneak?"

Vincy: Seek!
DMH: "Hide and Seek." ya. you play that too?
Vincy: Sometimes I plays with me toys.
DMH: What kind of toys do you have?
Vincy: Well. I owns one that's. that got guns.
DMH: My God! Guns?
Vincy: Not real ones. toys.
DMH: Ya.
Vincy: And it runs on batteries. There's a crackle to it. It's got a two way-buttons. You press them and it goes crack. or without. [Pause.] I'm gettin' tired now.
DMH: Alright. Are you going to be here tomorrow again?
Vincy: I dunno.[14]

I felt somewhat disappointed after this conversation with Vincy, when I listened to the tape again the following morning. I questioned myself whether I intimidated the little boy when I approached him as he had definitely been engrossed in playing with his figures. Should I have just concentrated on his play performance with his figures? Why didn't I ask him about the characters he portrayed in his "warrior" game? The occasional minute long pauses in our conversation seemed to clearly indicate that there was a gap in our communication that kept us from a mutual understanding. Robert A. Georges and Michael Owen Jones note:

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[14] Conversation recorded on June 26. 1987.

> Whether the parties involved are well-known or unknown to each other, and whether they meet and interact in an environment familiar to all or some or none, they are never fully prepared for the experience of conceiving themselves, and identifying each other, primarily as observer or observed and as questioner or questioned.[15]

The experience of conceiving myself as researcher couples with Vincy's description of the toy with guns. He may have found my reaction somewhat incomprehensible. My instant negative response to the mention of his toy is based upon experiences in my own family.[16] My reaction shows what Wolfgang Alber describes as *das Durchsetzen von Denkkategorien und Vorgaben des Interviewers*. Alber describes the process of social interaction between the researchers and informants. He argues that the informants have a certain degree of influence by shaping scenes through the selection of contents, but finally, however, the researchers will prevail with their categories of thinking and their cues.[17] Furthermore, Vincy's reluctance to talk to me seemed also be

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[15] Robert A. Georges and Michael Owen Jones, People Studying People: The Human Element in Fieldwork (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) 44-45.

[16] I was raised in a family that disapproves of any form of war games or toys. This, being the result of my father's head injury from the second world war and the loss of my uncle killed in action in Russia, caused my spontaneous reaction.

[17] Der Prozeß „sozialer Interaktion", wie ihn die Wissenschaft ebenso euphemistisch wie nichtsagend beschreibt, war zwar vom erzählenden oder berichtenden Partner graduell beeinflußbar, indem er szenische Momente gestaltete oder die Auswahl der Inhalte traf, aber meist setzten sich die Denkkategorien und

based upon an instruction by his parents not to talk to strangers. Thus, his reply "nothing" can be interpreted as a protection mechanism in two ways. Firstly he was following the above mentioned rule set by his parents, and secondly his interpretation of my question may well have been understood by him as a measure of control by an adult, as frequently exercised by parents and teachers. I had the feeling that he politely tried to tell me to leave him alone; he perhaps knew that adult males usually talk to his father, and sought to point me in that direction.

I felt rather downhearted after this first attempt to establish rapport with a neighbourhood child. It was in fact the first time that I had had to handle an unknown informant head-on. In previous fieldwork situations I had been known to my informants, and I had had sufficient time to approach them and establish solid rapport before I began my actual fieldwork.[18]

Vorgaben des Interviewers durch. Wolfgang Alber, "Feldforschung als Textproduktion?," Feldforschung ed. Utz Jeggle (Tübingen: Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde E.V. Schloss, 1984) 122-123.

[18] Cf. Dell' Maria Hohmann, "Jennifer and her Barbies: A Contextual Analysis of a Child Playing Barbie Dolls." Canadian Folklore canadien 7.1-2 (1985): 111, and in "You're out, you're out!: Hopscotch in Harlow, Essex." Talking Folklore 7 (1987): 43.

It also indicated to me that fieldwork does not only entail pure data collection, but rather means building a relationship between the informant and the researcher in a way that suits both parties. My physical appearance and the fact that, being so absorbed in his play, Vincy did not notice my approach may have played a role in derailing our conversation. Later on I tried to imagine how Vincy must have felt being addressed by a very tall person (191cm) with shoulder length hair, an unknown accent, different clothing, and tape recorder and camera slung around his shoulder, something he likely had never seen in the community before.

The conversation with Vincy was the only time I actually tried to interview a young child playing alone. On some other occasions during my fieldwork I saw Vincy playing by himself in front of his parents' house just as he did when I met him for the first time. I did not make another effort to collect from him. In any case, it turned out to be more productive to collect from groups of children than from individuals.

Besides the indicated reasons for the application of the term "nothing" by Vincy, groups of playing children also used the term upon my first approach, which hints at a third possible conclusion. When a

group of children is playing together, they not only identify themselves by a cohesion based upon sharing common elements of folklore, but also by forming defence mechanisms against intruders to the group like rival peer groups or other individuals. This defence mechanism may be set in motion if the group is approached by an adult, in this case the researcher.

The exclusion of unwelcome peers can easily be achieved by merely ignoring the intruder(s), or by an aggressive statement such as "Go away!" or "Leave us alone." When an adult approaches a group, however, the term "nothing" seems to function as a dilatory manœuvre. With this answer children indicate that they are not doing anything that could be interpreted by an adult as "doing something wrong," something that goes beyond any established rules within the social matrix of the peer group or even the value system of the community. Considering the "collector's potentially limited access to the world of children's lore and fantasy" Kenneth S. Goldstein notes:

> Because children's materials are so in-group oriented, there is a real challenge for the collector to obtain anything more than simply those materials which the children are willing to permit him to hear and observe. But children

> have a whole world of private beliefs, rhymes, and erotica which only a few sensitive and understanding adults are ever allowed to penetrate.[19]

The dilatory manœuvre may also be a stalling tactic applied as a rhetorical strategy. By giving the speaking turn back to the adult, it gives the children a moment to gather themselves in a defence position to argue with the adult.

Similar experiences to the one described above occurred a few times with other groups of children in other parts of the community, especially during the first ten days of my fieldwork. When I approached a group of children for the first time they behaved in a rather shy manner. When, however, they began to realize that I was not one of those adults who told them not to get dirty, or not to scream, and who did not make them accountable for a broken window or such, they quickly opened up and offered to help me with my project.

They were even more thrilled when I asked them occasionally whether I could join them in their game. They often cheered for joy and

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[19] Kenneth S. Goldstein, A Guide for Fieldworkers in Folklore (Hatboro: Folklore Associates, 1964) 150-151.

excitement. The reaction was perhaps caused by the unexpected nature of my offer to join them. By joining them I was taking the role of somebody who accepted the children's rules of the game, in which case they considered me as an almost equal playmate or as an *honorary child*.

This was acknowledged when three of the neighbourhood children, Dennis, Anne-Marie, and Sheldon introduced me to their game of Balance, which will be discussed below. In the course of the game Mrs Wakeham called me to the phone and while I was absent from the playing scene the children continued the game without me for a few minutes. The tape recorder kept recording the situation in my absence.

> Sheldon: You've got to go up there.
> DMH: Where?
> Anne-Marie: That's not really necessary, Sheldon. You're out, Dennis. Delf, now it's your turn.
> DMH: My turn?
> Anne-Marie: Ya.
> DMH: So I go up here.
> Sheldon: You have to come up, and you got to get right here, right? And you just walk down like that without losing your balance.
> DHM: Like this? Whoops.
> Sheldon: You have no trouble because your feet's big.
> DMH: And then? How far do I go?
> Anne-Marie: Hop, just hop off.
> DMH: And then I go back the same way?

Anne-Marie: Yes, and you hop off now, wherever you feels like hopping off. Shel, get out of the way.
DMH: It's hard.
Anne-Marie: Isn't it?
DMH: Shit.

[No comment by the children about my profanity]

Anne-Marie: I gotta start hopping again. [The others take their turn.][...]
Anne-Marie: Delf is last, cuz he's gotta learn. [I hop across the keel of the boat]
DMH: It's damn hard.
Sheldon: He's doin' good.
DMH: Oh, I didn't get any further than that. That's it.
Anne-Marie: Now, Shel.
DMH: Did you ever try walking backwards?
Anne-Marie: No, but that the next thing you gotta do, after this step.

[Mrs Wakeham calls me to the phone, the tape recorder keeps running.]

Sheldon: I take your turn, Delf.
DMH: Okay.

[The children take several rounds during my absence.]

Anne-Marie: Didn't cross.
Sheldon: I takes Delf's turn.
Anne-Marie: It's your turn.
Sheldon: No way, this is Delf's.
Anne-Marie: Shel, do you like Delf? I likes him.
Sheldon: I do, too. You're out.
Anne-Marie: No, I'm not.
Sheldon: Yes, you fuck it.
Anne-Marie: Shit.
Sheldon: It's Delf's turn.
Anne-Marie: Delf, it's your turn.

[I return to the scene.]

Sheldon: He's coming.
DMH: How far did you get.
Sheldon: So far, here.
DMH: Do I pick up here?
Anne-Marie: Yes.
DMH: And do what?
Anne-Marie: Down there.
Sheldon: No, he don't, he gotta to pick up there.
DMH: Oh, I'm losing again.
Sheldon: Good game, but it's a hard game, too.
DMH: Oh, it is.
Anne-Marie: It's a good game, though. I'm fartin'. How, in the name of God, do I know when to jump off?
Sheldon: I tell ya. Jump, jump off.[20]

Neither did the children react to my profanity, as they normally would have if another adult had been present at the scene, nor did they restrict their own vocabulary. They approved my presence by teaching it to me, and during my absence discussed their liking for me.

The children's positive reaction was underlined by the fact that I chose to come down from an adult level as I more or less acted like one of them, which meant that they were able to impose their rules on me, an adult. Thus, it served two purposes. Firstly, as a participant observer in a game I was guided through the game by the children which helped

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[20] Tape-recorded play session 30 June 1987.

me better to understand the game itself, as the children explained it to me during the ongoing event, as well as the dynamics of the performance of the game. Secondly, it helped tremendously to overcome what I describe as the "psychological slope."

Children, in general, view people older than themselves as a representation of authority. This is caused partly by the physical features of an adult, as well as by what I call a *psychological slope* which exists between the adult world and the children. It is therefore necessary for the researcher to adjust to the children, in order to overcome a "vertical" relationship, thereby relating to them in a more "horizontal" manner.

From earlier fieldwork experiences with children I learned that it seemed necessary to adjust as much as possible to the children's level of behaviour, thus, to reduce the authoritarian perception children have of the adult world. When I participated in a game with the children, or even showed interest in a particular play activity the preconceived *psychological slope* seemed to be diminished.

Being a performer myself, a musician, certainly benefited me in fieldwork situations. For example, in a concert context I usually walk out on stage with a set programme for the evening; during the performance I constantly communicate with the audience, monitoring their response to various selections and introductions to songs in order to reduce a *psychological slope* that is further emphasized by the physical nature of the division between the stage and the auditorium. The audience reciprocates well when I show them that my flexibility to make instant adjustments to my selections is the result of their disposition, and that I make every possible effort to overcome the barrier that is naturally given in a performance context. This flexibility and sensibility learned in stage performance contexts is applicable to the relationship with the children as my informants.

On occasions other than game playing, for instance when I met a group of children on the road, they seemed to be more reluctant to release any information about the games they played; this was in contrast to their readiness to talk if the game was still in process or if they had just finished playing a game. The children usually waited for me to open the conversation, whereupon I geared the conversation towards their games by relating to them my recollection of my own

childhood games. Despite the fact that I approached the children in that manner, however, in situations like this the *psychological slope* seemed to be more evident than when I participated directly in an activity.

Participant Observation, and reducing the *psychological slope*: During a game of Balltag the children smack the ball on my bottom. The photograph was taken by Dale Ryan.

Wanda Lee and her sister Gayle

My first informants, Wanda Lee and her sister Gayle could be described as my guarantors in the field, for their important role in helping me to establish further rapport with children and their parents in the community. Whenever I met them with groups of other children, the girls greeted me with "Hi, Delf!" and a big grin on their faces. These recurring situations made me feel more comfortable, since being introduced by the girls to their friends increased my rapport with the children in the community. Rolf Lindner observes:

> Der Forscher, der in eine Lebenswelt eintritt, die nicht die seine ist, braucht jemanden, der ihm die Türen öffnet.[21]

Wanda Lee's and Gayle's behaviour not only benefited me as the researcher, but also supported the sisters' status among their peers, which echoed frequently when I met groups of other children who then referred to me as a friend of Wanda Lee's and Gayle's. In ad hoc conversations with the children, Wanda Lee and Gayle played themselves

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[21] Translation: The researcher, who enters a habitat that is not his own, needs someone else to open doors for him. Rolf Lindner, "Ohne Gewähr - Zur Kulturanalyse des Informanten," ed. Utz Jeggle, Feldforschung - Qualitative Methoden in der Kulturanalyse (Tübingen: Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde, 1984) 59.

into the foreground and mentioned that I was going to write a book about them.

Where the simple greeting "Hi, Delf!" was always enough to begin a conversation with the children with the least amount of formality, a slightly more formal approach was necessary when the parents of the children or any other adult member of the community was present. This would be when children were playing inside their parents' property, or when I met them on the road or in the store together with a parent. The children acted more formally and often I had to take the first step and introduce myself to the parent. Commonly the parent was somewhat surprised, because he or she could see that the children were acquainted with somebody who did not belong to the community. Immediately after I shook hands with the parent I told them about my research and made reference to Memorial University. In an effort to diminish the parents' suspicions, I also mentioned my conversations with the school principal and that the teachers of Our Saviour King School knew about my project. This seemed to allay their fears and increased my rapport within the community.

The Reaction of the Community

While living in the community for one and half months and conducting research I had to introduce myself to a new social sphere which I had known only on the surface from my previous visits and the contacts with the children. By living in the community I had to learn to cope with an established and complex social structure, as well as the pursuit of my particular interest, the children's play activities. Georges and Jones saw a similar problem, as they comment on Whyte's Street Corner Society:

> Whyte's depiction of his early abortive attempts to establish contacts with members of what he conceived to be "a world completely unknown" to him reveals several kinds of conflict that create ambivalence in a fieldworker and that require him or her to clarify and compromise. His initial plan, one can infer, was to gain access to the residents of Cornerville without assistance from others. Yet his attempts to do so through his limited survey work and his brief foray into a local bar made him aware of the difficulties involved in accomplishing this feat, given his reluctance to intrude and his feelings of self-consciousness about being a "stranger" in the community in which he had chosen to work.[22]

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[22] Robert A. Georges, and Michael Owen Jones, People Studying People (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) 72.

Suspicion about the "man from the university" seemed to exist during my first fieldtrip among the parent generation of my informants. Hence, I made efforts to meet with the parents. A good place to meet them was the three little convenience stores in the community. There my appearance seemed to be less intrusive to the parents, as I came to the store as a customer to purchase goods.

Other good opportunities arose to talk to parents when children were playing with their friends in their yards, and the mother, for example, was hanging out the laundry to dry on the line. I usually greeted the children first, who already knew me from previous recording sessions, and then I introduced myself to the parents and after a little chat, asked them for permission to record their children's play activities on their property. The permission was never denied, but I also had to reciprocate with more explicit information about my project and the use of the materials I collected.

One of the key figures in the community's information network was the post woman, Mrs Hickey. Frequently I went to the post office at a time in the morning when most of the community members fetched their mail. It seemed to satisfy the curiosity of those coming to the post

office when they overheard a conversation with me and Mrs Hickey, or somebody else. This was especially true during the first two weeks of my time in Southern Harbour.

Furthermore, the "man from the university" may have triggered another reaction with today's parent generation, because the majority of the parents of my informants were resettled in the 1950s and 1960s. Mrs Rita Wakeham, my host, told me that her family had been resettled from the Red Islands, Placentia Bay. The house the Wakehams live in since they moved to the community had been towed across Placentia Bay to Southern Harbour. The majority of the resettled families and their homes were allocated space in "the Bottom" along the road leading to the centre of the community. Hence as "the man from the university" I may have been categorized as someone "official," or at least "semi-official." Therefore a certain amount of suspicion on the parents' side may have been supported by their memories of government officials entering their communities to convince them of the benefits of relocating to the so-called "growth centres."

Despite the fact that I did not see the parents as direct informants for my collecting I considered them as informants on behalf of their

children as they granted me permission to conduct the fieldwork with the children. If the parents had been concerned with my contact with the children they certainly would have restricted the children's accessibility to me. The "stranger value" that I portrayed was supported by the fact that I worked with the children as the informants. Some of the parents even commented that I was the first researcher to come to the community who was interested in the children.[23]

The Storekeeper, the Mock Pattern, and Alf

Despite the generally positive acceptance of my presence in the community, two incidents made me think that there could have been resentment towards me and my research. The keeper of one of the convenience stores greeted me with a suspiciously low sounding "Hi!" when I entered his premises for the first time. Through his store window he had probably seen me interact with the children on the road. His store lies on a strategic point on a bend between the school and the church from where he can see the road in both directions. Only after my

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[23] On previous occasions Wilfred Wareham of Memorial University's Folklore Department, and Kenneth S. Goldstein from the University of Pennsylvania visited Southern Harbour to record traditional singers in the community: MUNFLA 86-161.

frequent visits to his store and my conversations with children that he overheard in the store, did he seem to relax and drop his suspicion. Eventually he asked me what had brought me into the community, and he continued to ask me the same question almost every time I came into the store. Our relationship was very cordial in the end.

His question pattern seems to indicate that he received his information about me from elsewhere in the community, perhaps from the earlier mentioned chain of referrals and the misconception that I was interested in the organized sports of the children. Rolf Lindner notes:

> Bevor jedoch der Forscher überhaupt in der Lage ist, im Feld eine Rolle aufzubauen, die seine dortigen Aktivitäten den Einheimschen plausible erscheinen lassen, hat sein Eintreten ins Feld bei den Untersuchungsobjekten bereits eine eigene Plausibilität gefunden.[24]

The second negative incident occurred when two teenaged boys successfully lured me to a "hopscotch pattern" on the pavement in front of the school entrance. The boys did not admit that they had drawn the pattern onto the pavement, but it seemed obvious that it had originated

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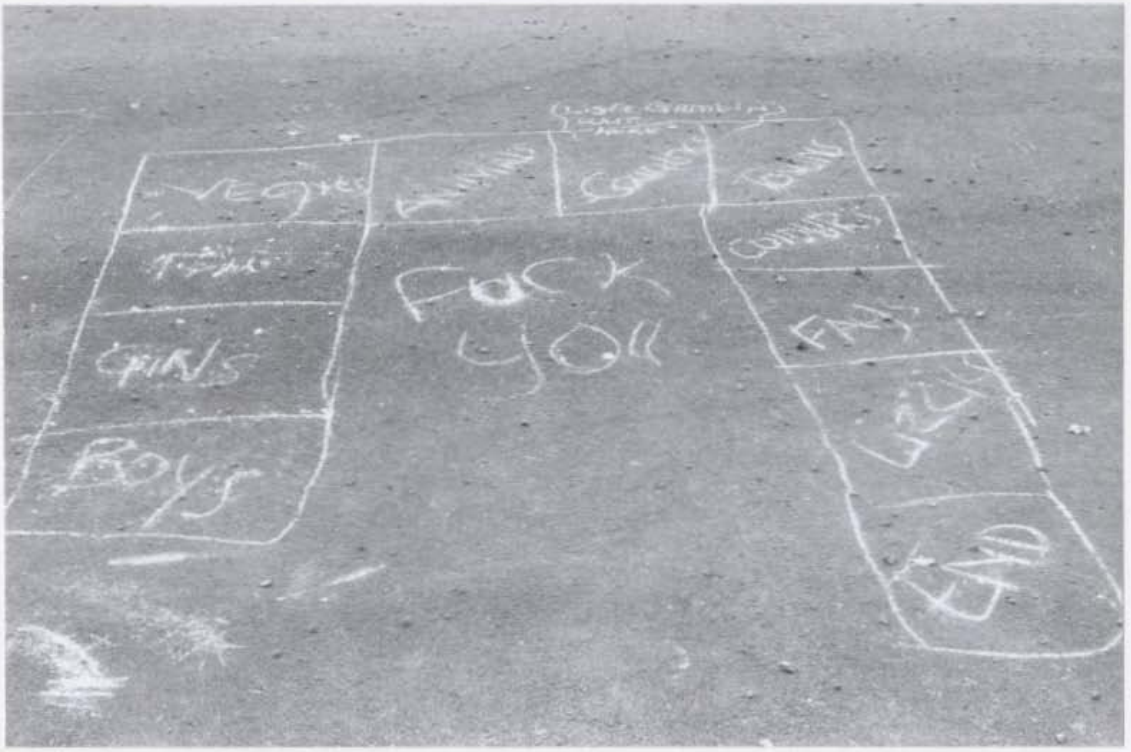
[24] Translation: Before the researcher is able to build his role and make his activities plausible to the members of the community, his appearance in the field has already found its own plausibility among the members of the community. Rolf Lindner, " Die Angst des Forschers vor dem Feld," Zeitschrift für Volkskunde 77:1 (1981): 52.

in their minds. The pattern looked somewhat like a combination of a Hopscotch pattern and a Girls Girls pattern.[25] Instead of numbers or letters they had written *boys, girls, fruits, veggies, animals, countries, towns, colours, fags, lizzies,* and *end* in sequence into the aligned squares. The pattern followed the shape of a horseshoe, and in the middle of the pattern they had written *fuck you.*



The mock pattern in front of the school.

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25 See diagram of Girls Girls pattern on page 112.

In the first moment I felt slightly insulted. However, I took the photograph of the pattern above and concluded with delight that my fieldwork had triggered a reaction in the community which was expressed in a cruel joke in the creation of a parody of a pattern on the pavement.

The parody seemed not only to challenge my presence in the community, but also showed that I was closely monitored by some members of the community. If the boys had no understanding of the reason for my presence in the community, this mock version of a hopscotch pattern would not have occurred. A couple of days later when the mock pattern had been washed away by the rain, I met the same boys again on the road. They asked me whether I had seen the pattern in front of the school, and stated that such a pattern can not be seen frequently in Southern Harbour. I jotted down some notes on the pattern as I was talking to them as if to take them seriously and again asked who drew it. They denied they had drawn the pattern themselves, however, when I asked them directly about it.

Their reaction to my presence in the community and the resulting mock pattern may have hinted at their insecurity regarding my sexual

orientation: whether I was hetero- or homosexual, and that I could have been a potential competitor disrupting their courting patterns with the older local teenaged girls. Therefore, on one occasion I asked my girlfriend to come for a visit to the community in order to counteract a rumour spread among the local adolescent boys that I was interested in some of the local girls they were courting. The boys had observed my conversations with the girls while walking the road in the evenings. On several occasions the boys grouped around me and questioned me about my presence in the community, and whether I had a girlfriend.

A funny coincidence, however, which left a positive impression on both the children and the parents, was my name. The children frequently greeted me with "Hi, Alf!" The close phonetic relationship between "Delf" and "Alf" seeemed to encourage a parody of my name and some even called me "Delf the Alf." Others, including some of the parents, especially those who did not get an early opportunity to talk to me, thought that my name was in fact "Alf." I asked a group of my informants why they called me by that name, and they replied that "ALF" was a television series for children they had watched frequently ever

since the community received cable television in 1986. The initials "A.L.F." stand for "Alien Life Form."[26]

One evening after supper, to my surprise, two of the children from my host's neighbourhood dropped in and proudly showed me their "Alf," a plush toy creature. The Newfoundland Herald reports on the appearance of various ALF-paraphernalia:

> The kids didn't need permission, their own or anyone else's, to fall for the furry fellow. They're drawn to anything ALF-like on their side of the horizon, so much that a mini-ALF industry has grown up. Now there's a hierarchy of ALF-dolls (silent, talking a little bit, and talking quite a lot), posters, lunch boxes, T-shirts....ALF's face is becoming more familiar than Michael Jackson's, and not just because it changes less.[27]

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[26] "Alf" is a show about a creature from outer space. The show, a situation comedy, was created by producer Paul Fusco of the NBC-Network and broadcast on the NTV station, Sunday evenings at 19.30h. About three feet tall, "Alf" is a furry character that has a big snout. "Alf" lives with a middle-class suburban family ever since he crashed into the family's garage with his spaceship. He is hidden from the public in the garage. The creature enjoys cooking and considers cats a staple part of his diet on his home planet. Whenever the family's cat disappears "Alf" is suspected.

In April 1992, in a phone conversation Doreen Allan of NTV told me that to date the series is being replayed on the Cancom cable channel in the Conception Bay area. An animated cartoon version based on the series was broadcast during the time of my original fieldseason in 1987. Since I never chanced to see the television show myself, I had to rely on a friend of mine, Kim Marshall of St. John's, to communicate some of this information to me. Kim considers the show to be rather silly.

[27] "Alf was not an overnight sensation." The Newfoundland Herald 7 November 1987: 41.

The incident with the name benefited my fieldwork in Southern Harbour as the television character "Alf" is portrayed as a good creature.[28] In addition, I was in fact an "alien life form" in the children's understanding, which supported my "stranger value" to a great extent, as I was not a Newfoundlander, but someone who had come from a "different world" — Germany — and who belonged to a different *Kulturkreis* (culture group). Jackson notes:

> Stranger value isn't something you get to keep, by the way. If your relationship with an informant continues over a period of time, you're less and less a stranger and you sense more and more the unspoken restrictions of the kinds of questions that can be comfortably asked.[29]

As the children often questioned me about Germany, or as they frequently put it "where you come from," I gave carefully measured doses of information about my country. It was easily done by talking to the children about the games I played myself when I was their age.

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[28] This incident made me realize that it is very important for somebody doing research with children to watch children's programmes on television, which I did not do before I went into the field. I did not even possess a television at that time, or now. I could have had an opportunity to tune in to some of the shows while I stayed in Southern Harbour, but I was reluctant to ask my host, Rita Wakeham, to switch the channels, as she was watching her own programmes. On the other hand I wanted to be outdoors to record the children's play activities.

[29] Bruce Jackson, Fieldwork (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987) 70.

Being characterized by the children as somebody "from away," who had an accent, spoke a different language, and did not behave like any other male adult in the community, sparked the children's constant interest for two reasons. Firstly, my informants saw me, the researcher, through their own understanding of what a male adult should be. They were not able to group me with an image that had been passed on to them by their parent generation. A typical male could possibly be described as a person working outdoors by going fishing, painting boats, mending nets, or any other form of physical labour that relates to the Newfoundland fishing culture. Secondly, they may have seen me as an ambassador from a somewhat exotic world that usually lies beyond their experience. Their image of the outer world is largely created by the constant influx of information through the medium of television.[30] Based upon these premises, I was able to maintain my "stranger value" among the children throughout my entire fieldwork period.

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[30] Although cable television with its dozen channels, only came to Southern Harbour in 1986, two channels had been received over the air for more than 30 years.

The Children, and Fieldwork Ethics

Fieldwork practices have been described and discussed by many folklorists, anthropologists and other social scientists. Unfortunately, most of the researchers into children's folklore make only brief and sometimes vague statements on how they obtained the lore from the their informants. Rarely do they comment on ethical issues concerning their fieldwork practices. Leea Virtanen writes:

> If one is to use interviewing as one's only method in fieldwork, the process is slow and cumbersome. A child's ability to discriminate is less developed than an adult's, so that unless the interviewer has the patience to wait for spontaneous narration, he will have to lead the child on in order to get the facts he wants.[31]

Virtanen discusses how the researcher can observe and note down the information, but she does not explain how she leads on children to "get the facts he wants."

Jon-Roar Bjørkvold who studied spontaneous singing among children denies that his presence altered the children's behaviour:

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[31] Leea Virtanen, Children's Lore, Studia Fennica 22 (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1978) 9-10.

> In order to minimize interference, I used no technical equipment such as tape or video recorder. When studying singing in a social context, it is important that the social and emotional continuum not be disturbed. Technical apparatus can register data, but it can also affect the observed phenomena — hence, the old problem, finding a balance between validity and verification. Practical experiences suggests that in studying singing as part of an ongoing social and cultural activity, the fieldworkers are in fact best served by relying on their own senses sharpened by professional training. For the purposes of the present study, I adopted the role of passive participant and observer. I was with the children all the time, but without actively influencing their playing or singing.[32]

Reimund Kvideland, with reference to children's narratives about advance warnings of death, relates:

> My material was collected during the period 1969-1978 in Bergen, Norway, and its environs, and includes several thousand items, some written down by the children themselves, some supplied through tape recordings or notes from interviews. The interviews were conducted at school without the teacher present, or at playgrounds and gathering places in residential areas.[33]

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[32] Jon-Roar Bjørkvold, "Spontaneous Singing Among Children," Nordic Folklore eds. Reimund Kvideland, and Henning K. Sehmsdorf (Bloomington: Indiana Univeristy Press, 1989) 187.

[33] Reimund Kvideland, "Stories about Death as a Part of Children's socialization," Folklore on Two Continents, eds. Nikolai Burlakoff, and Carl Lindahl (Bloomington: Trickster Press: 1980) 59.

Furthermore, publications dealing with fieldwork generally lack discussion of the recording of children's play activities in context. Edward D. Ives mentions it in one paragraph, and Kenneth S. Goldstein devotes a small section to the problems that may occur while recording children's play activities. Ives discusses fieldwork with children in reference to Goldstein's concept of the distinction between natural and artificial contexts, whereas Goldstein considers children as aids to collecting, if the collector brings his own wife and children into the field.[34]

Just at the end of my time in Southern Harbour, Bruce Jackson's Fieldwork appeared.[35] Despite his discussion of practical, mechanical, theoretical and ethical aspects, Jackson misses children completely. The keywords "children," "play," or "game" are not listed in the index, and they do not appear in his section on fieldwork ethics.

It is necessary to touch on the sensitive matter of fieldwork ethics relating to fieldwork with children in context. The ethicist may argue

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34 Edward D. Ives, The Tape-Recorded Interview (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1980) 56; Goldstein, 90, 150-154.

35 Bruce Jackson, Fieldwork (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987).

that I did not have the informed consent of my informants when I approached them with a running tape recorder or when I took photos from a distance without my informants' knowledge. The question arises whether there is a difference in collecting from adults or children.

Collecting from Children versus Collecting from Adults

In dealing with children as informants for my research, I did not always follow the established ethical convention that one would use with adults, to first gain the consent of the informants to tape-record or photograph them during their activities. One may argue that a child, or a group of children, is overrun by the adult researcher with little or no consideration of collecting ethics. I was however aware of this problem, and when appropriate, I told the children that I was going to write a book about them. Michael H. Agar comments:

> There are many implications for ethnographers in the codes of ethics and the guidelines. For now, the implication that concerns us is that people must be informed of your role — who are you and what do you want. I would think that most ethnographers have always done this anyway. But there are different ways of

> explaining your role. For example, if you say, "I am an anthropologist and I am here to study your culture," the description, though technically correct, may not be very informative, especially for a group who has no idea of what "anthropology" and "culture" are all about. On the other hand, suppose you say, "I'm here to write a book about you folks." Though devoid of references to social science, the statement may be more informative for some groups. It implies that you are going to explore different aspects of their life and eventually publish something about them in the public domain. Yet, I can imagine a reviewer who would accept the first statement and reject the second.[36]

The children gave me their permission to record their games and even use their names as stated in the following conversation with three of the children Viola, Dennis and Sheldon:

> Viola: How come that you're interested in our games?
> DMH: Oh, I used to babysit the children of a friend of mine, and they were playing barbies, so I thought, maybe I should study the games of children. And what I want to do, I want to write a book about it.
> Dennis: My God, we're goin' to be livin' forever. [Viola laughs] Is our names goin' to be wrote down there?
> DMH: Huh?

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36 Michael H. Agar, The Professional Stranger (New York: Academic Press, 1980) 55-56.

> Sheldon: Is our names goin to be wrote down there?
> DMH: If you would like to, sure. [Viola and Dennis laugh].
> Sheldon: It's up to you.
> DMH: Okay.[37]

The children seemed to feel honoured when they knew that I was going to write a book about them. On another occasion, in front of one of the stores, they told me that I was the first adult to ever show interest in their daily activities.

Children are as valuable informants as adults, and they deserve the same respect paid to adults. In contrast to adults, children are not as inhibited by societal rules and conventions and seem to need less warming-up than adults. The Southern Harbour children's casual behaviour during my presence allowed me to approach them casually. In addition my successful attempts to reduce the *psychological slope* to a minimum justified the *modus operandi*. I do not feel that I treated the children with less respect than I would have given to adults; throughout my fieldwork I explained to them my reasons for using the tape recorder and the camera. The children enabled me not only to collect

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[37] Tape-recorded interview, 24 June 1987.

quantitatively their games in the community, but also to record the games including their current performances. Consequently, I was able to capture the entire dynamic process of the children's play activities.

In order to record the children's play activities and to gather the dynamics of their performances, it was necessary to record as much contextual information as possible. This not only included the different games they played, but also the entire realm of their interaction during their activities. In a "normal" fieldwork situation in which the researcher deals with one informant at a time, conversation is geared toward a certain item of folklore. Thus the dynamics of the performance in a one-to-one fieldwork situation remain within an immediate context and a fairly clearly defined space, such as sitting around the kitchen table, or in a barn or stage, where the collecting takes place. The recording of children's play activities differs because there is a much higher level of spontaneity on the side of the children. The children's play activities are largely determined by impromptu behaviour. Certain behaviours and decision-making depend on rather spontaneous actions, which cannot be found, for example, in the performance of a song by a single informant. The dynamics of the song performance are more dependent on the presence of the fieldworker, his or her posing of

questions, and the immediate interaction of researcher and informant. The dynamic range with children is broader and less confined, especially outdoors. With children one does not just focus on one item or one person, but on a very flexible range of dynamics that make the particular game or play activity. Children's entire play behaviour is very spontaneous, and under less control of the fieldworker's solicitations.

Collecting from single children versus collecting from groups of children

My attempt to interview Vincy, who was playing by himself, did not lead me very far in my efforts to establish rapport with the neighbouring children. This became apparent only an hour after my conversation with Vincy when I met a group of adolescent girls on the road. The girls were curious to know who I was and why I was in Southern Harbour.

The conversation with the girls turned out to be very fruitful. It helped me realize that approaching just one child playing alone could have caused major problems not only for the results of my fieldwork, but also in the way the community would have looked upon my presence in

Southern Harbour. From that moment on, I decided instead to approach groups of children rather than single playing children. In fact, I received more information from groups of children than from single boys or girls playing — clearly a result of the dynamics within the group as it became evident a few days later. In addition, as an adult, "breaking the ice" with a solitary child as informant appears to be more difficult. The peer group identity in a group allows the children to be more self-assured and to act more confidently against any intruder, especially adults.

The Children, the Tape Recorder, and the Camera

The first group of children I met playing together were between ten and twelve years old. I met them on a large lawn stretching between a few houses in an area of the community called "Whiffen's Cove." The children were engaged in a game of Ball Tag when I approached them. They did not seem to notice me at first, which gave me the opportunity to observe them and take a few photographs until a few of them came near while some others searched for the ball that had been kicked into an adjacent lawn with high grass. I was convinced that my appearance

would change the performance context considerably. Edward D. Ives argues:

> For example, if one is studying children's games, he can simply spend a lot of time watching children at play from some vantage point where his presence will not disturb them or affect their actions. In this way he would see the games in their completely natural context. Should he make himself obvious (for instance by standing nearby and taking notes or using a tape recorder or a camera), he could be almost certain that his presence would affect what is going on, and the context would therefore be to some extent artificial.[38]

To observe children in their "completely natural context" certainly has great value. The collecting of children's play activity, however, necessitates the use of recording devices, as it is not only the movements of children that are important to be observed, but also the children's exchange of dialogue, their arguing about and negotiation of rules, and the use of linguistic features the children apply during the game context. These cannot be collected "from some [distant] vantage point" unless the fieldworker is provided with a hypersensitive directional microphone that picks up the children's dialogue.

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[38] Ives, 56.

Shyly, but curiously, and with facial expressions that showed both emotions, the children greeted me. Two of the younger ones, girls about five years old, giggled. I asked them what they were doing and I received the same answer that Vincy gave me a few days before: "nothing." I pointed out that I saw them playing with the ball, whereupon they told me that they were playing Ball Tag.

Meanwhile the others had retrieved the missing ball from the other lawn and joined the children that had already surrounded me. I asked them about their ball game and how it was played. The children were less reluctant to talk to me about the game than I expected, after I explained the purpose of my presence in the community, and that I was particularly interested in the games they played. Everyone in the group, it seemed, wanted to fill me in on their game. To my dismay, they all started to talk to me at the same time. I interrupted them and asked them not to speak at once as it would ruin my recording. The children understood the point and only three of them, the older members of the group continued to explain the game.

Until then the children had not noticed that the tape recorder was running, and they asked me why I was recording them. I told them that I

was going to write a book about them and that it was easier for me to use a tape recorder, because I wanted to ensure that I received as much detailed information on the game as possible, and that I was afraid to miss important information by trying to write it down quickly. The children seemed to accept my reasoning and did not appear to be disturbed by the presence of a running tape recorder.

Not only in this situation, but during many other field sessions, some children screamed deliberately into the microphone while others were being interviewed on a particular game and this caused the loss of some of information that I collected from my informants. It seemed that in interview situations like the one described above, each member of the group wanted to contribute to the conversation and competitively attempted to pass on as much information to me as anybody else in the group, which almost seemed to develop into a game. When I asked the children not to all talk at once, some of them felt discriminated against and they seemed to release their frustration by disturbing the others by screaming into the microphone.

At other (but rare) occasions the presence of the tape recorder inspired some of the children to imitate rock music stars. They picked

up the microphone and "sang" into it as can be seen on the music videos that are broadcast on one of the cable-television stations. In cases like that, I knew that the presence of the tape recorder and myself changed the children's behaviour. In St. John's I have seen children in the streets pick up sticks and imitate singers along with imitations of playing electric guitars. Perhaps having a real microphone was too good an opportunity to miss for the children to play.

The first few times, and whenever I encountered a new group of children, I let them play with the microphone and the tape recorder, and let them listen to their own "production," which they generally acknowledged with great laughter. The children's earlier curiosity about my presence was mixed with a certain degree of shyness. One child made a valid complaint about the presence of the tape recorder by saying "He's tapin' you off!" while I interviewed one of her playmates. Weighing my informants' first reaction to the tape recorder it seemed that they felt intimidated. The children's reaction was also a justified response to my approach as I did not ask their permission to tape record them in advance. But in any of the first meetings with a group of children this slight tension vanished very shortly after I told the children what the tape recorder and the camera were for. In most events the

children took the opportunity to interrupt their current activity with another play performance around the camera and the tape recorder. Cameras, of course, are far more "normal" in Southern Harbour than tape recorders. Children are very used to having their pictures taken.

The children are posing for the camera.

The children were indeed very keen on posing for the camera, and did not show any signs of intimidation then. Nor did they, as many adults do, worry about their outer appearance.

The tape recorder usually prompted the above mentioned imitation of singing rock stars. Later on the children were aware of my presence and knew that I would always appear with my field recording gear. My appearance was registered subconsciously as such with them, and it remained like that throughout my entire fieldwork. Another student of children's play had the same experience:

> The more the children became used to me as part of the furniture, the more I began to ask them questions as to what they were doing. This did not disrupt their activities for they simply replied to my questions and returned to what they had been doing.[39]

The more children got accustomed to my presence and the constant use of the tape recorder, the less they seemed to be disturbed and tempted to alter their play behaviour during my presence. After a while the interest of the children in the devices diminished so far that

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[39] Andy Sluckin, Growing up in the Playground (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981) 7.

they would not take notice of the presence of the camera and the tape recorder. Once in a while at a less tense moment of a particular activity a child would run over and quickly grab the microphone and say something into it. When new playmates arrived at the scene who were not immediately engaged in playing with the group, they would approach, and talk to me; their attention might be drawn to the machinery around my shoulders.

A Note on the Tape Recorder and its Use

I brought quite a selection of equipment to record the children's play activities: two tape recorders, three microphones, a battery recharger, a double set of rechargeable nickel-cadmium cells, one extra set of conventional batteries, my camera, a flashgun, with a double set of batteries, a telephoto-, wideangle- and a normal 50mm lens, one extra button cell for my camera, an excessive amount of C60 cassette and 5 inch reel-to-reel tapes, a bunch of note booklets, three exercise books, an AC-cable for the cassette recorder, and a rechargeable nickel-cadmium battery for the reel-to-reel tape recorder.

Earlier bad experiences with equipment prompted me to bring two tape recorders into the field: a Sony TC-142 which I had borrowed from the Memorial University Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA), and my own Uher 4400 Report Monitor. In Southern Harbour, I was about 140 kilometres away from St. John's with buses leaving only twice a day from the Trans-Canada Highway/Southern Harbour turn-off, about five kilometres away. In the event nothing unexpected happened to the cassette recorder or any other equipment when I conducted my fieldwork. Nevertheless, I felt more relaxed and confident to have a second recorder at hand in case something were to go wrong. On the other hand I was not particularly looking forward to the idea of having to do fieldwork with children with a heavy Uher reel-to-reel tape recorder slung around my shoulder. I especially began to appreciate the small Sony TC-142 when I was involved in a hide-and-seek game as a participant observer where I had to crawl under bushes, run through tuckamore patches, and was shown hide-outs and other places by the children that were not readily accessible for an adult over six feet tall.

A few days before I left for Southern Harbour I charged all my nickel-cadmium cells to be readily available for use upon my arrival in the community. The charged nickel-cadmium cells usually supplied me

with three to four hours straight recording time, although on some occasions the cells emptied faster as the children asked me to playback some of the materials right after I taped them. Hence, I checked the remaining electricity in the cells on a regular basis during the fieldwork sessions. Only on two occasions had the energy levels gone very low, and as I was afraid of not being able to record the next play performance completely, I quickly exchanged the almost empty nickel-cadmium cells for the conventional batteries which I carried with me at all times when I was out recording the children. As soon I was able to reach the house where I stayed, I exchanged the conventional batteries for the fully charged set of nickel-cadmium cells which I kept in the charger at all times to ensure that I had a set of fully loaded cells ready when needed. Rita and Mike Wakeham kindly allowed me to leave the battery recharger plugged into their AC-outlet all the time.

The Sony TC-142 tape recorder proved to be a reliable and handy fieldwork machine for my recording purposes. The tape recorder was not too heavy and not too big to be carried around for a long period of time slung around the same shoulder. I used the recorder with an external microphone, a Sony F-27S, that plugs into the front part of the machine. The microphone itself is fairly slim and its head is small enough not to

be intrusive to my informants. The slim shape of the microphone also allowed me to slip it into a loop in the strap when I was out recording the children's play activities, especially when it involved a lot of running around, or climbing over cliffs and crawling underneath stages without falling into the water. I was able to leave the microphone slipped into the loop of the strap without needing to worry about it falling out during the collecting process, as the weight of the recorder pulling on the strap secured the microphone tightly in its space. Hence, I was able to use both hands to take photographs or notes while the recording took place.

Conducting fieldwork with children demands having the recorder running all the time as I did. It is not only the actual play activity of the children, which includes stretches of time before the actual game begins, but also the intermediate periods when for some unexpected reason the game pauses or comes to a halt. It is necessary for the subsequent analysis to record as much of the context as possible. Jackson argues:

> Having a recorder going all the time doesn't solve the problem either, because you have to change reels or tapes, or you're aware of the potential need for changing reels or tapes, and that means you never fully participate in the action of the room because you're watching the

> clock. People sense that; if you're at all sensitive, you'll sense it too.[40]

Jackson's argument is grounded in a recording situation in an informant's home which is of course different from mine, being literally in a field or on a road with children moving about. His point that changing a tape would interrupt the performance was not applicable to my work as the children were usually so deeply absorbed in their activities that they did not notice that they were being recorded, especially when I left the recorder at a stationary location. The fact that I had to exchange the tape or turn it over after a certain time did not seem to disturb the flow of the children's action.

One problem with outdoor tape recording is wind rumble from the microphone, and this appears on a few tapes. I did not become aware of this until I rewound the tape for a few seconds to have the children listen to their own voices. A foam cover for the microphone would have solved the problem swiftly but it was the only item I missed among my equipment. Instead I used one of my socks which I pulled over the microphone and attached with an elastic around the microphone neck, very much to the amusement of my informants. The sock covered the

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[40] Jackson, 87.

sharp edges of the microphone and reduced the rumble to a great extent. From that time on I also protected the microphone by holding it in front of my stomach and keeping my back to the wind.

The Camera

The camera I used was my old 35mm Canon FTb, an excellent manual camera in a strong metal body with a built-in light meter. Though not as lightweight as any of the modern automatic cameras it is not heavy. Most of the time I used the "normal" 50mm lens but on rare occasions when I sensed that my appearance with the camera would change the children's play performance considerably I used the telephoto lens enabling me to step back to Ives' distant vantage point. The use of a wide angle lens proved to be inappropriate. A light-weight video camera would have been a great asset in the field. The somewhat antiquated half-inch open-reel video-equipment, a Panasonic Portapak camera and NV-3085 recorder at MUNFLA, however, would have been too heavy and bulky to move around with to successfully record the children's activities.

Three Methods of Collecting

Three different methods of tape recording the children's play activities seemed to be appropriate, depending on the circumstances of the activity. The first method already described above with the microphone attached to the strap was indicated in most cases. A second method I applied was to leave the microphone in a stationary position. Choice between these methods depended largely on the course of action and the use of space by the children during a particular play activity. By and large, I had to rely on my own judgement whether the microphone would capture all the sounds made during the activity. The majority of the recordings made with a stationary microphone turned out well, and to my surprise captured more of the distant sounds than I expected. During such a recording session I rested the microphone on a fence post or at some other elevation that seemed suitable in relation to the ground covered by the children. In some few cases I left the microphone lying in the grass when no other elevation was close enough to the spatial centre of the children's activity. I usually moved away from the microphone and tape recorder in order to take photographs, or just to observe the children's action from different viewpoints.

Leaving the tape recorder on its own posed one problem. Once the tape recorder was on the ground in a stationary position it was less visible to the children and therefore at risk of being run over by them. Nevertheless, only once was the microphone knocked off a piece of wood that I had used to elevate it: a girl was being chased by a boy, and unsuccessfully attempted to jump over the obstacle. Leaving the tape recorder in a stationary position also had a positive element. Once I moved away from the position of the tape recorder, I lessened the formality of the recording session. The children took only little notice of my moving about as they were engrossed by their current activity.

Two other fieldwork sessions when I left the microphone in a stationary place occurred across the road from my host family's house and the children played a Hide and Seek game. I participated in the game, and for one round of the game I left the microphone at the homebase, the bow of a boat pulled up from the water onto the gravel below the road. I positioned the microphone on the rail of the bow and the tape recorder underneath the boat's bench. While "it" was counting to a hundred, the other children and I ran around looking for hiding places. With the tape recorder at the home-base I was able to record any conversation and action among the participants who had been either

caught by "it" before they reached the base, or those who were "free" and had touched the bow of the boat before they were caught by "it." In the second round I took the tape recorder with me, as one of the boys promised to show me some of his secret pathways and hiding places. I did not want to miss anything he was going to tell me while we were hiding.

The second occasion arose randomly. A group of children was involved in a game of Balance, again across from the home of my host family. An upside down boat and the space between fishing gear on the ground defined their play area. This time I had left the microphone and the tape recorder on a pile of lobster traps behind the boat while I was taking photographs and also being taught the game by the children. Then I was called into the house to take a phone call. I debated for a few moments whether I should leave the tape recorder where the children played or take it with me into the house. The fact that I decided to leave the equipment functioning in its place was rewarded with a continuous and satisfying recording of a children's Balance game. The children acknowledged my absence but were completely oblivious to the equipment.

The third method of using the microphone, to follow the children around with the equipment, and to direct the microphone towards the centre of their action was appropriate when the children covered a larger amount of space, and when the children's conversation during the play activity was rather subdued and low. A game of "Hospital" may serve as an example.

From the kitchen window of Rita and Mike Wakeham's house, I saw a group of girls gathering in the neighbours' front yard. The yard was of fair size and stretched from the neighbours' house and a shack beside it to the trench near the road. The yard was fenced in, marking the boundaries for the imaginary building and various wards of the girls' "hospital." The girls went through a routine of "tasks" in their roles as nurses, doctors, and patients. The changes of scenes to another "ward" were usually indicated by some of the "staff" moving to various places and corners in the yard. It was not easy to make a decision in terms of which children I should record, since some of them remained in one position as "patients" on a different "ward," and were still interacting, whereas the others moved around.

The conversation of the children during the play was very low, and no yelling was involved. The extension of the game over the entire yard and the quiet voices made it impossible for me to leave the equipment in one place. Hence, I decided to follow a group of girls that seemed to stage the main course of the action. I sensed that the girls felt slightly intimidated by my close presence with the microphone held above their heads. I asked them to ignore me and to continue what they had planned to do, which they accepted and the tension eased.

In situations like this I felt like a sound technician of a film crew shooting a soap opera. A great asset in this particular instance would have been the presence of another fieldworker who then would have been able to record the other girls, who did not take part in the main action of the play, but remained at their assigned or chosen "ward" of the "hospital."

After Fieldwork

The Hickey Case

A couple of months after concluding my fieldwork, Newfoundland was rocked by the news about Father James Hickey. In January 1988, Father Jim Hickey was charged with multiple sex crimes involving adolescent boys.[41] Until his final conviction in August 1988 rumours about the case had spread widely across Newfoundland. In a conversation at a visit with my former host Mrs Wakeham later in the same year, I expressed my thoughts on the Hickey case and wondered about possible concerns the parents may have had when I did my fieldwork with the children in Southern Harbour. Mrs Wakeham allowed that people had first wondered about my presence in the community, but later on, especially after the publication of an interview with me conducted by Joan Sullivan for the Newfoundland Herald, I was well received by the community.[42] This was reflected frequently when older

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41 Michael Harris. Unholy Orders - Tragedy at Mount Cashel (New York: Viking Penguin, 1990) xxi-xxv.

42 In the fall of 1987 Joan Sullivan of the province-wide mass-circulation television magazine, The Newfoundland Herald, conducted an interview with me about children's games in Newfoundland. I scheduled my second fieldtrip to Southern Harbour at the time of the publication of the article. In the interview I mentioned the community of my research as well as some of the games the children in Southern Harbour performed for me. The article was well received in the community and made me even more acceptable to the members of the community, which was particularly acknowledged in

siblings or the mothers of my informants addressed me on the road asking me how I was doing, and whether I was still interested in the children's games. The conversations usually ended with a friendly "All right!" which reinforced the parents' knowledge about me but at the same time granted me permission to pursue my project.

Nevertheless, I was fortunate that I had finished my fieldwork before the Hickey case and the later inquiry of the Hughes Comission into sexual abuse cases at the Mount Cashel orphanage in St. John's.[43] Otherwise, I believe, I would have had major difficulties as a single male adult in approaching children for my fieldwork purposes, especially when they were playing by themselves without any of their playmates. Discussing various possible problems arising from collecting children's folklore, David J. Winslow notes:

> With all the sensational publicity about child molesters and the elaborate warnings and guides against them in popular magazines, most

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conversations with my host family. Joan Sullivan, "Growing Up in Newfoundland: Games Children Play." The Newfoundland Herald 14 November 1987: 16-17.

[43] Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Response of the Newfoundland Criminal Justice System to Complaints, Report - Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Response of the Newfoundland Criminal Justice System to Complaints (St. John's: The Commission) 1991.

> children have been warned by their parents not to talk to strangers, especially men.[44]

Subsequent Visits to the Community

After finishing my fieldwork, I took every opportunity to return to the community to pay my host family a visit. I even introduced my parents to the Wakehams during their visit to Newfoundland in the summer of 1990. Although we were only staying for a day, my parents were as warmly welcomed as I had been three years earlier during my fieldwork.

During other subsequent visits to Southern Harbour I occasionally met a teacher or some students on the road. The teachers engaged in an interesting conversation that went beyond the usual formulaic repertoire of greetings. The children, my former informants, however, usually passed me with a teenage facial expression of shyness and a moderate smile, being slightly embarrassed. They have physically grown out of being children in the six years that have passed since my fieldwork. They

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[44] David J. Winslow, "The Collecting of Children's Lore," Keystone Folklore Quarterly XI:2 (1966): 91.

may have lost some of the spontaneity with which they used to approach me on the road, and perform their games. The children of Southern Harbour, however, did not forget that I was going to write a book about them.

Chapter Three • THE PLAY AND GAME ACTIVITIES

The children of Southern Harbour performed a variety of games during my two main periods of fieldwork. In this chapter I describe the children's game and play activities as I observed them and, making use of the children's own perceptions given by my informants, provide an emic perspective. The items discussed below do not represent the children's entire game and play repertoire. In order to give a comprehensive list of the children's repertoire, a year's stay in the community, covering an entire seasonal cycle, would be necessary. This limitation does not detract from a performance analysis, however, as I am concerned with the dynamics of play among the children of Southern Harbour. The thesis is not a catalogue of play texts; rather it uses the texts collected to describe those dynamics. Just the same I wanted to collect as many games as I could, within the time frame and season in which I was collecting.

As a single fieldworker I was unable to cover all of the play areas in Southern Harbour. In most cases I had to concentrate on several major areas and frequent decisions had to be made as to which specific area to select. During the first week of my fieldwork I was mainly

surveying the community in order to find the most popular play sites and I was aware that I would perforce miss out on some of the ongoing activities. Soon I became aware of the children's preferred areas, the Bottom and Whiffen's Cove. Different groups of children performed their games throughout the day at various locations, and I had to make *ad hoc* decisions about which group to adhere to for an entire play and game session, despite the fact that other groups of children would also be performing close to where I was.

This fluidity of children's play made for difficulties, as already discussed in Chapter Two. The spaces children use to perform their games are not often defined by strict boundary lines and become somewhat amoebic in comparison to an interview with one informant in a non-dynamic environment such as a kitchen. Despite the sacrifice of some field data that I let pass, not being able to pay close attention to it, my practice of joining in the ongoing events among the children turned out to create much more of a natural context than any other induced or set-up fieldwork situation I have experienced before. Furthermore it turned out to be more conducive to the children's spontaneity.

To my surprise my informants did not make use of the community-built playground behind the school. Once in a while I would observe a teenaged girl using the playground as a place to hang out with small children while on baby-sitting duties. But the playground itself did not function as a play area preferred by unsupervised children, at least not during my fieldwork period.

Play and Game Categorization

The Children and a Taxonomy

When children play, they do not categorize their activity by features and characteristics displayed in the context of a play performance — that is left for the researcher to do. The children, however, may have an underlying idea of what is fun and no fun, and therefore give certain activities preference over others. It would therefore be interesting to discover a categorization system that provides an emic taxonomy of the games by the children.

Such a system may indicate that a taxonomy of their activities differs from peer group to peer group. One group of children may exercise strict rules in a game while another group may play the same game but feel rather lax about the application of certain rules. It was not my original intention to unearth an emic categorization system from my informants during my fieldwork in the community and I did not ask my informants "what kind of game is this?"

The children of Southern Harbour, however, distinguished the activities by the names they had assigned themselves such as Balance or World, or they took an already given name provided by the media or the outside world such as Wrestlemania, for which they also used their own name as they called it "Rampling."[45] A game that they learned from other peers such as Hopscotch was most likely passed on to them under the same name without the desire or necessity to change it, or they applied the same term for two different games as was the case with Spotlight.

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[45] G.M. Story, W.J. Kirwin, and J.D.A Widdowson, Dictionary of Newfoundland English, 2nd ed. (St. John's: Breakwater, 1990) 417, "to romp or wrestle."

Taxonomies

In the past a number of attempts to categorize systems of play and games have largely considered adult games, especially those of North American Native peoples. For example, Stewart Culin deals with two major categories on the top level, Games of North American Indians and Games with European Influence. Between these he moves into three major categories on the next level: Games of Chance, which he breaks down into Dice Games and Guessing Games; Games of Dexterity, which he subdivides into Archery, Ball Games, Hurling over Surfaces, Racing Games, Moving Target Games, and Minor Amusements; and Unclassified Games as a third section.[46] The game classification of the Royal Anthropological Institute suggests nine different game categories: Games of Movement, Games of Dexterity, Games of Chance, Amusements with Animals, Dancing and Dramatic Acting, Shows and Professional Performers, Round Games, and Toys.[47] Neither of these two examples considers children's play.

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[46] Stewart Culin, "Games of the North American Indians," Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology (1902-1903) (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1907) 31, 781, 789.

[47] Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Notes and Queries on Anthropology (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960).

By contrast, Roger Caillois' classification system incorporates children's play and game activities as examples, but remains on a general level. He defines play as an activity which is essentially free, separate, uncertain, unproductive, governed by rules, and make-believe.[48] Caillois aims at a more general categorization which he breaks down into four major sections: AGÓN (competition), ALEA (chance), MIMICRY (simulation), and ILINX (vertigo). These four categories allow for a possible interchange of characteristic elements in certain play and game activities. The interchange happens on a horizontal level. PAIDIA and LUDUS on a vertical level, as ways of playing rather than representing categories, show that the PAIDIA element is constantly decreasing whereas the LUDUS element is ever increasing.[49] PAIDIA "manifests a kind of uncontrolled fantasy" that is characterized by "an almost dominant indivisible principle, common to diversion, turbulence, free improvisation, and carefree gaiety." LUDUS on the other end of the scale stands for "a growing tendency to bind it with arbitrary, imperative, and purposely tedious conventions" with "ceaselessly practicing the most embarrassing chicanery upon it, in order to make it more uncertain of attaining its desired effect." Caillois continues to say that "this principle

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48 Roger Caillois, Man, Play, Games (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961) 9-10.

49 Caillois, 36.

is completely impractical, even though it requires an ever greater amount of effort, patience, skill, or ingenuity."[50] AGÔN, ALEA, MIMICRY and ILINX, do not have to stand separate from each other, but can be combined as "numerous games are even based on their capacity to associate."[51]

In examining the children's play and game activities a difficulty seems to arise in the interpretation of Caillois' term ALEA. Caillois defines ALEA fairly strictly in the first place:

> in contrast to agôn, all games that are designated based on a decision independent of the player, an outcome over which he has no control, and in which winning is the result of fate rather than triumphing over an adversary.[52]

But later he eases this seemingly uncompromising category by comparing it to Agôn:

> Nothing is more noteworthy in this regard than the exact symmetry between the natures of *agôn* and *alea*: parallel and complementary.
> .....

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50 Caillois, 13. Caillois derives these terms from the Greek and Latin languages: agôn, Gk. αγδν; dice, Lat. *alea*; mimicry, Lat. *ars mimica*, and ilinx, Gk. ιλινγός; paidia, Gk. ὁ παῖς, παιδός (child), παιδιός (easy); game, sport, pastime, Lat. *ludus*, -*i*.

51 Caillois, 71.

52 Caillois, 17.

> Chance is represented in the resistance offered by nature, the external world, or the will of the gods to his strength, skill, or knowledge. The game seems like the very image of life, yet an imaginary, ideal, ordered, separate, and limited image. It could not be otherwise, since these are the immutable characteristics of play.
>
> .....
>
> In *agôn*, the player relies directly on his will, while in *alea* he renounces it.
>
> .....
>
> The combination of *alea* and *agôn* is a free act of will stemming from the satisfaction felt in overcoming an arbitrarily conceived and voluntary accepted obstacle.
>
> .....
>
> We have just seen that *alea* and *agôn*, like *mimicry* and *ilinx* can be readily combined. However at the same time, within the mixture, it is remarkable that one of the elements in the compound is always active and creative and the other passive and destructive.[53]

If dexterity characterized by AGÔN weakens in a child's performance of a particular task in a game it gives in to ALEA (chance). This point arises in a variety of games described below, but may be best exemplified in the game of Balance. Slipping off the keel may be interpreted as a failure of dexterity as a result of an unrehearsed and more difficult task in the game. The lack of dexterity increases the element of chance and determines the final outcome of the player's performance which is seen

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53 Caillois, 75-76.

by his/her playmates in black and white terms, as a preset condition needs to be fulfilled or the player is out.

Whereas Culin's taxonomy, and that of the Royal Anthropological Institute are not relevant to the following categorization of the play and game activities of the children of Southern Harbour, Caillois' definitions are applicable as they allow overlapping features in the different games to be considered. Most important for this study, however, are the categorization systems suggested by folklorists Brian Sutton-Smith, Iona and Peter Opie, and Jan Harold Brunvand. These all consider children's games exclusively, as opposed to adult ones.

Brunvand only scratches the surface as he proposes three different categories: Games of Physical Action, Games involving manipulation of objects, and games of Mental Activity. More important are the detailed categories suggested by Brian Sutton-Smith and Iona and Peter Opie. The Opies consider a regional and temporal corpus: the games they collected over time in the British Isles with their historical antecedents; Brian Sutton-Smith discusses historical evidence of the rise and fall of the popularity of certain games and considers developmental

psychology in framing his categorization. The main principle of his categorization is structural.[54]

Unfortunately children's play in real life is not so easily reduced to categories. The children I observed in Southern Harbour are dependent while playing on the dynamics that are generated in a session; consequently the resulting fluidity of their moving in and out of activities and their interruptions make it difficult to clearly fit an activity under a particular heading. The bleeding from one to another category is caused where similar rules apply to different games, when performed by the same peer group and where a change-over from one game to another occurs in a short time. In the following I have grouped the play and game activities according to the suggestions of Brian Sutton-Smith and Iona and Peter Opie.

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[54] Jan Harold Brunvand, The Study of American Folklore: An Introduction (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1986) 381-386; Iona and Peter Opie, Children's Games in Street and Playground (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969) xvii-xxvi; Brian Sutton-Smith, The Folkgames of Children (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972) 18-221.

Dialogue Games

Witch in the Well[55]

Although it was mentioned a few times by children in the community I only recorded Witch in the Well in one instance. The game grew out of a conversation with two children and their mother in their backyard in the Bottom.

> DMH: They seem to be making up stories over there?
> Mrs Gambin: That's what they're at, they're always like that, they spend a lot of time making up stories. But you know most of the games they play is the same old games we used to play.
> DMH: What did you play?
> Mrs Gambin: Oh my God, ... we played Red Rover and, and Witch in the Well ...
> DMH: Witch in the Well?
> Mrs Gambin: They're always talking about that.

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[55] This game has been recorded by many collectors, among them: Iona and Peter Opie, 305-307. The Opies list it among acting games under the title "Old Man in the Well;" in Uta Schier-Oberdorffer, Hex im Keller: Ein überliefertes Kinderspiel im deutschen und englischen Sprachbereich a comparative study of this particular game, it is referred to as "Ghost in the Well;" Alice B. Gomme, The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland names it "Ghost at the Well" 149-150 (I). Gomme also prints a rhyme with a similar dialogue which she found in Halliwell's Nursery Rhymes 15 (II); William Wells Newell, Games and Songs of American Children 1903 (New York: Dover Publications, 1963) 223, lists it as "Ghost in the Cellar" and refers to a version from London as "Ghost in the Copper;" Samuel Singer, "Deutsche Kinderspiele," Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde 13 (1903) 50-53, lists and points out to differences in the dialogue from various European versions of the game; Brian Sutton-Smith found it in New Zealand as "Ghost in the Garden," The Folkgames of Children, 46; Edith Fowke Red Rover, Red Rover (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1988) 98-99, published a version called "Skunk in the Well," remembered by Laurel Doucette from her childhood in Venosta, Gatineau County, Québec.

DMH: Do they? I never saw anyone play that around here.
Mrs Gambin: I'm after forgetting, we used to ... Danette.
Danette: Wha'?
Mrs Gambin: Can you play Witch in the Well? I'm forgetting.
Danette: You gets the witch.
Mrs Gambin: You pick a witch.
Danette: And a mother and the children.
Mrs Gambin: Ruby what do you do?
Ruby: You gets that ..., and then you ask for bread and molasses Danette: And then, you ... and you clasp your hands, and say there's a witch in the well, that jumps up at you. It's crazy.
Mrs Gambin: And then if they catch them, then the witch take 'em or something.
DMH: So you ask for bread and molasses?
That's what you're asking for?
Mrs Gambin and Danette: Yeah.
Danette: If the witch catches you, you got to be the witch.
DMH: How do you find out in the first place who is going to be the witch?
Mrs Gambin: You vote?
Danette: Yeah, we vote. We do everything to choose it from. Eenie meenie miney bubblelugum ...
DMH: What was that?
Mrs Gambin: You're talking too fast ...
Danette: Bubble gum, bubble gum in a dish, how many bubble gum do you wish?[56]
Mrs Gambin: They count to each other wherever they stop ...
DMH: Ya, ya you count it out.
Danette: If say, she's fourteen, she goes one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten,

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56 Cf. Roger D. Abrahams and Lois Rankin, Counting-Out Rhymes: A Dictionary (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980) 28.

eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, like that.

[Danette points with her hand as if she were counting out a circle of playmates]

DMH: That's called Witch in the Well.
Mrs Gambin: What other games you play?
Danette: Hide and Go Seek, Bike riding, House.[57]

Unfortunately the conversation steered toward other activities, but later, after the mother became busy again with painting her fence, the children departed on a round of Witch in the Well.

The game entails a sequence of dialogue and actions by three characters, the mother, the witch, and the children.[58] At the beginning of the game, one finds the mother and her children in a homely situation when one of the children perks up and asks the mother whether they can have some bread and molasses. The mother asks the children to show their hands to her, whereupon she claims that they are dirty. She demands that her children wash their hands; otherwise they will not receive the food they requested. The children walk to the well where they

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[57] Tape-recorded play session, 13 July 1987.

[58] Opie, 305; for comparative purposes, the dialogue closest to the one I recorded in Southern Harbour was collected by the Opies in Swansea. I witnessed the game only once, so other versions of the game may exist in Southern Harbour.

find a witch hiding in the well. The well is usually represented by some larger object which clearly marks a boundary line to a space at which the children stop. The witch jumps up and scares the children.

Michalla, the witch, jumps up and scares Ruby, the child.

The children run back to the mother calling out that there is a witch in the well. The mother declares this to be nonsense and tells them that

they have mistaken what they thought to be a witch for a piece of clothing belonging to their father. In several rounds of the game the children choose such items as their father's shirt, his underwear, his old pants, his old jingle [jinker?] pants, and his underpants.[59]

After several repeats of this step in the game, sometimes initiated by a request of the children, the mother finally accompanies the children to the well where she has a dialogue with the witch, asking her what she is doing in the well. The dialogue comes to a pivotal point at which the witch threatens to brutally kill the children and their mother.

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[59] It is not clear from the recording whether one of my informants use the term "jingle" or "jinker." The choice of the word "jinker," however, makes sense in the context of this game. DNE, 278, describes jinker as an unlucky fellow. The verb "to jink" means to 1. cast a spell on someone, or 2. to play tricks or to frolic. Cf. Delf Maria Hohmann, "'You're out, you're out': Hopscotch in Harlow, Essex," Talking Folklore 7 (1989): 48. The verb "to jinx" someone is used commonly in the English language in a similar way. For example, on the way to the outdoor swimming pool in Bannerman Park on one of the few sunny days of the summer of 1992, I ran into a friend of mine, and I told her that I was on my way to go for a quick swim in the pool. She envied me as she had to stay indoors and work all day in the drugstore across the street from my apartment. Later that evening as I went to the drugstore to purchase a lottery ticket, I told her that I had been unsuccessful getting into the pool as it was filled with children, and that I wouldn't have been able to go swimming after all, whereupon she smiled at me and told me that she had "jinxed" me.

Danette, the mother takes Ruby and Theresa, the children to the well.

The witch jumps out of the well and chases them. The mother and children run back to the homebase which the children had established at the beginning of the game.

Michalla, the witch, chases after the children.

The person caught by the witch while running from the well and the homebase becomes the new witch in the next round of the game.

Foxy Foxy[60]

This game as played by Danette, Theresa, Ruby, Gayle, and Ella, combines a variety of elements such as a dialogue based upon guessing, followed by chasing another player.

In Foxy Foxy the children search out a relatively limited play area, very much as in Mother May I? or Alligators.[61] The actors in the game are the mother, the children and the fox. The fox is an evil character, here in disguise as the devil with the name of "Knocksy Foxy."

The mother, who stays at the homebase, assigns a different colour to each of her children. The children are mingling about while the fox knocks at the door and is allowed in. Then the fox guesses a colour which he thinks the mother has assigned to each one of her children. Once the mother answers positively, upon the suggestion of a colour, Knocksy Foxy drops his disguise by chasing after the child that tries to

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60 Simon J. Bronner, American Children's Folklore (Little Rock: August House, 1988) Pies 181; Gomme, Angel and Devil 8 (I). Mary and Herbert Knapp, One Potato, Two Potato: The Secret Education of American Children (New York: Norton and Co., 1976) Colored Bunnies, 251. The Opies, 286-290, describe two games "Jams" and "Coloured Birds" which closely resemble the Southern Harbour version of Foxy Foxy; they give numerous accounts from other collections.

61 See page 160 for Mother May I?, and page 155 for Alligators.

escape him. If caught the child becomes another "devil" that will assist the fox in his quest for more victims. If the child reaches the homebase before being caught by the fox, it becomes immune and is called an "angel." The children demonstrate:

> DMH: What do you call that?
> Danette: Foxy Foxy
> DMH: What is this?
> Danette: It's just like Colours.
> DMH: What is Colours?
> Danette: See, if the fox, calls colours, [...] every child receives a colour from the mother. And they catches you you're a devil, if you're back home, you're an angel.
> Michalla: I'm the fox.
> Danette: Okay.
> Theresa: I'm mother, I'm mother, I'm the mother.
> Danette: Okay give 'em colours.
> Ruby: Don't give 'em double colours.

[Theresa whispers the colours into the others' ears]

> Danette: Yuk.
> Theresa: Take it or leave it.
> Danette: Okay, I know. Alla come here, you knocks on her back. You're ready?
> Michalla: Ya. Knock, knock.
> Theresa: Who's there?
> Michalla: Knocksy, foxy.
> Theresa: Come in. [...]
> Danette: Would you come on and guess the colours? They're ordinary colours, like blue and green, and black, and orange, and red.
> Michalla: Pink?
> Danette: Go catch 'em. [screams, giggle, Michalla runs after Danette]
> Michalla: Orange?

Theresa: No.
Michalla: Green?
Theresa: No.
Michalla: Uhmm, yellow?
Theresa: No.
Michalla: Blue? [Ruby runs, but reaches the homebase before being caught by Michalla]
Ruby: Mother, I'm the mother. I wants to be the mother.
Danette: Come on, now. Let her be, she got to be the fox. [The older ones depart on the game]
Danette: Give us a colour. [whispering]
Theresa: What's your colour?
Ruby: Shhh. Shut up. [whispering]
Danette: Hurry up, would you?
Theresa: Knock, knock.
Ruby: Who's there?
Theresa: Knocksy, Foxy.
Ruby: Come in.
Theresa: How many colours do you have today?
Ruby: Three.
Theresa: Gold? [spits]
DMH: Why do you spit on the floor? [giggle]
Theresa: That's when I spits.
DMH: Huh?
Theresa: Just water.
DMH: Why do you do it?
Theresa: That's just part of the game.
DMH: Why?
Theresa: Foxy, Foxy is trying to kill everybody and stuff. So he's sort of naughty.[62]

At the beginning of the transcript above, the children make reference to the game Colours. I have not seen my informants perform Colours, but from the children's reference to the game and its

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62 Tape-recorded play session 10 July 1987.

resemblance to Foxy Foxy it is most likely that it exists as a separate item in their repertoire. It has been reported elsewhere in Newfoundland.[63]

Classification: Witch in the Well and Foxy Foxy

These two games are characterized by a formulaic exchange of dialogue and action. In Witch in the Well the mother departs on a dialogue between herself and her children, followed by a dialogue between the mother and the villain, which brings a round of the game to its conclusion. The action in Witch in the Well is staged between the mother and the children, and as the game progresses, between the mother and the villain. In Foxy Foxy the mother only converses with the villain, whereupon the villain takes action. For example, in Foxy Foxy the villain has to guess the right colour which has to be acknowledged by the mother before the Fox sets off to chase the child with the assigned marker. Witch in the Well stages the chasing sequence in a more predictable way, as the witch emerges from the well only after the mother and her children have approached the well, and again departed

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[63] "A children's game in which each player is assigned a colour." DNE, 110.

on a set dialogue. The powers of the villain in both games are the same: that is, to determine the next villain figure by catching another participant in the game.

Both games display strong characteristics of a chasing game as the villain, the witch, or the devil in disguise as a fox, chase after their victims. The chasing, although being the final action, is only the result of a particular solution articulated in the dialogue and not the major feature of the game which allows both games to be classified as an ACTING GAME in the Opies' understanding, and as a DIALOGUE GAME (B) in Brian Sutton-Smith's classification, who distinguishes between two types: 1. A CENTRAL PERSON REPRESENTS A FEARSOME PERSON, AND 2. THE CENTRAL PERSON REPRESENTS AN OLD WOMAN WHO IS TEASED BY OTHER PLAYERS. Witch in the Well and Foxy Foxy belong to the first type.

In Caillois' terms Witch in the Well and Foxy Foxy, as played by the children of Southern Harbour, exhibit mainly elements of MIMICRY, based upon the staging of a scene that leads to a pivotal point in a drama section at the end when the villain reveals his identity. Elements of chance surface in the latter part of the games when the villain chases the victim(s) in order to pass on his role to the next player; ALEA is

therefore placed in the PAIDIA range, whereas the MIMICRY, the major feature of the games has to be placed in the LUDUS range, as the course of action largely depends on the fixed dialogue.

Hopping Games

Hopscotch[64]

Hopscotch is a favourite among the children of Southern Harbour, and their most frequently performed game. Throughout the community

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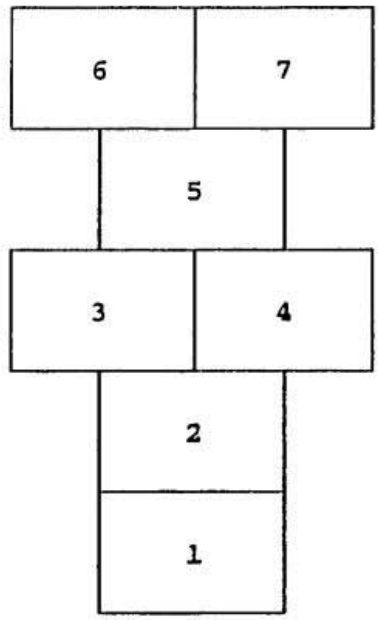
[64] For discussion of another version of Hopscotch see my paper "'You're out, you're out': Hopscotch in Harlow, Essex." Talking Folklore 7 (1989): 39-54. An interesting study of the seasonal and geographical distribution in altogether 628 locations in the Netherlands based upon questionnaires distributed by the *Volkskundecommissie van de Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam* was undertaken by Jan de Vries, Untersuchungen über das Hüpfspiel: Kinderspiel - Kulttanz (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1957). Other publications that discuss the game are, for example: Catherine Harris Ainsworth, Games and Lore of Young Americans (Buffalo: The Clyde Press, 1983) 89-91, 141-142; H. Babington Smith, "Hopscotch at Sinula." Folk-lore 5 (1894): 340. Gyles Brandreth, Everyman's Book of Children's Games (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1984) 88-89, 185-186; Simon J. Bronner, 189-197, 364; Paul G. Brewster, "Children's Games and Rhymes," The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1952) 39-40; ---, American Nonsinging Games (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953) 107-113; Leslie Daiken, Children's Games Throughout The Year (London: Batsford, 1949) 41-44; Norman Douglas, London Street Games (London: Chatto and Windus, 1931) 74; H.F. Feilberg, "The Game of Hopscotch as Played in Denmark," Folk-lore 6 (1895): 359-372; Edith Fowke, 122-123; Amy Stewart Fraser, Dae Ye Min' Langsyne? (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975) 47-49; Alice B. Gomme, The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland (1894, 1898; London: Thames and Hudson, 1984) Vol.I 190, 223-227, Vol.II 451; Frederic V. Grunfell, ed., Games of the World - How to make them, How to play them, How they came to be (New York: Ballantine Books, 1975) 165-167; David Holbrook, Children's Games (N.p.: Gordon Fraser, 1957) 71-74; Knapp, 138-140; Hilda C. Murray, More Than 50% - Woman's Life in a Newfoundland Outport 1900 - 1950 Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Publications Monograph Ser. 2 (St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1979) 51; William Wells Newell, 188; James T.R. Ritchie, Golden City (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1965) 96-109; Brian Sutton-Smith, 187-189; Joseph Strutt, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England: A New Edition, Much Enlarged and Corrected by J. Charles Cox (London: Methuen & Company, 1903) 303; Flora Thompson, Lark Rise to Candleford (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973) 151; John Symonds Udal, Dorsetshire Folk-Lore (Stephen Austin & Sons, 1922) 372-373; A.C.J Vrankrijker, Zeitschrift für Volkskunde 1 (1941): 42; Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann, Die Kindheit (Frankfurt am Main: Insel-Verlag, 1979) 255, 259.

the children use the "airplane" pattern as illustrated in the figure below, the only pattern I saw in Southern Harbour.[65]



The game was usually played on the gravel on the roadside or in the driveway of a house. In most cases the children did not mark numbers into what they called the blocks. There was, however, an agreement among the playing participants to read the blocks in

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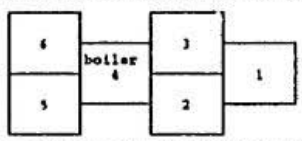
[65] Murray, 51, provides the following Hopscotch pattern, from her childhood in the 1940s, in Elliston, Bonavista Bay.



The children in Southern Harbour did not use the term "boiler" to mark the central square into which the stone is to be thrown at the beginning of the game. Cf. DNE, 56. Ritchie, named a similar pattern "aeroplane bed." Ritchie, 104.

sequence from left to right. Other publications refer to the "block" as division or square. The children of Southern harbour always referred to them as "blocks." In the following I have used the term rock for stone as the children of Southern Harbour referred to the stones they used to toss into the hopscotch pattern as "rocks."

The children went through two steps to determine who would be the person to begin the game. They began by calling "first," "second," "third," to decide who would be the first person to throw a rock into the first block. This player then had to skilfully toss the rock from a previously marked line into the first block without having the rock skid beyond the boundaries of the first block. The player was allowed to carry on if the rock successfully landed in the first block. If not, s/he had to get back in line and wait to take another turn until the following players had fulfilled their task successfully or unsuccessfully. If all players effectively passed this hurdle, the actual game began.

The player hopped, on one leg, over the first block, in which at that time all the rocks were resting, into the second block, and from there into the third and fourth block until s/he reached the end of the pattern where the player jumped out of the pattern, turned around and

returned to the second block, picked his/her rock from the first block, jumped over it and out of the pattern. Then the same player tossed his/her rock into the second block and proceeded in the same way as in the first round. The player continued until s/he was out. Thus, the point of the game is to avoid making a mistake by stepping onto a boundary line between the blocks, by being unable to throw the rock into the next consecutive block, by jumping into a block that was "owned" by another player, or by accidentally picking up the rock of a fellow participant.

The children did not bring with them any special rocks that they kept for the purpose of playing hopscotch. Instead they picked them from the playing site each time they engaged in a game. The rocks, usually a piece of slate, are easily confused by the participants, especially when the game is played on the gravel from which they were chosen, as they can only be distinguished by their shape and perhaps their size rather than their colour. A general rule which was accepted in all Hopscotch sessions was that a player had to hop with the same foot throughout his/her turn; changing feet during one's turn is seen as an attempt to cheat and is unacceptable to the other participants.

The children referred to the block that held a rock thrown by a player as being "owned" by that player. The player then waits until it is his/her turn again and begins his/her next turn at the block where s/he in the previous round made a mistake. When a participant had successfully mastered the entire pattern, s/he would then begin his/her "hopsies." The hopsies are a more difficult task to fulfil. Anne-Marie explains:

> Anne-Marie: Pretty soon, Sheldon, you're gonna be at your hopsies. And hopsies are difficult.

It is a frog-like jumping with two feet over the pattern whereby the player stretches his hands forward to touch the ground in the block s/he is supposed to jump into. The hopsies are followed by throwing the rock backwards over the shoulder. The other players are then not allowed to step into the block where his/her rock has landed. The player marks the block s/he has come to own with his/her initial. Only the owner of the block is allowed to hop into the designated block, as Sheldon and Anne-Marie explain in the following transcript from a game of hopscotch.

> Sheldon: Thrown me rock.
> DMH: Now, he has to throw it backwards?
> Anne-Marie: He's throwing back his rock, and which ever one he gets ...

DMH: Backwards.
Anne-Marie: Ya, and whatever block he gets, you can't step on it.
Sheldon: Now, when you ...
Anne-Marie: So when your rock is up here, you gotta go like this and stretch up, get your rock, and you're not allowed to touch his block, and get your rock.
Sheldon: And when you comes down, you're not allowed to hop on that block.
DMH: It's yours then, isn't it?
Sheldon: Yeah, that's mine to keep.
DMH: So, alright, that's why you put the "S" in there.
Sheldon: Ya, you put your name.[66]

One further condition in some of the Hopscotch sessions was to master the pattern three times in a row with the same foot, before the other foot could be used, and before a successful player could move on to the hopsies.

In Hilda Chaulk Murray's experience Hopscotch was a "girls-only" game.[67] This was not the case in Southern Harbour. The game was equally enjoyed by girls and boys playing together. I did, however, never see boys play Hopscotch by themselves; there were usually girls

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66 Tape-recorded play session 27 June 1987.

67 Murray, 51.

involved, especially among the eight to ten year old children. Older girls, between the ages of twelve and fourteen played the game by themselves.

A Hopscotch session in front of the school in Southern Harbour.

Kick the Rock[68]

I did not see my informants play this game frequently. This game uses a similar pattern to that used in a Girls Girls game (discussed below). Nine fields are drawn in a three by three fashion into the gravel or onto the pavement.[69]

finish

9	4	3
8	5	2
7	6	1

start

After the first player has been selected in the same way as for starting a game of Hopscotch the player places a rock outside the first field of the pattern and while hopping on one foot kicks the rock with the same foot into the first field. S/he carries on following a serpentine route

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[68] The children sometimes referred to the game as Kick the Block. de Vries, 38, provides the same pattern as one of the examples of patterns for Hopscotch in the Netherlands.

[69] The children neither bothered to mark the blocks with numbers, nor did they call the blocks by numbers. I added the numbers here for the better understanding of the diagram.

through the pattern, until the goal, the end of the pattern, is reached. Again, as in a game of Hopscotch, the player has to manage the pattern on the same foot with which s/he began.

If one block is already "owned" by another participant the current player has to hop across the owned block, and at the same time kick the rock into the subsequent block without touching any of the boundary lines between the blocks. If the player makes a mistake either by kicking the rock into the wrong block, by touching a boundary line between the blocks, or by losing his/her balance and touching the ground with the other foot, s/he has to wait until it is his/her turn again to pick up on the block where s/he made the mistake. The first player to make it through all nine blocks wins.

Girls Girls[70]

Girls Girls, played mainly by twelve to thirteen year old girls, does not just require physical dexterity but is a combination of both the ability to hop across and to call out words.

> DMH: What sort of games do you play?
> Gayle: Okay, floor hockey, badminton, basket ball, soccer, and road hockey, ice hockey, [various children] no, we plays road hockey in the summer, we plays soft ball up on the field, basket ball, baseball, dodge ball ...
> Jimmy: What's dodge ball?
> Gayle: ... soft ball, basket ball, frisbee, skipping, hopscotch, girls girls.
> DMH:What's girls girls?
> Gayle: You goes, girls girls girls, something like hopscotch ...
> DMH: Show me how you do that.
> Gayle: I show you.
> Wanda-Lee: Make a small one.
> Gayle: You put a "G" there for girls, a "B" for boys, "F" for fruits, then you goes: Jeffrey, Jeffrey, Roland, Roland [laughter], apples, apples, pears, pears, plum, plum, [the descriptions ends, laughter].[71]

The player has to hop through the pattern without making a mistake in the same way as in a Hopscotch game. At the same time, however, and in the same rhythm as s/he hops, the player has to call

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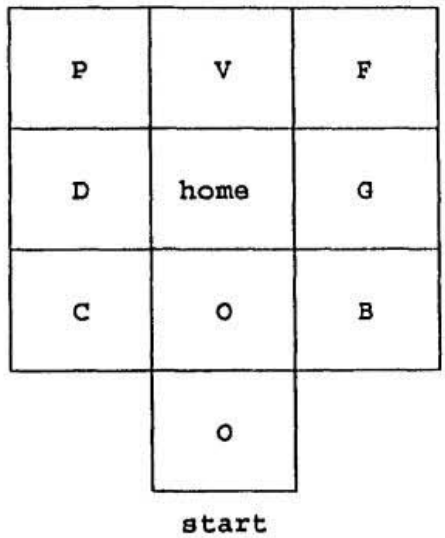
[70] A rather elaborate version of the game called "Nine Squares" from North Bay, Ontario is described by Edith Fowke, 114.

[71] Tape-recorded interview, 30 June 1987.

out the names of girls (G), boys (B), fruits (F), vegetables (V), placenames (P) that may include cities, provinces, states, countries or other geographical occurrences, the days of the week (D), and colours (C). The (O)s in the pattern below stand for a neutral block where nothing has to be said.



In a game session, the game itself varies to some extent. In the first round the player calls out the names and terms twice as indicated by my informant. The second round becomes more difficult, as the player does not repeat the same name or term twice in a row, but changes to two different names or words. For example, if the player has

reached the (F) block, s/he calls out "apple, orange," instead of just "apple, apple" as in the first round.

The children hop across the pattern in the same fashion as a game of hopscotch. They have to master the pattern one leg first, and then on the other. Unlike Hopscotch no rock is used in the game and the player does not pick up again at a block where s/he made a mistake. Instead, s/he has to go back to the beginning and start over when it is his/her turn again. Two kinds of mistakes can be made: first, the player may touch a boundary line with his foot, and secondly, the player may not provide an adequate word in the block on which s/he is currently hopping.

Classification: Hopscotch, Girls Girls, and Kick the Rock

These three games can be placed under one major heading, for their similarities as Hopping Games. Their features, however, are somewhat different and need to be distinguished in terms of a classification. All three games allow the person who masters the pattern with the least mistakes to be the winner, which also indicates that the

competition in the games is based on exercising the players' skills and their display.

Hopscotch, Girls Girls, and Kick the Rock demonstrate three major features: competition, the display of physical dexterity, and elements of chance. In addition, the game of Girls Girls is characterized by exercising verbal skills as the players have to pronounce a specific word every time they hop, while in Kick the Rock the element of chance is increased by having to kick the rock while hopping through the pattern.

Competition is displayed by the need to master the pattern with the least mistakes. Mistakes are made by changing to a different foot to hop on, or stepping on a boundary line between the blocks, or stepping into a block that already contains the rock of another player. In Girls Girls the possibility for making a mistake is amplified by not being able to pronounce a word, such as a name for a vegetable or a fruit. In Kick the Rock the element of chance expands as the player may kick the rock past the boundary lines of a block.

The element of chance is introduced at the beginning of the games, when the participants determine the first player by throwing the rock

into the first block of the pattern. The rock is only allowed to land in the first block, not in another, and not on the marked boundaries between the blocks. If the surface of the play area is smooth, for example the paved area in front of the school in Southern Harbour, it may skip further than intended by the player as it bounces off the pavement. The rock does not skip much further on a rougher surface like the gravel on the side of the road. Thus, the element of chance decreases in such areas.

All three games can be classified in Caillois' terms as a combination of AGÓN and ALEA. In the way the games are played, as rules are exercised fairly strictly, they are placed in the LUDUS range. Brian Sutton-Smith clearly identifies Hopscotch as a HOPPING GAME (K-53).[72] He does not provide any reference to Girls Girls nor Kick the Rock. The Opies do not include any of the three in their collection, nor a game category in which the participants have to hop or jump. Hopscotch, Girls Girls and Kick the Rock, however, can be placed under their category of RACING GAMES as they define one of the subcategories as "races in which the progress of those taking part is dependent on their fulfilling a

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72 Sutton-Smith, 187.

condition or possessing a particular qualification."[73] The racing element is part of the competition among the players as everyone strives to be the first to master the pattern.

Seeking Games

Hide and Seek[74]

Hide and Seek was played on numerous occasions by both sexes between the ages of six to thirteen. The community offers a great variety of objects for hiding in or behind, such as boats, stacks of lobster traps, other fishing gear, stages, piles of wood, oildrums, cars and the beds of pick-up trucks; plus, there were a variety of hiding places offered by

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[73] Opie, 187. The Opies provide only a few remarks to Hopscotch in their introduction to Children's Games in Street and Playground with reference to age groups and some historical evidence of the game.

[74] Brewster, Frank C. Brown Collection 37-39; Brewster, 42-46; Bronner, 176-178; Fowke, 44; Fraser, 25; Gomme, 211-213 (I); Bessie Jones and Bess Lomax Hawes, Step it Down (New York: Harper and Row, 1972) 182-184; Newell, 160; Opie, 155-154; Knud Rasmussen Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos, Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921-1924 Vol.II No.1 (København: Gyldeddalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag, 1932) *ijERA'mEq: Hide-and-seek* 245; Ritchie, 54-59 provides eight versions under different names. Sutton-Smith, 76-77, 263-264, 512, 531.

nature, such as bushes, tuckamore,[75] rocks, and small cliffs in certain parts of the community. Depending on the location of Hide and Seek, the children used a number of "secret" paths, which had proven to be effective ways to sneak back to the homebase in a game without being seen too early by the seeker.

The game usually begins by counting-out in order to determine the first seeker. The seeker then turns his back toward the others against an object, such as a boat, a truck, or the wall of a stage or a house and counts to one hundred. The place at which the seeker counts also represents the homebase in the game. It has to be reached by the hiding players without being caught or seen by the seeker.

While counting to one hundred, the seeker counts the last ten to twenty numbers out loud, or calls out the tens so that the hiding participants know that they soon have to be invisible. Once the seeker reaches a hundred, s/he calls out the formula "Ready or not, you gonna be caught," turns around quickly and begins the search. Thirteen year old Karen-Anne demonstrates during a game of Hide and Seek:

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[75] The DNE, 586-587, 763, defines it as "(a) a small stunted evergreen tree with gnarled spreading roots, forming closely matted ground-cover on the barrens; (b) collectively, low stunted vegetation; scrub."

> Karen-Anne: I only got another thirty to count, [long pause] eighty one, eighty two, eighty three, [pause] eighty four, eighty five, [pause], eighty six, eighty eight, eighty nine, ninety [long pause], a hundred, ready or not you gonna be caught.[76]

The seeker then looks around for the hiding playmates. Once in a while a participant hides very close to the homebase in order to reach it before being discovered or caught by the seeker. Knowing this s/he looks for them in the vicinity of the homebase. The seeker then continues to search in the larger surroundings of the homebase. Every few moments s/he will turn quickly to spy a player that could reach the homebase before being caught or seen.

Standing at a distance from the playing range, I could see some of the participants peeking out from behind their shelter to see which area the seeker was currently scanning and, when the opportunity arose, racing to the homebase and calling the formula "home" to be immune. The final rush to the base is usually accompanied by dramatic, and loud screams. Colin Whiffen explained the two versions on a later occasion when I met him on the road without his playmates:

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[76] Tape-recorded play session 29 June 1987.

DMH: How do you do it?
Colin: You don't know?
DMH: Well, I do, but I want to know how you do it.
Colin: Play it in the daytime, we used to play in the night time, or up in the woods somewhere. One person'll hide, like seek, right, just cover their face against, uh, something, count to a hundred. The rest'll go hide. A designated area'll be home, and uh, the per ..., the seeker'll go out, and try to find the people. If he see someone, they just say, uh, uh, I caught ye runnin', or I caught ye, Barbara or whatever, right, and uhmm, that'll be it. The person gotta run home, without, uh, that the seeker's seen him. And when they get home they gotta say "Home free!"
DMH: Oh, I see.
Colin: There's another way, they plays it, too. Uh, the seeker got to get home, if they saw Freddy or someone, the seeker's got to run home, touch home and say, "One two three on Freddy!" And Freddy's out. That's another way they can play it.
DMH: Oh, ya.
Colin: Uhmm, the next seeker is the last person to get home. No ... the last person to get caught ... is the seeker. And that's the way that one works.[77]

In the final stages of the game the children of Southern Harbour used two variations.

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[77] Tape-recorded interview, 10 July 1987.

Hide and Seek (A)

Once the seeker has found the player the seeker tags the player by touching him/her. This is never an easy task for the seeker as the player tries to run away as quickly as possible to reach the homebase before being touched by the seeker.

Hide and Seek (B)

A second variation was usually played by the above ten year old children. Once the seeker sees a player running to the homebase s/he must run to the homebase. If s/he gets there first s/he calls out the name of the other player, thus catching him/her out. But if the player reaches the homebase before the seeker, s/he is safe.

When the other participants discover that the seeker is currently chasing or racing someone else to the base, they rush to the base themselves in order to be safe. Having noticed the sudden rush of the other players to the base, the seeker often leaves the current player s/he has been chasing, and chases after the one furthest away from the base, as the easiest to catch. The one who is caught last becomes the new seeker in a new round of the game. Once in a while a seeker does not

catch anyone before they all reach the base which means s/he has to be the seeker again.

In Hide and Seek the children always remain within a reasonable distance from the homebase, approximately fifty metres, when they seek out places to hide. It is expected that they hide first, and then intend to race back to the base, despite being seen and perhaps caught by the seeker in the effort. In one incident I witnessed how this rule was enforced by Karen-Anne and Viola when the two girls put Kenny in his place for wanting to hide too far away from the base:

> Kenny: You gotta give up sometime.
> Karen-Anne: No! What do you mean, I gotta give up?
> Kenny: Like, you gotta give up when you can't find me.
> Karen-Anne: Ya, but I won't give up if you stays in the one place.
> Kenny: I'm plannin' on.
> Karen-Anne: Oh fine, get lost!
> Viola: Eh, you're not allowed in a place really really far away.
> Kenny: No.[78]

The children, once engaged in Hide and Seek, usually played several rounds of the game. The rounds were rather short. Often the

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[78] Tape-recorded play session, 1 July 1987.

seeker counted very fast so that the other players were unable to find the best places to hide in such a short time span. Plus, the key attraction to the game was not the ability to find a place to hide and not be discovered, but rather the thrill of being discovered after a short while, and then having to race back to the base without being caught.[79]

Spotlight (A)[80]

I was curious to see the children perform this game as it had been mentioned to me by some teenage girls at an earlier occasion in the Bottom area of the community. To my surprise I observed two completely different games under the same name. The first Spotlight (A) described below is an after dark version which closely resembles Hide and Seek. The second Spotlight (B) resembles a game of Mother May I?[81]

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79 When I played the game with my playmates in Germany, vindictive as we were, once in a while, we played a practical joke especially on a new child that had just moved to our square. We either hid in places far away and did not return to the base if the new child turned out to be the seeker, or even worse, once the new child hid, we all disappeared and let him "hide."

80 Opie, 154.

81 Cf. Hide and Seek page 116, 120 and Mother May I? page 160 of this thesis.

One evening I was walking to the convenience store in Best's Cove. In the dark I saw one boy, Jamie, who lived in the same area in the community, searching with a flashlight around two houses, and under the oil tanks on the outside of the buildings. I assumed that he was looking for his dog, because when I had met him with some of his friends earlier in the day, he had carried a little puppy in his arms and being generally admired by the other children for his new acquisition. I addressed him from a distance, and wondered whether he needed help. He, however, only gestured to me to be quiet.

Soon after, I saw another boy emerging from behind an old oil drum in one of the yards and running toward the corner of one of the houses, soon followed by two others coming from different directions, each of them shouting "home" once they reached and touched the corner of the house. Jamie again went to search around with his flashlight. Another player emerged from behind a car that was parked in front of one of the houses and ran to the corner of the other house. Before he could reach the corner Jamie caught him with the light beam of his flashlight and he became the new seeker. Another player, who must have observed the scene from his hiding place suddenly appeared seemingly out of nowhere while Jamie followed the first with his flashlight. The

participants in this game were all boys between eleven and thirteen years of age. I have not seen any girls playing this game.

This game of spotlight begins with the selection of the seeker. The first seeker is usually the one who owns the flashlight, which is then passed on to the next seeker, the one who was caught first by the seeker in the previous round of the game. The seeker counts audibly to one hundred, announces that he is coming, and sets out for his search for the other players in the dark. The other participants have to run to the homebase determined at the outset, touch the base and make their arrival known by calling out "home." They usually hang around the homebase until one round of the game has finished, or they sneak away from the homebase to hide again when the seeker is not looking. Once a participant has been hit by the light beam the seeker exclaims "caught" or "gotcha" to reinforce his achievement.

Classification: Hide and Seek (A and B) and Spotlight (A)

The two versions of Hide and Seek (A) and (B), and Spotlight (A) can be dealt with together for a classification. All three games display

features that are very much alike. The only difference is made by the children themselves as they name an after-dark version of Hide and Seek "Spotlight" to make a clear distinction between the different versions of the same game for themselves.

All three versions have in common that members of a playgroup hide to be found by one selected member of the group. They also entail a strong racing element as once a player has been discovered by the seeker s/he has to run to the homebase in order to be free, and so not to become the next seeker. The differences are minor and lie in the participants' choice of hiding places, which in the daytime poses more difficulty than in the after-dark version. In the dark the players can more easily both find places to hide and sneak back to the base. In the dark, then, the seeker finds him/herself in a disadvantaged position spotting his/her counterparts in the game, but has an advantage in the daylight, when the hiding players are at a disadvantage. The children in Southern Harbour do not present the game in these terms and there seemed to be no preference between the two games. Since roles are fluid (everyone has about the same chance of being the seeker), the differences are irrelevant to the players.

The games are clearly identified by the Opies as Hide-and-Seek, and fall into their category of SEEKING GAMES, where they are subcategorized as GAMES IN WHICH A PLAYER TRIES TO FIND OTHERS, WHO OBTAIN SAFETY BY REMAINING OUT OF SIGHT OR BY GETTING BACK TO THE STARTING PLACE with the further subcategory of a DISSIMILAR NUMBER OF PLAYERS HIDING AND SEEKING. The Opies also point out that the game is played in its basic version, here Hide and Seek (A), by smaller children in which the children just hide until they are found by the seeker, and that the version that involves racing back to the homebase is preferred by older players.[82] In the case of the Southern Harbour children, I detected that the racing version of the game occurred more frequently than the simple hiding version without racing back to the base. No version of the game was linked to a particular age group, and I did not see the game played by smaller children.

Brian Sutton-Smith does not categorize Hide and Seek as a racing game in the Opie fashion, but places it as a CHASING GAME: CATEGORY E (E-2). The games under this heading are characterized by a competitive

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82 Opie, 153-154.

nature as a central-person game in which one player is in competition with all the others.[83]

Both, the Opies' and Sutton-Smith's categorizations are valid, the difference being, however, that the Opies see the racing elements as a major feature, and Sutton-Smith prefers the chasing elements in the game. Despite the different placements, competition arises in Hide and Seek (B) and in Spotlight (A) because of the racing element. In Hide and Seek (A) the element of chance is emphasized as the hiding person waits in his/her hideout until found by the seeker. Caillois' classification enables me to compromise between the Opies and Sutton-Smith, and place all Hide and Seek (B) and Spotlight (A) under both AGÒN and ALEA, given the fact that the seeker and players compete by racing back to the base, and therefore taking the chance of reaching the base or not in time. Hide and Seek (A) can be clearly placed under ALEA, as a hiding player chances whether s/he will be discovered by the seeker. In terms of PAIDIA and LUDUS, all three versions of the game are to be found in the PAIDIA range, as the elements point to a less regulated conduct of the game.

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[83] Sutton-Smith, 57-77.

Chasing Games

Tag[84]

Tag in Southern Harbour was the most spontaneously started game and the most commonly played game before school by almost everyone present with the exception of the Level I to III pupils, in the morning and after the midday break before classes resumed in the afternoon. This hints at the fact that this was not necessarily a peer group oriented activity as were most of the others which I observed in the community. The school grounds represented common play area for all children in school. Here the children engaged mainly in a form of tag, which they called Last Touch.

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[84] Brewster, 63-67; Brewster, Frank C. Brown Collection, 73-74; Stewart Culin, "Street Games of Boys in Brooklyn, N.Y.," Journal of American Folklore 3 (1891): 222-223, describes six different versions: Wood Tag, French Tag, Fence Tag, Squat Tag, Cross Tag, Last Tag; Douglas, 76-77; Fowke, 20; Fraser, 25, 93; Gomme, Tick 291 (II), Tig 293 (II), Touch 304 (II); Knapp, 52, Newell, 158; Opie, 62, 64-75; Rasmussen, *a'makitaujuamEq*: "*Touch*" 245; Ritchie, 50-54, briefly describes twenty four versions; Sutton-Smith, 76, 263-264, 434, 532.

Last Touch[85]

A game of Last Touch begins with one child spontaneously touching another, who understands this gesture and immediately tries to pass it on to someone else, whereas the former tagger runs away in order to avoid being tagged again. The game goes on until the children are given the signal to enter the school by one of the teachers opening the door. A child does not carry the "last touch" until the next round of the game.

In front of the school on a schoolday the game of Last Touch turned out not only to have just one tagger all the time, but a number of taggers that went around tagging a few children. This usually caused quite a commotion among the children, and within minutes a majority of the children were engaged in Last Touch, each of them running after each other in the attempt to tag another.[86]

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[85] Opie, 77-78. A game under the same name is described by Ritchie, 29. Other names such are "Last Nip," and "Last Whistle."

[86] I observed the same phenomenon among four to thirteen year old Iglulingmiut children when I visited the community of Igloolik, NWT, in the fall and winter of 1991/1992. Igloolik children play Last Touch at almost any possible occasion as soon as they form a group in the school, or at the weekly square dances at the community hall, and outdoors on the frozen ocean close to the beach.

Frozen Tag[87]

Frozen Tag represents the other version of Tag which I observed in Southern Harbour. The tagger chases his playmates, again in a fairly constricted space, between two houses, in a yard or in a larger gravel section on the side of the road. The child that has been tagged "freezes," in the position s/he has been touched by the tagger, and remains in the same position until another player, who has not been tagged, touches the "frozen" player thereby releasing him/her.

In some versions of Frozen Tag rules were exercised strictly which did not allow any movement by the "frozen" person. In versions by other groups of children, the tagged person was allowed to put him-/herself into a more comfortable position while being "frozen." These more lax rules also allowed two "frozen" players, who were positioned close enough to reach over to the next, to release each other by touching, as long as they remained with one body part, in most cases one foot, in the same spot in which they were tagged before. If seen by the tagger, and if not too far away from the two "frozen" players, the tagger usually remained close by to be able to "freeze" the just released person anew. A

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87 Bronner, 179; Fowke, 20; Fraser, 35-37; Opie 110; Sutton-Smith, 473.

round of the game ended with the last person being tagged who then became the new tagger in the next round of the game.

Classification: Last Touch and Frozen Tag as a version of Tag Tag

The Opies and Sutton-Smith agree in filing Tag under CHASING GAMES, which are defined by the Opies as GAMES IN WHICH A PLAYER TRIES TO TOUCH OTHERS WHO ARE RUNNING FREELY IN A PRESCRIBED AREA. Caillois' choice to place Tag under MIMICRY in the PAIDIA range, as one of the few children's games he alludes to in his study, may be challenged. Caillois places Tag in a table showing the classification of games in order to give an overview of his categories.[88] Later in his work, he refers to Tag as an example in his argument in which he shows how a sociology may derive from play.

> In the game of tag beneath the childish innocence and activity, is the terrifying choice of a propitiatory victim. Chosen by decree of destiny, before being selected by the sonorous and hollow syllables of counting-out rhymes, the victim could (at least in theory) rid himself of the

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88 Caillois, 36.

> defilement by passing it through touch to someone whom he had overtaken in the race.[89]

In the quotation Caillois describes Tag as a "race," but does not place the game in the right category in the table, and he does not refer to the game in any other context. In my observation of the children of Southern Harbour, Tag carries strong elements of competition, as the playing children race around in order to avoid being tagged by the chaser, plus it carries elements of chance as the child running too close to the chaser may be pursued by him/her and therefore may get tagged and thus selected as the next chaser. Tag therefore can be placed as a combination of AGÔN and ALEA.

Last Touch

Last Touch, as a version of tag, is characterized by the agility of the players: the person chasing after the others, and the others trying to escape the chaser. The verbal interaction among the players is reduced to a minimum. There is no calling out when someone has reached the

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[89] Caillois, 59-60.

homebase, such as in Hide and Seek, and there is no real dialogue, or discussion of rules, though the game is usually accompanied by the screams of the participants. The children communicate in a nonverbal manner, however, by switching roles quickly once they are touched by another. Once a player is touched by the chaser, an instant role-switching takes place; the person then knows that s/he has become the new chaser.

The Opies provide a convenient subcategory for games with a PROLIFERATION OF CHASERS in which they consider that the chaser has to gather more chasers in order to assist him/her. Brian Sutton-Smith offers CENTRAL PERSON- and TEAM-CHASING GAMES. Last Touch in Southern Harbour certainly begins as a central-person game by having one tagger, but continues, as a result of the chaser's action of spontaneously touching several people who then react accordingly to become taggers themselves. One may argue that the acceleration from one tagger to many can be classified, in Sutton-Smith's terms, as TEAM-CHASING GAME and interpret the taggers as one team and the untagged players as another. At the beginning of the game there is one tagger, and later there are many taggers. Thus, one may add another subcategory to Sutton-Smith's classification and call it a "multi-person-chasing game." As in

Tag, mentioned above, Last Touch can be classified under AGÓN and ALEA, but it also carries strong elements of ILINX, especially once many taggers hunt for other players which causes a great hullabaloo. Since Last Touch does not display pure vertigo, as the players are quite conscious of their taking actions in the commotion they are involved in, the game may be located halfway on the range between PAIDIA and LUDUS.

Frozen Tag

As a version of Tag, Frozen Tag displays the same elements of competition and chance. The element of chance, however, seems to be more prevalent than the competitive notion of the game as it can be argued that being "frozen" by the tagger does not seem to be as important as being freed from a spot by another player in order to receive another chance to reach the homebase. The player trying to release the "frozen" playmate often risks being tagged him-/herself while trying to free the other and thereby increases the element of chance. Frozen Tag can therefore be categorized in Caillois' system as ALEA and AGÓN. In terms of PAIDIA and LUDUS, Frozen Tag may be placed in the

range between the two poles with a tendency toward LUDUS, as the game is characterized by the rule of being able — not being "frozen" — to move toward the homebase.

The Opies report a similar game, French Touch, where the tagged player has to hold his/her hand in the spot where s/he was tagged under their subcategory of THE TOUCH HAVING A NOXIOUS EFFECT. Frozen Tag has a "noxious effect" on the player as s/he is not able to move from the spot where s/he has been tagged. The same game was described to me under the name of Doctor Tag by a teenager in the community, but I have never seen it being played by my informants. Brian Sutton-Smith does not give a subcategory, but in his terms Frozen Tag fits in his category of a CENTRAL PERSON CHASING GAME. He then describes the above mentioned French Tag or Do g as a game in which "the He's tag represents a dangerous power."[90]

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[90] Sutton-Smith 78-79.

Chasing-Racing Games

World[91]

World is played by boys and girls aged ten to thirteen. The children draw a rough circle onto the pavement or into the gravel. The pattern contains three to six segments of equal size which are given names of countries, cities, or other placenames. Each participant selects his/her own segment and names it to his/her own liking. The stickthrower is selected before the game by calling "stickthrower," in the same way they called "first," "second," etc. before starting another game. Once the stickthrower is selected in this manner, the other children call out the placenames, for example Newfoundland, Southern Harbour, and Germany (the latter choice was almost certainly triggered by my presence).

The stickthrower stands at a fair distance, approximately two to five metres, from the pattern at a marked line. The other children stand in their "country" in the pattern. The stickthrower calls the name of a

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[91] The only parallel to this game I found is in Fowke, 68-69, where it is called "Territories." Members of the older generation in the Southern Harbour referred to the game as 'war.'

country, city, or other placename that is represented in the pattern. The player whose "country" is called runs as fast as s/he can from the pattern to step on the stick that has just dropped on the ground at some distance from the pattern. At the same time, after having flung the stick, the stickthrower runs as far as possible from his position in another direction. Once the owner of the "country" has stepped on the stick, s/he calls out "stop" whereupon the stickthrower immediately stops his/her movement. The owner of the "country" then picks up the stick and casts it at the stickthrower with the aim to hit him/her. If hit, the stickthrower takes his/her position in the land of the person who has just cast the stick at him/her. The former owner of the "country" becomes the new stickthrower. If the owner of the land misses the stickthrower, the stickthrower marks a slice out of the player's "country" and identifies it with his/her initial. The size of the slice is determined by the stickthrower and depends on his/her judgement as to how far the owner of the "country" was able to get away when his placename was called. The children explain:

> DMH: How do you do that?
> Anne-Marie: Needs a stick. The stickthrower he does ... say, he's supposed to say Germany. Well, then you gotta run, and step on the stick and say stop.

DMH: Okay.
Anne-Marie: Then you throw it at him, and sees if it hits ya, well, then you're the stickthrower.
Sheldon: And don't hit too hard.
Anne-Marie: See, if Sheldon is the stickthrower, he goes over there, and he's supposed to call Germany, then you gotta run, and step on the stick, say stop ...
Sheldon: Just look, say if I called Germany [Sheldon throws the stick to demonstrate], you gotta go step on the stick ...
DMH: And say stop ...
Anne-Marie: Yeah.
Sheldon: Then I gets to stop, and then you pick up the stick and throw it, but throw it easy ...
Anne-Marie: And if it hits ya, then you become the stickthrower ...
Sheldon: Just listen, if you drop ..., if you misses me, then I gets a piece of your land.
Dennis: And you can ask, if you can walk on somebody else's land ...
Anne-Marie: Ya, and you can ask before anybody throws it.[92]

Once a stickthrower has conquered a "country" by marking so much space in the player's country that the player cannot remain in his country, the stickthrower becomes the final owner of that country, whereas the loser is out and this also marks the end of the game.

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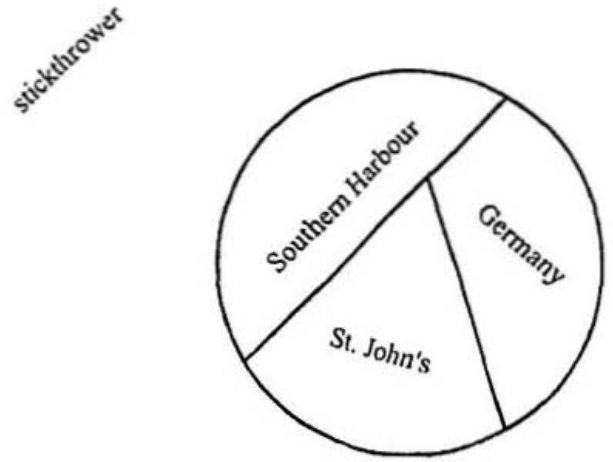
92 Tape-recorded play session 29 June 1987.



A world pattern for four players.

The children have a general interest to keep the game going, therefore the slices of land are moderate, because if too much land is taken the game would soon come to an end, and perhaps provide less satisfaction in terms of making a constructive contribution to the peergroup. The child can re-identify with a new "country" once they give up their role of the stickthrower and take over from the former owner of the land. Adapting to a "new ownership" of a "country" the child as the former stickthrower learns to test his/her social skill to switch between the

offensive role as a stickthrower to a rather defensive role as the new owner of the "country."

A game of world in front of the school in Southern Harbour.

Classification: World

The main features of the game are racing from a particular site, catching, and throwing an object. The stickthrower runs away from the pattern as far as possible: the further away, the less chance of being hit when the object is thrown at him/her. The other player, whose "country" has been called, runs in an opposite direction in order to catch the stick with his/her foot. The stick has usually landed on the ground by the time the player reaches it.

Physical skills in this game are displayed in two ways: the fast racing from the play pattern for both players currently in competition, and the ability to successfully hit the other player with the object. These two elements seem to be equally represented in the game, as the racing from the pattern determines the distance the object has to be thrown.

The game fits into the Opies' classification system under the heading of RACING GAMES, and in their subcategories it may be grouped under two headings: GAMES IN WHICH ONLY TWO COMPETITORS RUN AGAINST EACH OTHER AT A TIME, ONE OF THEM GENERALLY BEING INSTRUMENTAL IN THE SELECTION OF THE OTHER, and GAMES IN WHICH THE PLAYERS START RUNNING

FROM DIFFERENT PLACES.[93] Although strictly speaking, the two competitors in World do not measure their racing skills by running against each other in a parallel manner, they are racing from different places aiming to secure a section in the pattern, while the stickthrower wants to gain new territory and the other is defending his/her grounds.

Brian Sutton-Smith offers his category of GAMES OF SKILL in which World fits: although Sutton-Smith does not name such a game, or one of a similar nature, the game may be placed in this category under the two subheadings of RUNNING GAMES and THROWING GAMES.[94] In Caillois' terms, the game displays the features of AGÔN as the participants are racing to meet their goal, and ALEA, the element of chance when trying to hit the other player with the stick. Though Caillois places racing in the non-regulated way of playing under PAIDIA, I would place World closer to the LUDUS range since the game features tight rules to which the participants have to adhere.

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93 Opie, 195-206, 207-211.

94 Sutton-Smith, 152, 163, 196.

Ball Tag (Dodge Ball)[95]

The children form two equal sized groups. A variety of group combinations apply, either boys against girls, or children from one cove against children from another cove in the community, or mixed groups of boys and girls from either part of the community, depending on who is present. The children, however, stated that they prefer a game of boys against girls.

On one occasion I reached the children while a game was already in progress in Whiffen's Cove, where the children played the game most frequently. The children helped me to understand the rules:

> DMH: Can you explain this to me? How are the rules?
> Lisa: You got to hit under the head [that is not the head]. If you hits the head ...
> Nicole: First at the beginning [you throws stuff together] okay?
> DMH: Ya.
> Nicole: And then you gotta try to hit 'em, but you can't hit 'em in the head, because if you hits them in the head, it's not counted. But you usually has three chances, but see we are ... it's

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[95] I was not aware that this game actually represents a version of Dodge Ball, until I described it to Cynthia Boyd, a fellow folklorist who played it as a child in Stanstead, Québec, and in Newport, Vermont, where she used to go to school when she was between 9 and 13 years old. See also Sutton-Smith, 207.

boys against girls. We got twenty chances and they got three chances, but it's supposed to be even, like score, and whoever wins does ...
Rodney: We wins ...
Nicole: Sure
Rodney: We won five games.
Nicole: Ya, ya.
DMH: So you just count.
Nicole: Ya.
Dale: Ya. For us to hit them, they only gives us three.
Nicole: We gets twenty.
DMH: So, if you hit them twice, no three times, you won the game?
Dale: No, we gotta hit them twenty times.
DMH: Twenty times?
Dale: Ya, because they're girls. Cuz they're girls, we're better than them, see.
Rodney: But if, we're playin' right, each on each other, this is how you plays, then each one of us would have three chances, and once you're hit three times, then you're out.
DMH: Oh, ya.
Rodney: Unless they hit you in the head, then ye ain't out.
Dale: We has some others [rules].
DMH: What are these? [children giggle]
Lisa: If they loses, then ... [giggle].
Rodney: No, if we wins, we gets a chance to hit one of them on the arse with the ball.

[great roaring laughter]

Dale: Do you want us to demonstrate?
DMH: Sure.

[fully orchestrated screams and laughter by the children]

Nicole: But then we gets to hit one of ye.

[The children run after Nicole, catch her, pull her down in to the grass and bounce the ball on her bottom.][96]

Dale bounces the ball on Nicole's bottom. Rodney makes sure that she can't escape.

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96 Tape-recorded play session 7 July 1987.

The two groups crowd together somewhere on the field, which is marked by two fences, a pathway to a house, and a row of rocks with some tuckamore.

The person who currently holds the ball begins by throwing the ball at a player of the opposite team. Any member of either team can run for the ball, and whoever gets it throws it at a member of the opposite group. Once a player is hit by the ball, the opposite group members chase the player who tries to run away within the boundaries of the defined playground. When they catch him/her they pull him/her to the ground and turn him/her to lie on their belly. A team member of the opposite group smacks the ball onto the player's bottom. This is accompanied with a lot of screaming and laughter.

The player who then has just lost one of his/her three "lives" takes the ball and pursues the members of the opposite team. The player is out once s/he has lost his/her three "lives." During the game the girls frequently form a circle by putting their arms around each other's shoulders which looks like a football players' huddle. It remains unclear, however, whether the girls in their huddle actually worked out a strategy, although it seemed that the girls singled out a particular boy

after their consultations as a target to hit with the ball. The boys did not discuss nor apply such possible strategies.

The Ball Tag Players.

Classification: Ball Tag

In my understanding of the game as performed by the children of Southern Harbour, Ball Tag is a mixture of three different related games: Ball Tag, Three Lives, and Dodge Ball. The Opies group them under CHASING GAMES in their subcategory of TOUCH CONVEYED BY SUBSTITUTE OF HAND as "Ball He," "Three Lives," and "Kingy." They write:

> In 'Ball He' the ball becomes an extension of the chaser; he may run with it, throw it when he likes at whom he likes (or dislikes), and if he hits someone that person becomes the chaser; but if he misses he has the wearisome task of fetching the ball himself while the others run off to the other end of the playground.
>
> In 'Three Lives', which is a more civilized game than 'Ball He' and played principally in Scotland, no player is appointed chaser, and it is as if the ball itself was 'het'. Whoever is nearest the ball throws it at someone else, and whoever is hit by the ball below the thigh loses a 'life'.
>
> 'Kingy' is a ball game in which those who are not He have the ball hurled at them, without means of retaliation, and against ever-increasing odds, an element that obviously appeals to the national character. Anyone who is hit by the ball straightaway joins the He in trying to hit the rest of the players.[97]

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[97] Opie, 74-75, 95-96, 99.

Brian Sutton-Smith lists Ball Tag which is the equivalent of Ball He in the Opies' collection as a GAME OF SKILL under the subheading of RUNNING GAMES, which gives the game a more athletic touch, compared to the Opies' interpretation who emphasize the feature of the ball being the extension of the player in the game. Although not suggested by Brian Sutton-Smith the game may be filed in his classification CHASING GAMES as a TEAM-CHASING GAME as the game's features include two teams playing against each other, in which one team chases the other in the attempt to tag its members.

The game as played by the children in Southern Harbour does not quite fit either of the categorizations suggested above. In the application of Caillois' classification, the game generates competition among the players of the different teams. The game, accompanied with a lot of screams and laughter by the children, also carries moments of vertigo, particularly when a member of the opposite team is caught and pummelled with the ball on his/her bottom. AGÓN and ILINX are therefore the appropriate niches for the game with AGÓN being the stronger feature of the two. Ball Tag is a game with fairly strict rules with a notion of a sportive activity and may be placed halfway in the range between PAIDIA and LUDUS.

Catching Games

Monkey in the Middle[98]

Monkey in the Middle was another game frequently played by the children in the community between the ages of seven to thirteen. The game was played by girls and boys, but not by boys alone. It requires at least three players. I have seen it played in Southern Harbour with three to eight participants. The children used a ball.[99] Two players stand with one or more other players between them, with perhaps one to one and a half metres of space between the individual players. The two players on the outside throw the ball back and forth to each other, while the other(s) attempt to catch it. If a player catches the ball without dropping it on the ground, the ball thrower exchanges his/her place with the one who caught the ball. If played with more than one "monkey in the middle" and a player in the middle catches the ball, but accidentally

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[98] A version possibly related is printed in Fowke, 24, under the heading "Dodge Ball." The "Monkey's" role is somewhat reversed as s/he "dodges" the ball. Schier-Oberdorffer, *Tratzball*, 77.

[99] A fellow folklore student at Memorial University, Cynthia Boyd, told me that she used to play Monkey in the Middle with only three people, but using either a ball or a frisbee.

drops it, the other "monkeys" are entitled to it. Whoever last holds the ball exchanges places with the outside player who threw the ball.

The two players on the outside employ various techniques to pass the ball to each other. They threw over the other(s) in the middle, past their side, or bounced the ball beside their feet, especially when the other(s) did not expect such a move. The ball, was never thrown too high, or too far to the side, but always within reach of the other(s) in the middle.

When I observed the game on many occasions, I noted that the children always used a play area that had some distinct markings on the ground, such as the edge of the pavement adjacent to the gravel on the roadside, or with a fence between them and the other players as shown in the picture below.

Monkey in the Middle

Nevertheless, I never saw the children deliberately mark boundary lines precisely with an object or draw a line with a piece of slate onto the pavement or into the gravel as they would have in the hopping games. I never saw the two players in the outside position try to snatch the ball from the other(s) in the middle while it was thrown, once the ball was

clearly bound to land within the inside space of the "imaginary" boundary lines. The monkey(s) in the middle also did not attempt to snag the ball from those positioned on the outside once the ball bounced beyond their inside space.

Classification: Monkey in the Middle

Monkey in the Middle is characterized by two major features: it is a game in which the participants compete with one another by displaying their ability to catch a ball, or another suitable object without letting the player in the middle, the "monkey," catch it. In addition, the ball has to be thrown in a manner that the "monkey" would be able to snatch it before the opposite player, standing behind the "monkey" in his/her role to catch the ball, is able to catch it. From most of my observations, the children compete to become a player on the outside rather than the monkey.

If a low odd number of players — for example three — are playing with each other, each player competes with the other two to take up a position on the outside. The level of competition shifts if there are more

than three players involved in the game. It shifts from an individual-oriented competition to a team-oriented competition as the players in pairs have a tendency to take sides with players who are in the same position in the game. Thus the "monkeys in the middle" want to get themselves into the position of the outside players; they try to make sure that the ball is caught by either one of them, which then allows the "monkey" who caught the ball to take the outside position. The monkey remaining in the middle then attempts to catch the ball before the other "monkey" as s/he belongs to the other "team." Likewise, the team member on the outside throws the ball into a favourable spot for his/her team member to have easy access to the ball, and if caught enables him/her to join the other in the outside position.

If a higher even number of players, such as six or eight, play Monkey in the Middle, the children have a tendency to compete in teams, in pairs of monkeys against each other, whereas a higher odd number of players causes the children again to compete on an individual level.

The Opies do not include ball games, nor games with an object as an example for the display of physical skills under CATCHING GAMES. But

if one allows the object — here a ball — to be interpreted as an extension of the player then one might group this game so. In Sutton-Sm. ı's classification the game classifies as THROWING GAME under GAMES OF SKILL (K). In terms of Caillois' classification system the game can clearly be identified as AGÓN, as its major feature is that of competition between individuals or teams. In the way the game is played it can be characterized as Ludus, as it is played within a fixed frame of rules.

Alligators[100]

This game has many parallel features to what I played in my own childhood, *Ochs vorm Berg*, and to a game called Colours.[101] The children of Southern Harbour play this game on a ground that has easily distinguishable boundaries on all four sides like a fence, a parked car, or the edge of the road. One person becomes the first "Alligator" by calling out, or by counting out. The Alligator remains in the middle of the play area, whereas the other participants go to one end of the ground.

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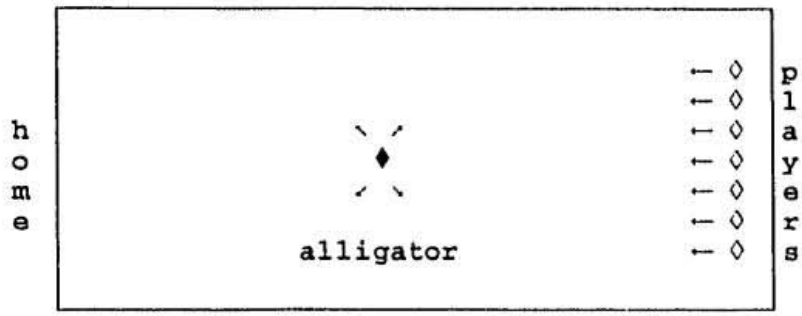
100 Cf. Opie "Colours," 80, 191-192.

101 See my description in footnote 110 page 165 for *Ochs vorm Berg*, and footnote 100 page 155 for Colours.



A general Alligator play area.

The children have the task of reaching the other end of the ground, representing "home," without being caught by the Alligator. They are only allowed to move forward; the Alligator can move in all directions. The Alligator chooses a colour which s/he can detect on the clothes of one or more of the other participants. The person(s) who bear(s) the colour runs toward "home" trying not to be caught by the Alligator. If caught before reaching "home" that person becomes the new Alligator.[102]

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[102] Brewster, Wolf Over the Ridge 53, Pom Pom Pullaway 76; Bronner, Pom Pom 180. From my own childhood in Fulda, Germany I remember playing the game in the winter on the ice of a pond. We called it *Schwarzer Mann*, which translates as "black man." We chose to determine the first *schwarzen Mann* by racing from one end of the pond to the other, and whoever was last became the *schwarze Mann*. The *schwarze Mann* and the other players were positioned on the opposite sides of the pond. The *schwarze Mann* then called out: *"Wer hat Angst vom schwarzen Mann?"* [Who's afraid of the black man?] whereupon the crowd on the other side, in a chorus, answered: *"Niemand!"* [Nobody!] The *schwarze Mann* then replied: *"Und wenn er kommt?"* [And if he 's coming?], and the others responded: *"Dann kommt er halt!"* [Well, then he comes!]. At the same time they start moving toward the other side of the pond against the path

It seems that there are several of such games which are alike. The Opies list two games under their sections "Chasing Games" and "Racing Games" under the name of "Colours." As a chasing game, "Colours" applies the opposite conditions. The Opies note:

> Whoever is appointed chaser names a colour that will give immunity while he is chasing; and those players who are not wearing the colour, and cannot see any of it, have no alternative but to keep running ....[103]

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of the *schwarzen Mannes*. Whoever was tagged by the *schwarzen Mann* became an additional *schwarzer Mann* and had to join the other in the next round of the game. The game went on until there was only one person left, who then became the *schwarzer Mann* in the next course of the game. The game was mainly enjoyed by us children, but on many occasions it involved everybody who was on the ice at the time of the game, adult or child. Since we usually used the entire ice area for the game, nobody had a chance to escape. A person skating about in the middle of our playing area (the entire pond) was touched by the *schwarzen Mann* or the *schwarzen Männern*, and therefore had no choice but to join the game. Being on skates on the ice, of course, the game was a very fast one. With reference to *Schwarzer Mann* cf. Opie 130-131. The game was also collected in two versions by Rasmussen among the Inuit of Igloolik as *amarit'jartut*: the wolf game" 244-245 which clearly resembles *schwarzer Mann*, and *una'ja'mEq* which continues as *amarit'jartut*: "the wolf game" 246. Although the game *Schwarzer Mann* or any related version thereof is not mentioned by Mac E. Barrick, the compiler and editor provides a number of children's games collected among the German-Americans in the Pennsylvania regions, see Mac E. Barrick, German-American Folklore (Little Rock: August House, 1987) 124-138.

[103] Opie, 80; cf. Fowke "Fishy Fisher," 38-39.

In "Alligators" multiple or single players who bear a particular colour are being chased by the Alligator. The other game similar to "Alligators" in Southern Harbour is a "Racing Game" in the Opies:

> The child in front calls out a colour, and those who have it 'on their body or on their clothes' take a step forward.[104]

Classification: Alligators

Alligators fits into the category of CATCHING GAMES in the Opies' classification system, although it is characterized by many features of a chasing game. The Opies distinguish between the two by saying that

> the runners' chief object is usually to reach a designated place, or accomplish a particular mission, rather than keep out of the chaser's reach.[105]

The players' aim to reach the homebase seems to be the foremost goal for the participants, although the Alligator's aim is to catch one or more persons in order to determine the next catcher which makes this a

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104 Opie, 192.

105 Opie, 124.

CHASING GAME in the Opies' definition. The Alligator's movements are not restricted as s/he is allowed to move in all directions, whereas the other players only move in one direction. It is therefore easier for 'it' to intercept the other players rather than chasing after them if they were to run freely. Brian Sutton-Smith does not make such fine distinctions as the Opies do within CHASING GAMES, and the game as played in Southern Harbour has to be categorized under his broad category of CHASING GAMES. My own tendency, however, because of the close resemblance in its features to a version of Tag, would be to group the game under CATCHING GAMES based on the Opies' definition.

Alligators is a game characterized by chance and competition. It seems to be a game that is highly organized, compared to others I observed in the community. The element of chance in this game is even higher compared to, for example, Frozen Tag. The selection of a colour on the players' clothes as a criterion of being the subject of the pursuit, is a decision made randomly by the "Alligator." The chance of being chased by the "Alligator" increases if fewer players are involved who bear the same coloured clothes; it decreases for the individual player, if more players wear the same coloured clothes. Competition arises between players who carry the same colour on their clothes as they have to

compete with their counterparts while racing to the homebase. Thus, it places the game in Caillois' terms under AGON and ALEA, and by its tighter restrictions on the movements of players, plus the selection criterion of which players are to be chased, it moves closer to the LUDUS end of the range.

Racing Games

Mother May I?[106]

Mother May I? requires more than two players. The children in Southern Harbour played it with three to five participants at various occasions. A mother is selected, by calling "I'm the mother." Danette and Ruby explain:

> DMH: And there's another game, too, what is that ... Mother May I? Can you remember?
> Danette and Ruby: Ya, ya.
> DHM: Okay, how do you do that?
> Danette: Well, you get down there ... someone is the mother.

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[106] Lelah Allison, "Children's Games in Egypt," Buying the Wind, ed. Richard Dorson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964) 371-372. Brewster, Steps 164; Bronner, 181-182; Fowke, 55-56; Opie, 187-190. Knapp, 53. Sutton-Smith, 68-69, 212. In the version he collected the players and not the mother request to take a certain type of step. Douglas, London Street Games mentions the game, but does not give a description, 21.

DMH: Who is the mother?
Ruby: I be.
Others: Uhh!

[Mrs Gambin, the mother of the children, present at the time, helps out.]

Mrs Gambin: And they tell them to do certain...
Danette: And if they states, well then, and if I catches them sneaking up try to catch me, well then they get second times around.

[In the following the children depart on a game of Mother May I?]

Mother May I?

As in the game of Spotlight (B) the children determine a space to play in with two boundaries, such as the wall of a house, the curb of the road, or a fence. The person who is the designated mother stands opposite his/her friends in the game. All the others have lined up beside each other. The mother turns around facing in the same direction as the other players. Then she orders a person to make a step in a particular fashion, such as one giant step, or two big steps, five baby steps, a bunny hop *et cetera*, and turns around. The only person who is allowed to move at that moment is the one who has been addressed by the mother. If the addressed person forgets to respond to the mother by saying "Mother May I?" then the person has to go back to the beginning. Similarly, any person who is caught moving in any manner while the mother is facing them, and caught making a movement of any kind, that person, too, has to return to the beginning. Once the mother has turned her back toward the players any player is allowed to move forward. However, if caught in the process by the mother, as the mother can turn around to face the other players at any time, that player has to go back to the beginning, and start over again. If a person is able to sneak up to the mother and touch her without being caught, then that person becomes the new mother in the game.

Iona and Peter Opie's account of the game shows extremely close resemblance to what I collected in Southern Harbour. They also describe a large variety of different steps from various regions in the British Isles, that are applied by 'it' for the advancement of the players.[107]

Spotlight (B)[108]

I collected the daytime version of Spotlight (B) from a different group of children in the Bottom area from those who performed Witch in the Well for me. The version of Spotlight they performed resembled a game of Mother May I? and had nothing to do with Hide and Seek. My informants explain:

> Theresa: Alla we're playing another game.
> Michalla: Wha'?

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[107] Opie, 187-190.

[108] Brewster, Red Light, 35, makes reference to *Ochs am Berg* as a version of the game from Switzerland, see footnote 110 on page 165 for a description of the game as it was played in my own childhood. Bronner, Red Light 182; Fowke, Red Light Green Light 54-55. Knapp, 53. The Opies recorded it under "Peep behind the Curtain" 192, and as "Red Light" in versions from various places in England and from Edmonton, Alberta. They make further reference to *Ochs vom Berg, der Hase läuft über das Feld* [the rabbit runs across the field], and *Küche-Zimmer-Kabinett* [kitchen-room-toilet] as names for the game in Austria, and quote it as *Eins zwei drei—sauer Hering* [one two three—pickled herring] as a version from Berlin, Germany from Reinhard Peesch's collection Das Berliner Kinderspiel der Gegenwart (Berlin: Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1957) 32. Sutton-Smith refers to the game as "Creeping Up (D6)," 69-70.

> Ruby: Spotlight?
> Theresa: Spotlight, okay.
> DMH: How do you play it, Theresa?
> Theresa: You go on and on until somebody says ... when you says green light you go. And you says red, so you won't catch up to them. And you touch and then you're gonna be the spotlight.
> Gayle interrupts: No we're not playing that, let's play colours?
> Theresa: So, like, the person has to count to ten. And he turns around and the other person's movin'. While they, got to count to ten. You gotta move when you turn the back to them. Right.
> DMH: Ya?

[The children demonstrate one round of the game for me.]

> Theresa: So, Ruby saw me that time, and I had to be there.
> Ruby: But that's not the real way you plays it. If ... when ... you gotta go back, but there are not enough people here to play with, the other person would be there all day at it.[109]

In this game of Spotlight (B) the children line up beside each other at a previously defined marker, such as a pathway leading into a house or yard, or the wall of a house. The 'it' turns his/her back to the other participants, shouts "green light" and quietly counts to ten. Meanwhile the other players move toward 'it', the "spotlight," until the 'it' shouts "red light" indicating that all movement toward 'it' has to come to a halt.

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[109] Tape-recorded play session, 3 July 1987.

'It' turns around quickly, and any participant caught moving has to return to the beginning line. Once 'it' is reached by one of the players while his or her back is turned while counting to ten, s/he becomes the new spotlight. The children engage in a game of Spotlight with little dialogue, except the odd, "I saw you, go back."[110]

Classification: Mother May I? and Spotlight (B)[111]

These two games can be placed under RACING GAMES in the Opies' understanding. Both games are a very organized form of race, compared

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[110] Bronner, 182; Brewster, 35-36, names this game "Red Light" and points to a Swiss version called *Ochs vorn Berg*. This game was known under the same name *Ochs am Berg* in my hometown area in Fulda, Germany. The exchange of the preposition from *vorn* to *am* is due to the regional dialect in this area. In the English language both German prepositions have the same meaning. In German it indicates a location and therefore a Dative case is required. *Ochs vorn/ am Berg* translates as "Ox in front of a mountain or hill." The game was played with more than eight pe ·ple. The more participants we had as children, the more of a challenge it was for the *Ochs* to discover a moving participant. We played the game between the walls of two houses, and the *Ochs* had to stand one to two metres in front of the wall. In our version of the game the *Ochs* had to be passed by and the wall had to be touched before the *Ochs* was able to catch the one participant trying to reach the wall in order to become the new *Ochs*. If the *Ochs* had caught the participant, s/he had to move back to the other wall and start over. The role of the *Ochs* was a prestigious position, as one had to be either very fast to reach the wall before getting caught by the *Ochs*, or had to have been very good at standing completely frozen once the *Ochs* had turned around. Having been caught moving by the *Ochs* would have made one feel ashamed as one had to pass by all the others to go back to the beginning line.

[111] See page 160 for Mother may I? and 163, 165 for a description.

to any other form of racing or running from one place to another. In Mother May I? the children's movements are controlled by a central figure, the mother, who allows them to take a certain amount or quality of steps, before they reach her, tag her, and exchange the role for another round of the game. Mother May I? clearly represents the more elaborated form of the game compared to Spotlight (B). In Spotlight (B) the movements forward toward the "Spotlight" are only controlled by a time factor, between the announcement of "green light" when the children move forward and "red light" when they have to stop before their movements are detected by the leader of the game. The player in Mother May I? on the other hand, has to adhere to a specific question and answering scheme before a step forward is granted.

In Mother May I? the movements of the other players are tightly controlled by the authority in the game, the mother figure, which led Brian Sutton-Smith to place this game under LEADER GAMES in his categories. Spotlight (B) can be considered a simplified version of Mother May I? as it offers the same features: a group of children racing, in slow motion, toward another person in order to seek the exchange of a central leading figure.

The elements of chance in both games are equally represented in Mother May I? and Spotlight (B), as the children take the risk of being detected by the leader figure while they attempt to gain ground in their approach toward the leader when the leader who is facing the other direction, suddenly turns around. Although, in Spotlight (B), the leader counts to ten while not facing the other players, one may assume that the children approaching the leader, count along in order to better estimate the time frame in order to sneak up on the leader and therefore decrease the chances of being detected moving toward the leader. This is, however, not the case, as the element of chance in being detected is increased by the leader as s/he changes his/her speed of counting to ten.

The competitive factor is somewhat different in both versions. Competition exists in both games as the players race to be the first to reach the leader figure, which in Spotlight (B) depends solely on the amount of space covered in the leader's direction. The competition among the players in Mother May I, however, can be more controlled by the leader as the leader determines the type of steps to be taken. Once a player in the approach to the leader had been granted, for example, a "giant step" forward, perhaps placing him/her in front of the others, the

leader would then not grant another major step forward to that player but would tame the player by just allowing a "baby step."

The children applied a tactic to counteract the leader's decision on the quality of steps when they felt treated unequally by the leader, or when they were granted only minor steps forward once the leader had detected that they had moved further ahead of the others during the time in which s/he faced the other direction, or by the granting of a certain type of step as a form of favour for a particular playmate. It was noted by an informant of Brian Sutton-Smith that "A person who favours is only allowed to favour once."[112] Although this phenomenon was not articulated by my informants, I observed the children practising the tactic. The player who felt disadvantaged then did not move forward or only covered a very small amount of ground to still remain behind the others. This gave the leader the impression that the player had not moved forward as much as the others, and for the reason of fairness allowed the disadvantaged player to catch up with the others. Thus, the application of these tactics offered the children another stage for their competition.

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112 Sutton-Smith, 69.

In summary, Mother May I? and Spotlight (B) qualify as AGÔN and ALEA in Caillois' terms. The element of having a leader figure creates a certain power position for the mother or the spotlight, a notion of MIMICRY may therefore be added. The game progresses according to the way the rules are administered by the leader figure. Thus, I tend to place both games in the range closer to LUDUS and away from PAIDIA. Between the two, Mother May I? ranges closer to LUDUS than Spotlight (B), as the progression of the players, based on the decision making of the leader figure is much more controlled than in Spotlight (B).

Play Activities

The play activities discussed below occurred less frequently in Southern Harbour, and generally seemed to be less structured by figures of speech and movements. These games allowed for more creativity and were much more flexible with regard to their rules.

Jack's Pond Provincial Park

One Sunday afternoon in July I was invited by the children to join them at the Jack's Pond Provincial Park for swimming. The park is situated halfway between Arnold's Cove and Southern Harbour and is accessible in two ways from the community. One way to get there is to drive via the Trans Canada Highway. The other is to walk along the road approximately three quarters of the way to the highway and then follow a pathway through the woods to the park.

The children had mentioned the park many times before, and that they would go there "all the time," which of course made me quite curious as I wanted to see what kinds of activity they would take up in a context different from their regular play areas in the community.

One Saturday evening a group of neighbouring children came to visit me at the my hosts' place to ask me to go swimming with them the following day at Jack's Pond. They were happy when I agreed, and they promised to meet me the next day so that they could show me the way.

The children met me as they had promised and we walked along the road. Another two groups of children from different areas in the community were ahead of us, and many families in cars passed us headed to the same destination. We followed the road until we passed the new cemetery where we walked off the road onto the pathway through the woods. The pathway seemed to be well travelled. The children stopped once in a while to pick wild strawberries along the path way, and to my surprise when we arrived at the pond, I found that most of the parent generation and their very young children had grouped themselves in a way that replicated their neighbourhoods in the community. I had observed almost the same grouping on an earlier occasion at the bingo hall.

Most of the children were engaged in some activity in the water or close to it on the gravel beach, whereas the parents were perched up higher on the grassy area above the beach. I was able to discover only

one game which I had seen the children perform in the community before. The children played Last Touch in the water and on the beach without referring to any homebase.[113] This was the only game activity I observed. The children were mainly occupied with chasing, splashing, and pushing each other around in the water. Some of the boys engaged in what resembled a game of Cowboys and Indians. There was no grouping as such, but rather a 'wild shooting' of anybody that moved in the water. After being 'shot' the victim then fell into the water with a twitch of his body. Some of the girls tended to less 'violent' activities by busying themselves with supervising their younger siblings in the water or on the beach.

Another group of children prepared a plastic bag filled with gravel from the beach. In the shallow parts, they threw it in the water and dove after it to retrieve it from the bottom of the pond. Some children dove toward each other in the attempt to meet each other under the surface, while others raced from the beach into the water until they fell over in the water.[114]

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[113] See "Last Touch," page 129.

[114] Fowke describes a game of "Jaws," and "Marco Polo' as adapted versions of Tag played in swimming pools 33-34. "Marco Polo" is also reported by Bronner, 179. Knapp 52. Neither of these games was observed in Southern Harbour.

A classification in the sense of the Opies, Sutton-Smith, and Caillois in this case would not be fruitful to draw any conclusions, because of the wide variety of snippets of activities exercised by the children on the beach and in the water. Last Touch has been discussed before, the Cowboy and Indians "shooting" activity may well placed under Pretending-Imitative Games, and the diving after the plastic bags full of gravel carries competitive elements which would place this activity as AGÔN in the PAIDIA range in Caillois' system.

I found it more interesting to see the community's divisions reflected in the park. The children on the beach grouped themselves in their usual playgroups, but in the water I noticed the boundaries became obsolete; every child engaged in one of the water activities with whoever was close by, which was very much like that before school when the children engaged in rounds of Last Touch.

The beach is laid out half-moon shaped, which makes it easily surveyed by those present. Not only the children, but also their parents grouped themselves by their neighbourhoods in the community. It seemed that the living and socialising structure of the community had been transplanted to the beach at Jack's Pond with the only difference

being that everyone was simultaneously visible to the other, whereas in the community, because of various physical features, only the closer vicinity of an area could be monitored. Thus, it perhaps makes the group identity even more evident than in the community itself.

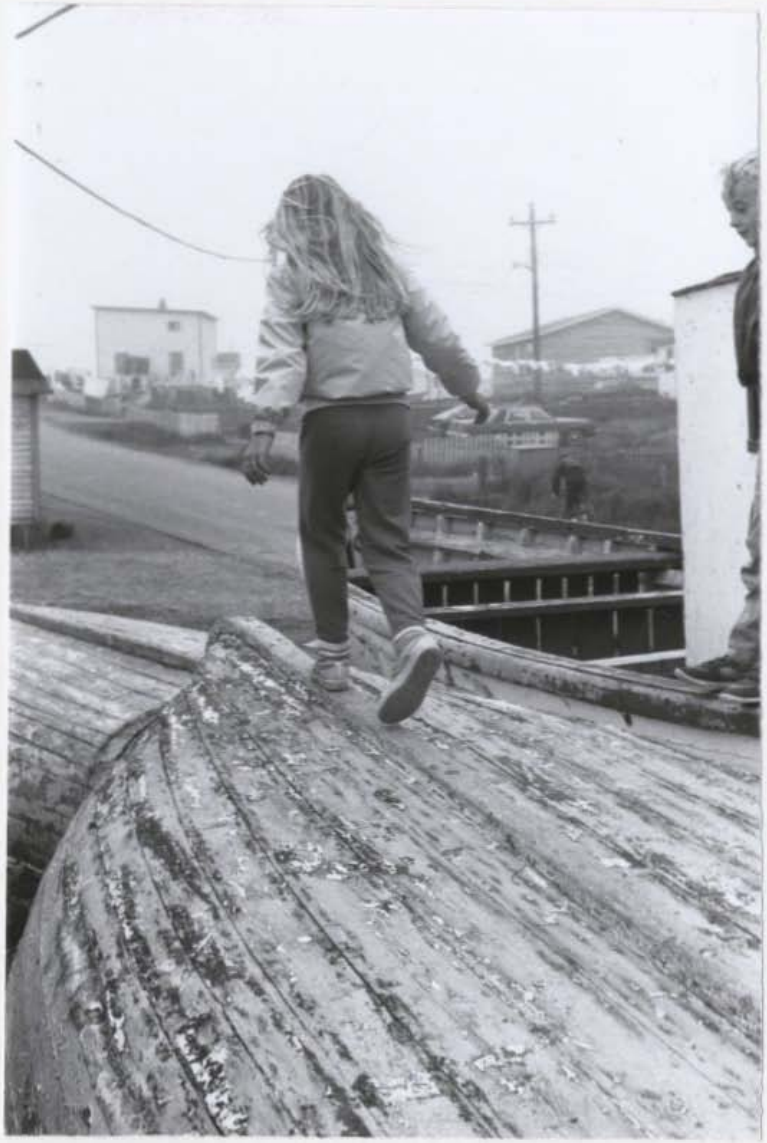
Balance

This game was invented by four of my informants, Anne-Marie, her brother Dennis, Sheldon and his brother Kenny who lived in the vicinity of my hosts' place. The upside down boat serves as the children's major play object. The three participants in this case make it their task first to balance on the keel of the boat, walking forward and then backward. As a second, more difficult task the children hop along on the keel on one leg, then on the other, again going forward and then backward. At the end of each round at the stern of the boat each participant jumps into the gravel onto the beach past a line scratched with a stick or their feet into the ground.

Each participant is carefully monitored by the others to see if the current player makes a mistake, such as getting out of balance and

touching the hull of the boat with their foot while walking or hopping forward or backward, or touching the keel or the hull with their other foot while hopping along.

Dennis hops forward on one leg across the keel of the boat.



Anne-Marie walks backwards across the keel of the boat.

The final moment in a round of Balance: Anne-Marie jumps of the boat.

After having jumped off the boat the participants continue to walk, run, or sometimes return to their starting position at the bow of the

overturned boat. This, however, was not a condition for successfully completing a round of the game. If the participant made a mistake while moving across the keel of the boat or by not jumping beyond the line in the gravel the participant had to begin another round until it was flawlessly accomplished.

Classification: Balance

Balance, the activity invented by the peer group who performed it across the road from my host's place, using the upside down boat, shows strong elements of competition and chance based on the dexterity displayed by the participants. The Opies do not provide a suitable categorization for this kind of activity; Brian Sutton-Smith being more general in his categorizations leaves room under GAMES OF SKILL (K), in which the activity fits into two subcategories: HOPPING GAMES and JUMPING GAMES. Sutton-Smith applies HOPPING GAMES to Hopscotch, Skipping and the like.

Balance can be placed in this subcategory, because balancing over the keel of the upside down boat requires similar skills by the player as

s/he attempts to master the course without slipping off the "boundary line" which defines the space available to the player to move in. Stepping outside the edges of the keel, thus representing making a mistake, would cause the player to await a new round of the activity until it is his/her turn again. For example, such a mistake is treated similarly to the way it is in a game of Hopscotch, although in a reversed sense as the player has to perform his action *on* the "boundary line" without slipping off onto the hull, whereas in Hopscotch the player must not touch the boundary between the blocks. The game turns into a JUMPING GAME as at the end of the course when the player jumps off the stern of the boat onto the gravel s/he is required to pass a marked line.

Elements of competition and chance as in Caillois classification system are the major features in the activity and therefore admit Balance as a combination of AGÔN and ALEA. AGÔN is evidenced by the display of the individual participant's dexterity. A mistake would cause the participant to let all the other players take their turn before s/he could continue, and therefore allow the others to move ahead toward the more difficult tasks in the course of the activity. The notion of ALEA is justified by the high possibility for the player of slipping off the narrow keel, in particular in the later phases of the activity when the course has to be

performed by walking, and in particular, hopping on one leg backwards, which also adds a touch of vertigo to the game. Conditions and rules that are self set and controlled by the players allow Balance to be placed in the LUDUS range of Caillois' system.

Pretending-Imitating Games

Hospital[115]

The scene was set in my host's neighbouring garden. The yard, surrounded by a fence, reaches from the road about fifty metres to the house that is set back to a tuckamore covered ridge. Adjacent to the house is a shack where fishing gear is kept and which also serves as a workshop for the owner. Of course, it also serves as a space the children use for their play.

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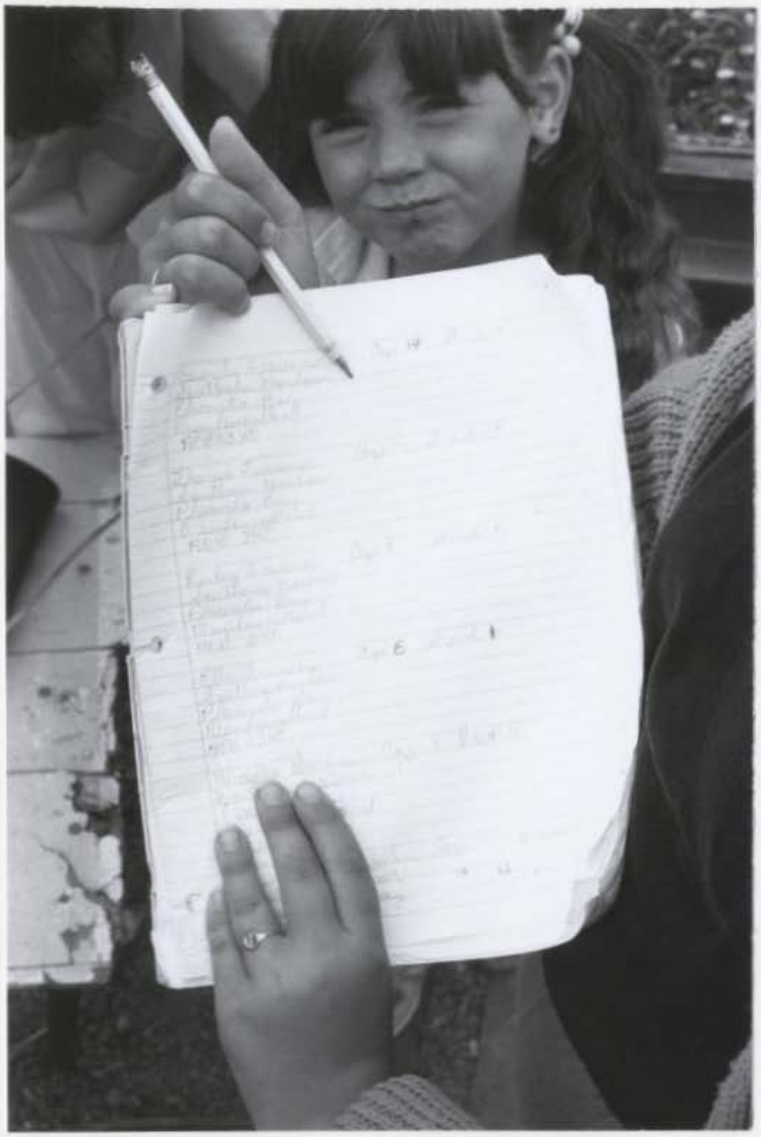
[115] Opie, 334-335.



The patient's record.

Danette, Ruby, Gaile and Michalla involved themselves playing Hospital. Danette, the oldest of the four children assumed the role of the

headnurse, while the others acted in the roles of other nurses, sometimes taking on a double role as a doctor.

The children started off their play by performing tasks which one would find in a day to day routine on the ward of a hospital. The nurses walked off to check the temperature of patients, assigning rooms to new patients, calling up patients to come to the hospital for check-ups and administration of drugs, and advising them of recreational activities such as swimming.

The nurses quite frequently returned to the headnurse to report on their duties, greeted by the nurse with a formulaic "who are you working on" and after listening to the nurse's report gave some advice to how to treat the patient next. The headnurse also arranged for the shift work, as she discussed her employees' working schedules with her nurses. The children used the entire yard for their play, including the workshop, which served as one of the wards, and the front stairs of the house which represented the headnurse's quarters.

Danette, the head nurse, gives instructions to Ruby, one of the staff nurses.

Toward the end of their Hospital session the children departed from their daily routine at the hospital and created a suspense action. A group of false doctors attempted to get into the hospital and give the patients harmful pills. The children did not enact the roles of the false doctors; they were simply an off-stage threat. The children, however,

switched their roles from nurses to undercover policemen dressed as nurses.

A meeting at the head nurse quarter.

The hospital session was the longest I observed and recorded. It took about forty five minutes until the children's play came to a halt as they were called in by their mother for supper. The hospital session was

also the most difficult for me to observe and record as the action took place in the large space of the yard. I saw the children perform hospital only once; they also told me that they do not play it very often.

Classification: Hospital

The children pretend to be characters in a scene they set themselves. My informants re-enact their hospital play very much in the way it can be seen on television on "General Hospital," one of the daily broadcast soap-operas. The children do not adapt to particular names of as provided in the tv-series, but imitate the hierarchy as provided from television. One may also argue that their role-playing originates in their own experiences, as two of the informants have been to the nearby hospital in Clarenville visiting relatives, and therefore reflect this in the children's game. With a visit to the hospital in reality, the children would only see their relative, but not come to grips with the actual hierarchy as it is displayed to them in the tv-show. Thus, the pretending game of hospital can clearly be identified as a direct re-enactment of the soap-opera, which come to light particularly when the children assume that

false doctors are causing harm to the patients in their imaginary hospital.

Undoubtedly this game with all its make-believe features identifies as a PRETENDING GAME in the Opie classification system and under INFORMAL GAMES (C) in Sutton-Smith's system. In Caillois' system Hospital as a form of MIMICRY is placed in the PAIDIA range as no set dialogues determine the course of the children's play.

Wrestlemania

This activity occurred sporadically, and mainly among boys when not engaged in any other game, although I have observed girls join in once the boys were already wrestling on the ground. The girls clarify:

> DMH: Do you play wrestling at all?
> Linda: No.
> DMH: Something for the boys ... do you play wrestling?
> Bradley: We rampse.[116]

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[116] DNE, 417: "to romp or wrestle."

A "knot" of wrestlers.

While mingling about one boy with a grunt attempts to pull another to the ground by either slamming into him or coming up from behind. With no delay the two boys are wrestling on the ground, and in

most cases they are joined by others, so that one sometimes sees three to four boys tight in a knot with arms, legs and heads sticking out in the most acrobatic positions.

Other bystanding children watch the ongoing activity from a safe distance and cheer the ones wrestling on the ground. The wrestling boys do not visibly imitate any of the wrestling matches they see on video or on a cable television station, although once in a while I saw them trying to hold their counterpart in a head lock. Once one of the boys considers himself a winner or the other on the bottom succumbs, the winner lets him go and makes an honorary round posing with his arms up in the air showing off his muscles among the others, a behaviour which he clearly imitates from the media. At other occasions the children referred to the activity as "Kung Fu" or "Rampling."

Classification: Wrestlemania

Wrestlemania as an activity is not to be confused with wrestling as an athletic discipline. Instead of imitating a type of sport, the children of Southern Harbour re-enacted a series of videos called "Wrestlemania"

that had just hit "Leonard's," one of the local video outlets in the community. At a later date Tim Conway of Video Inc. in St. John's, told me more about the videos over the phone:

> Tim Conway: They first came out in 1985, and you have about one movie every year.
> DMH:: Who produces them, could you look it up, do you have one in the store?
> Tim Conway: They're made by Colosseum Video, they belong to the World Wrestling Federation.
> DMH: Is it real wrestling?
> Tim Conway: No, it's prerehearsed shows for the audience's benefit. When it first came out in eighty five ... it peaked three or four years ago, and Hulk Hogan, was the most popular guy, and he developed a following. He had a figure good for whole professional wrestling, you know he was a big fat guy who used to work in a bank in Florida, I guess he figured he could make more money that way. He wasn't very athletic, more like a body builder kinda guy. The WWF [World Wrestling Federation] got into bodybuilder guys, weightlifters, gymnasts, and lesser known athletes. But a lot of athletic work goes into it, to do what they do. There's a lot of wrestling fans on the go, lot of guys, even kids follow this stuff fairly religiously. It is more of a commercial entity than ever. They have lunch cans, back packs, figures ... it's marketed very well, live action cartoons. It's like good guys bad guys, black and white stuff, so melodramatic and replaces the cowboy and indians stuff. Wrestling fans would get worked up about the real matches ... it's now broadcast by satellite, all over North America. Here in the stadium they have a big screen set up, you pay something like $ 20 and see it, that happened in the last three years.

As previously mentioned, it was an activity that occurred sporadically, especially among boys, as interludes between other play or game activities.

With reference to various athletic events in his definition of MIMICRY, Caillois remarks that:

> Great sports events are nevertheless special occasions for *mimicry*, but it must be recalled that the simulation is now transferred from the participants to the audience. It is not the athletes who mimic, but the spectators.
> .....
> In a word, these are dramas whose vicissitudes keep the public breathless, and lead to denouements which exalt some and depress others.[117]

In the same context Caillois mentions that among others, wrestling matches are one of the activities whose nature is that of AGÓN. In the case of Southern Harbour, it is clear that the children are not imitating actual wrestling matches, but the characters they know from the videos. The children display these competitive elements by showing off their strength in front of the others when wrestling on the grass. The children

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[117] Caillois, 22.

are, however, conscious about the imitative nature of their performance which became evident in particular when some of the younger and weaker boys challenged older or stronger boys. The stronger ones then wrestled less vehemently, and let the weaker ones go once asked to do so by the ones below them or by other children watching.

Justin poses after he won the wrestling match.

Still, the "winner" lived up to his calibre by posing in front of the others in the tv-fashion, as one of my informants, Justin, demonstrates in the photograph above.

In Caillois' terms the activity fits into his categories of MIMICRY and AGON, and its agitative and rather tumultuous nature allows it to be placed in the PAIDIA range. Brian Sutton-Smith does not have a category that clearly fits the activity, however his category of TEASING ACTIVITY (H), would accept Wrestlemania, as he includes physical tricks and the children's playful expression of their feelings of aggression, which is evident in this activity.[118] The Opies provide EXERTING GAMES, which is a suitable category for Wrestlemania as they define it as "Games in which the qualities of most account are physical strength and stamina." Wrestlemania also fits their category of PRETENDING GAMES, as the children make-believe that they are wrestlers as learned from watching the above mentioned video series.

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[118] Sutton-Smith, 122.

The Play and Game Activities and Community Values

There was no direct evidence about community values from the contents of the play and game activities of the children, but I may draw some conclusions from the procedures applied by the children while playing.

In my attempt to understand the transmission of knowledge I have distinguished between horizontal and vertical means of transmission. The conveyance between adult and child is understood as vertical, whereas the transfer of knowledge among children is considered to be horizontal in nature. Further distinction may be made among the children with reference to the dissemination of games. Once a child has mastered a particular game s/he will most likely pass it on to another playmate by integrating the other child into the process of a game as evidenced in the transcript of Foxy Foxy on page 97, 221.

While a child teaches another, his/her own knowledge is reinforced and acknowledged. The playmate who is at the receiving end learns by the demonstration of the game and the assistance of his/her friends while being involved in the game. S/he learns that there are

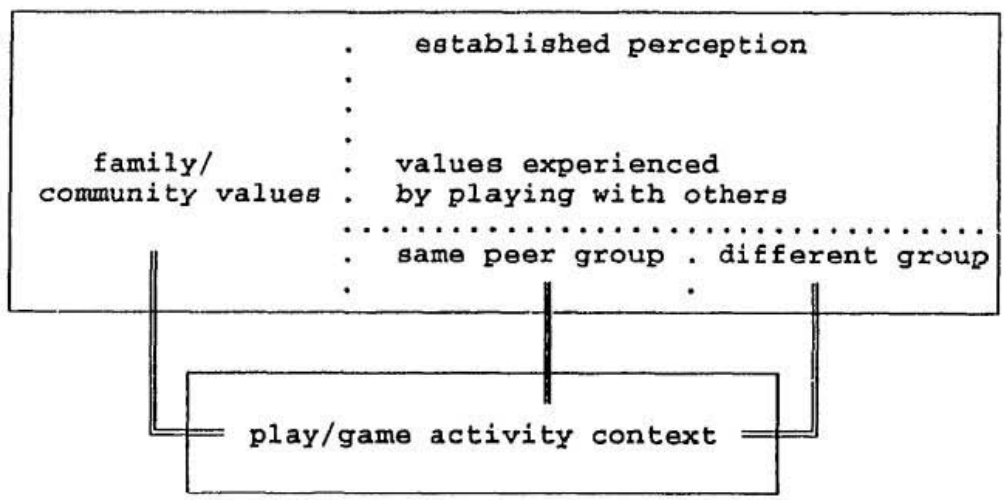
particular rules to adhere to, that there is a particular set of phrases to be recited, which will cause a certain action or movement to be performed in order to successfully reach the denouement of the game including particular values, which are laid out in the structure of the game. If a child that is playing with his/her playmates does not accept these indicators and rules of conduct to forward the action, the child is usually corrected by his/her other playmates. The correction may occur in the form of protest by the others, as in Balance on page 174.

In addition, a game provides its own mechanisms to correct another player, for example, in a game of Hopscotch, which is governed by rules that are strictly monitored by the other children. Any misconduct, or attempt at cheating, or just a plain simple mistake requires the player to stop and pick up at the point where s/he has left off in the previous round of the game. Any competitiveness stays within the realms of fairness, no one is completely out done, neither is there any foul play, which is considered to be unacceptable, and if it occurs it is immediately corrected by the other participants. This also represents a learning process for the children as they can test among each other the rules of conduct that are common and accepted in their community.

Similar rules of conduct are applicable in the macrocosm of the community the child is raised in. In as much as rules represent the highest form of conduct in a game, they are in as much the highest form of conduct if it comes to community values. In a game the child tests and challenges the rules to explore the limits of a value system prevalent in the community, represented by his/her playmates.

This also allows for a certain amount of creativity which became evident when I observed the same group of children playing Hopscotch and Balance. Balance was an entirely new game that had developed out of a pure act of an improvised activity as two of my informants fancied to balance along the keel of the upside down boat. Once they were joined by two others, the activity received a more competitive colouring than it had among just the two playing before. Also there seems to have been a need to give the activity a more regulated frame. This was then exercised, to my great surprise, by applying the rules of Hopscotch to their new game. This example shows that a preconceived notion of how to go about a new game is largely a matter of an already established perception among the children; it does, however, leave enough room for creativity to enter and to invent a new game within the framework of an already existing system.

This system of an established perception with societal rules to adhere to certain conventions as described and applied in particular contexts, especially moral obligations, and other family and community values may be illustrated below.



The play/game context frame provides leeway for alteration. Although it entails all established values, it allows for challenges of the given rules and values. The reinforcement of societal rules by the play participants may then derive from experiences within the same play group or filter in from experiences of participants from other play groups.

As an example: any game that required a pattern scratched into the gravel on the roadside, such as Hopscotch, Girls Girls, World, or Kick the Rock, was frequently redrawn by the children to ensure that the boundary lines were visible at all times. By doing so the children were able to eliminate any possible doubt that would make a player's step questionable as to him/her having made a mistake. Thus, it functioned as a form of social control to avoid cheating during a player's performance in a game setting, thereby in a subtle way reinforcing the value of fair play among the participants.

The microcosm of the peer group may therefore be interpreted as a parallel to the macrocosm of the community. My argument is supported by the fact that in most incidents I found my informants adhered to a particular peer group, mainly that of their immediate neighbours which was not as much a matter of convenience for the children who, in addition, are often bonded by their family relations, but rather because they can be seen as interest groups that prefer to be engaged in a particular activity, and who therefore also share the same current repertoire of play and game activities. A parallel may be drawn to the grouping of the adults during the Bingo game in the gym of the local school: they reproduced their neighbourhoods in the community by the

tables they chose to sit at. The children behaved in a similar way when playing together. This, however, does not mean that these peer grouping patterns are absolute, as seen for example in the Jack's Pond Park activities or in the Balltag sessions in Whiffen's Cove which included a number of children from other parts of the community.

Community Identity and the Children's Play and Game Activities

The fact that I was perceived as a researcher who was interested in the sports activities of the children, and not in their everyday play and game activities may be seen as an indication that children's play is emically generally not considered as a reflection of their own culture by the adults in Southern Harbour. The focus of identity seems to circle around their fishing culture *per se* rather than seeing the children's culture as a part thereof. The reason why the adult generation does not perceive children's play as part of their identity is due to the fact that the children's activities do not overtly reflect links to life in the community. The children play Hopscotch, Witch in the Well, Hospital and other games but rather name them themselves by their contents. When I participated and observed the children playing the children did not play

anything that seemed to be a particular expression of their fishing culture, for example playing at being a fisherman. One might have expected that the children would name the game of Spotlight (B), for example, as "Lighthouse," but that was not the case. The only link I could find to the foodways in Southern Harbour, and this may well be projected onto other outport communities in Newfoundland, also occurs in the game of Witch in the Well when the children ask their mother for bread and molasses.

Today's non-link, however, may be reversed later in today's children's lives, once they become adults, and perhaps have moved elsewhere. Their identity as children in the community is presently taken for granted and unconsidered by them; however, once grown in age and experience their childhood emic subculture will be looked at by themselves from an etic point of view. Most likely they will return to it, perhaps at parties, reunions and the like but their attitudes and reminiscences will be filtered by their former identity as children.

Chapter Four • PERFORMANCE

The following chapter concerns the major aspects of the performance of the children's play and game activities as recorded in Southern Harbour. It will describe a theoretical framework to show many elements of interaction. The accompanying proposed model is an attempt to encompass the main features of the dynamics of various play and game activities as they were recorded in Southern Harbour. The model is then applied to an actual play and game situation as performed by the children in the community.

In 1957 William Hugh Jansen pointed out that "there is the need for notes about the conditions of the actual performance," and that

> the very existence of a piece of verbal folklore, however insignificant, implies an auditor, frequently a group of auditors, and, of course, some person or occasionally persons to "do" that piece of folklore for that audience.[119]

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[119] William Hugh Jansen, "Classifying Performance in the Study of Verbal Folklore," in W. Edson Richmond, ed. Studies in Folklore in Honor of Distinguished Service Professor Stith Thompson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957) 110, 112.

Many other folklorists after Jansen, who opened the doors for a performance centred approach in folklore, dwell on verbal art as performance in the "major" genres: narrative and song. Richard Bauman defines performance thus:

> Fundamentally, performance as a mode of spoken verbal communication consists in the assumption of responsibility to the audience for a display of communicative competence.[120]

All of these studies consider performances of adults rather than children, and they consider various aspects of communication and relationships between the performer and the audience as they become explicit in the performance context. Recognising performance as the core element to make folklore operational, Roger D. Abrahams remarks:

> For folklore to work effectively in a performance there must therefore be a consonance between the situation that has arisen, the item that is called forth, and the enactment. The performer must recognize the situation when it arises.

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[120] Richard Bauman, Verbal Art as Performance (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1977) 11. See Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth S. Goldstein, eds. Folklore Performance and Communication (Den Haag: Mouton, 1975) and Richard Bauman, Story, performance and event: Contextual Studies of oral narrative (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

> know the appropriate traditions, and be able to perform effectively. Just as in any personal interaction, the enactment must evidence understanding of the decorum involved in the social system in which both performer and performance exist.[121]

With reference to song, an example in the Newfoundland context has been made by Casey, Rosenberg and Wareham in which they deal with the performer's abilities to cater a performance to a specific audience.[122] And again the authors consider an adult actor and an adult audience in a unidirectional performance. The singer, narrator or actor performs his/her piece for an audience that responds in a more or less inactive way, commenting on the performance or reacting to it but without an active participation in the action, and thereby providing an indirect control of the performance. The performer notes the audience's response which s/he will feed back into a future staging of a particular piece. The future performance *per se* indicates the major difference from a children's play and game performance in which the audience's response feeds back into the present ongoing event. Brian Sutton-Smith

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[121] Roger D. Abrahams, "The Complex Relations of Simple Forms," Genre 2:2 (June 1969): 106.

[122] George J. Casey, Neil V. Rosenberg, and Wilfred W. Wareham, " Repertoire Categorization and Performer-Audience Relationships: Some Newfoundland Folksong Examples," Ethnomusicology 16 (1972) 397-403.

recognises the importance of a performance approach within his interests in developmental psychology:

> The theory of *play as performance* is a theory which says that play is not ever simply solitary action, but always a performance before real or imagined others. The player may be both director and player on his own stage, as he is in solitary play. He may be audience for some other. The mother may be player, director and audience for her baby who is the counter player. But in all cases, thinking in quadralogic terms helps us to highlight the actual and implicit characteristics of the play phenomenon.[123]

He discusses the performer-spectator, or what he also terms the actor and counter-actor interaction, and the switching of roles that takes place in a play event. He does relate his discussion by and large to developmental issues, in particular to the communication between a mother and her infant. This has also been recognised by Jean Briggs who focusses largely on the playful dramatization between adults and

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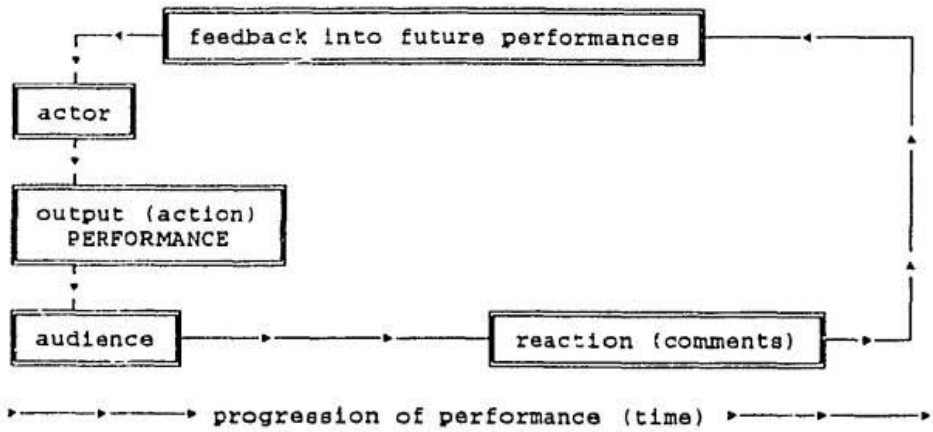
[123] Brian Sutton-Smith explains play as one of the many expressive forms as a "*quadralogue*," involving at least four prototypical parties: the group or individual that stages (or creates) the event, as actors and co-actors; that group that receives this communication (the audience); and the group that directs the race or conducts the symphony (directors). Brian Sutton-Smith, "Epilogue: Play as Performance," Play and Learning, ed. Brian Sutton-Smith (New York: Garner Press, 1979) 297-298.

children among the Inuit.[124] The diagram below shows the dynamics of a general unidirectional performance.



Flow of action in a general adult performance.

This concept, relating to an adult performance as shown in the diagram above, is different from that of children's play performance. In the children's play performance the items are passed on horizontally from child to child. This provides a platform for an immediate exchange of

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[124] Jean L. Briggs, "The Creation of Value in Canadian Inuit Society," International Social Science Journal XXXI No.3 (1979): 392-402; Aspects of Inuit Value Socialization, Mercury Series, Canadian Ethnology Service Paper No.56 (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1979) 17-41; "Living Dangerously: The Contradictory Foundations of Value in Canadian Inuit Society," Politics and History in Band Societies, eds. Eleanor Leacock and Richard Lee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 109-131; "Playwork as a Tool in the Socialization of an Inuit Child," Arctic Medical Research 49 (1990): 34-38. "Expecting the Unexpected: Canadian Inuit Training for an Experimental Lifestyle," Ethos 19:3 (1991): 259-287.

knowledge in form of a verbal response or movement. David Winslow points toward the way knowledge is transmitted among children:

> As a general rule oral tradition among children is transmitted both horizontally and vertically, from the older children to the younger, and throughout the child's own peer group.[125]

Winslow does not investigate both forms of transmission further, but points to the fact that most of the lore is learned from members of the same peer- and age group. There is no doubt that children attain their knowledge by vertical and horizontal transmission. The difference between the two levels of transmission usually relates to the transmission between members of different generations. In the children's play and game performance contexts I observed in Southern Harbour, the flow of information was primarily horizontal, flowing between and among members of a peer group of similar ages.

The children are therefore not performing for another group of commenting bystanders and onlookers, but for their own peer group,

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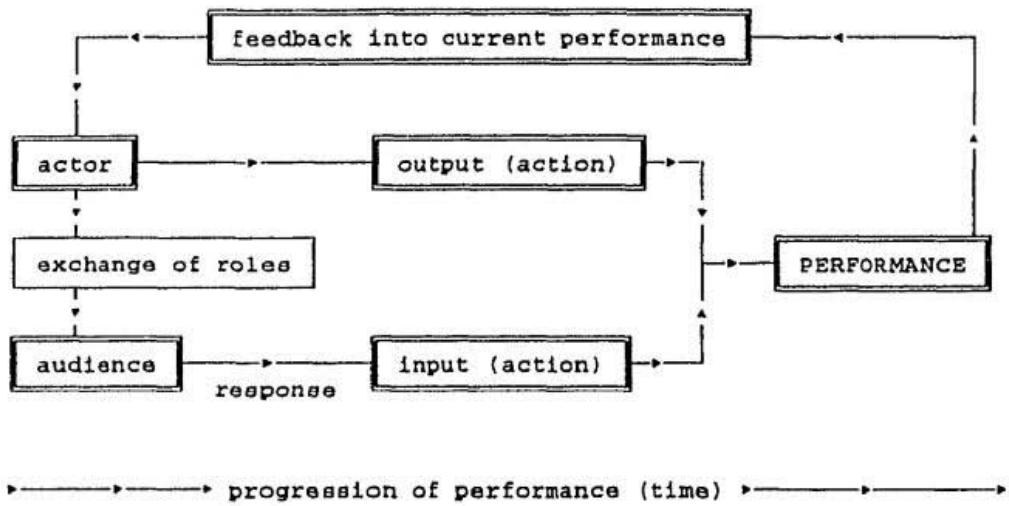
[125] David Winslow, "An Introduction to Oral Tradition among Children," Keystone Folklore Quarterly XI:1 (1966) 48.

which means they become audience themselves while playing together. The diagram below shows how various elements in a play session connect with each other during the progression of a play performance.



Flow of action in children's play and game performance.

When children play an audience exists but the audience exercises control directly on the outcome of the performance by being actively and reciprocally involved in the play performance. Dealing with the different range level of interaction between performer and audience Roger D. Abrahams notes:

> In a game like "Hide and Seek" the actors would direct their performances to each other, but in folk play they coordinate their actions for an ensemble effect, which is directed to the

> spectators viewing from their removed positions.[126]

The children's play performance is omnidirectional as opposed to the unidirectional notion of the adult performance. The involvement by all parties consists of the observation of the other playmates, and the application of verbal formulae and formulaic movements.

I begin with the role of the actor, which in most instances means acting in a keyrole for the child. A child while playing with his/her playmates finds him-/herself in a keyrole, for example the role of the mother in Witch in the Well, or the role of the fox in Foxy Foxy. The keyrole does not mean a representation of a leading figure in a particular game, but rather represents a key function in a particular moment of the game. The keyrole is performed as a step to further the action of the game, and to give the other players the necessary cues to act in their roles in the game. Once the keyrole has been performed the actor exchanges his/her keyrole with another player from the audience which is represented by another participant in the game. The keyrole actor's action delivers a particular output which is recognised by the other player(s) which signals to them their turn. Their reaction is to take

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126 Abrahams, 116.

action which provides a responsive input in furthering the performance. The current performance itself then functions as a feedback for the participants which tells them to adapt and move to the next step in the game, which newly distributes the roles of actor and audience in the ongoing event for the progression of the performance. Bauman notes that the player is accountable to the audience:

> Performance involves on the part of the performer an assumption of accountability to an audience for the way in which communication is carried out, above and beyond its referential content.[127]

The accountability in the children's game performance derives from every step in the game that is equally necessary to further the action. It is not only linked to the above mentioned keyrole but to the action performed by response to a certain step in the game.

There are many potential interruptions to the flow of performance. They may be verbal, as in a player's use of a wrong phrase, spoken or shouted at the wrong moment applied within the sequence of the game;

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127 Bauman, 11.

or the participating player may not yet have mastered the necessary steps that are required in form of movements and reactions to the actor's output: or there may be an attempt to cheat. The element of cheating is brought into games which have a competitive nature such as Hopscotch, Mother May I? or activities invented by the children such as Balance. Acting or dialogue games do not display features that make a participant want to cheat. Nevertheless, a possible competitiveness may arise from the display of linguistic competence.[128] In the children's game performance context the linguistic competence may well be interpreted generally as communicative competence.[129] This competence allows the children to be part of the game. Thus, it does not only have the sole purpose of display of communicative abilities, but is an indicator to the other players which is examined and judged during the play performance and if necessary corrected to lead the "new insider" into the game, which represents a learning process for the "new insider" whose ultimate goal is

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[128] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Mary Sanches discuss children's speech play with reference to rhymes, homonyms, phonologically determined ambiguities, tongue twisters etc. Mary Sanches, and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Children's Traditional Speech Play and Child Language," Speech Play, ed. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976) 65-110.

[129] Bauman, 11.

to be part of future play performances of a particular game among his/her peers.[130]

In the first instance it seemed to be a difficult task to find a reasonable format in which to present the following analysis. After looking at various performance analyses by other folklorists, I decided to follow the format used by Barre Toelken.[131] The following play session may serve as an example to show the dynamics of a play performance by a group of my informants. The session generated three games: Tag, Foxy Foxy, and Witch in the Well. The analysis will focus on Tag and Foxy Foxy.[132]

The Context

I was on my usual day to day excursions strolling along the road in the community of Southern Harbour one morning hoping to chance

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130 The term "new insider" is discussed by Barre Toelken. "Zum Begriff der Performanz im dynamischen Kontext der Volksüberlieferung," Zeitschrift für Volkskunde 77:1 (1981): 37-50.

131 Cf. Barre Toelken, The Dynamics of Folklore, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979) 93-103.

132 Tape-recorded play session 10 July 1987.

upon playing groups of children. I passed along by the house of one of the teachers of the local school when I heard some children's activity in the back of the house which was not visible from the road. When I walked to the back of the house I saw four girls engaged in a game of Tag in the backyard. The back yard, slightly larger than the floorplan of the house, was surrounded by a fence about five feet high. The children did not notice me at the first instance until I greeted Mrs Gambin. The mother of two of the children, Danette and Michalla, was at the time painting the fence, and after the obligatory how-are-yous and comments on the beautiful weather that day in July, Mrs Gambin and I departed on a conversation on children's games while I kept an eye on the children's activities in the background. The children disappeared once in a while to the front of the house briefly while engaged in their game of Tag, but remained for most of the time in the backyard. I found it a bit awkward having to talk to Mrs Gambin across the fence, so I asked permission to come into the yard and tape record the children's activities. Mrs Gambin did not mind. The children noticed me when I came around the fence, but were not concerned further with my presence as they kept playing.

The Game

I begin a more focussed conversation with Mrs Gambin as the children have gone off toward the front of the house. They do return almost immediately and mingle about. At this time they do not engage in a particular activity but listen in on my conversation with Mrs Gambin. They look interested in their mother's talk about Tiddley.

DMH: When you were young, did you play Tiddleys?

Mrs Gambin: You put a stick across two rocks, and hit the stick with another stick, and the persons you're playing against, if they're catch ... then they won. We used to play that. [laughs]

The youngest of the children, Theresa, picks up on my conversation with her mother and names a few ball games.

Theresa: Sometimes we plays baseball, sometimes we plays baseball or basket ball.

Danette: I never heard of that before.
Mrs Gambin: No you don't play that.

While Danette paying closer attention to the adults' conversation responds.

DMH: So, where do you learn all that Tag and Hide and Seek, where do you learn it?

Danette joins me, while Mrs Gambin busies herself painting the fence. Having the tape-recorder running, I signal to Mrs Gambin that I wish to focus on the children. At this moment the children depart on a game of Tag. I observe them for a short while, and begin to question them as I draw closer to them.

Danette: Uh, by playing with other people.
Theresa: And we plays basketball.

Danette, the oldest among her peers, answers me in a serious tone straightforwardly. She does not seem to be intimidated by my

interrogation and my pointing the microphone in her direction.

Ruby: I'm tagger.

Danette: Okay then.

Ruby suddenly announces that she is the tagger. The children mingle about in close proximity to the tagger, which has just been determined by calling out.

Ruby: One, two, three, get off my father's apple tree, or else you're out. One, two, three.

Instead of instantly chasing after her playmates, Ruby chooses to count out, as if in Hide and Seek. It is the only time I hear my informants counting, before they depart on the chasing.

Ruby: Caught. [giggle]

Ruby catches Michalla at the homebase.

Ruby: Now, you waits here, up here.

Ruby and Michalla argue about the borderline of the homebase.

Michalla: No, no you waits here.

Ruby: Up here.

Michalla: Okay.

Theresa: No you gotta come over here.

Ruby: You're not allowed to do that.

which they did not clearly define before the game. The homebase which grants the player immunity from being tagged is defined by a small area under the swings with no grass growing on it: the only such spot in the backyard.

Mrs Gambin: Shh! Don't argue.

Mrs Gambin overhears the children's argument and attempts to calm them down. The children stop for a moment and turn toward Mrs Gambin.

Whether Mrs Gambin's reaction is triggered by my presence, or if she tries to teach the children a proper behaviour in front of a stranger remains unclear. The children are not concerned with

their mother's interference and continue their game.

DMH: What is this now what are you doing now?
Danette: Frozen Tag.

I take this interruption in the children's activity to question them about their game.

Ruby: It's another kind. One, two, three, get off my father's apple [slows down] tree, or else [speeds up] you're out. One, two, three. [giggle]

Ruby continues to count, my interrogation does not seem to disturb the flow of the ongoing game at this moment.

DMH: So what's the difference between Frozen Tag and the other one?
Ruby: When you're frozen, you gotta stay where you are. And you can't go home. And somebody's gotta come out from home and catch you.

Despite my second questioning, the children keep playing, but also respond, and explain how a tagged person is freed again by another.

While the game pauses for a few moments, and Michalla monitors

Danette: And you sort of gotta crawl under your legs.

Theresa: One two three, apple tree. [touches Danette, giggles]

Danette's and Ruby's explanations. Theresa, the smallest in the group, practises her Frozen Tag skills by repeating the opening rhyming formula, before the tagger sets out to catch the others. Then she runs over to Danette and tags her.

DMH: Oh ya, that's right, ya.

Ruby: Under? [pause] Michalla. Caught. Okay.

Ruby: Ya. I'm home, Michalla, I'm home.

The children demonstrate which leads them straight back into their game. Ruby on top of Danette gets carried toward the homebase under the swings, but suddenly decides to jump off and run for home, where she gets caught by Michalla.

Michalla: Okay, I'm the tagger.

Danette: [screams]

Ruby the new tagger searches out Michalla next.

Ruby: Okay, okay I'm caught.

Danette: Under me, Alla, under me. Under.

Ruby: Caught!

Danette: Under me leg.

Ruby: She wasn't under your leg.

Danette: Okay.

Michalla crawls under Danette's legs almost in time to be safe. The ambiguity of the situation causes the children to instantly discuss the problem, which Ruby, the tagger, sees as an attempt to cheat by the other two. The disturbance occurs because Michalla mixes up two different types of games: Frozen Tag, in which the tagged person can be released by another, and a Hide and Seek in which the person spotted by the chaser runs for the homebase.

Danette: Alla you're free. Get going guys, you get caught again.

Meanwhile Danette frees Michalla. [screams, movement, running, giggle]

Ruby, currently chasing after Theresa, monitors Danette and Michalla, but instantly shoots back toward Michalla and tags her.

Ruby: I caught you.

Michalla: No, you didn't catch me.

Danette: How many times did you get caught?

Michalla: Three.

The children employ a rule that has not surfaced before: a player in this game of Tag has three lives before s/he becomes the new tagger.

Danette: Okay. Alla is the tagger.

Ruby: Alla, you're the best tagger.

Michalla: Caught ya.

Danette: No.

Michalla: I caught ya. [...]

Ruby claps her hands and sings this phrase.

Danette: No that's another game. Colours. Foxy Foxy. Foxy Foxy, okay.

Ruby: Okay.

Danette: Okay.

Michalla mistakes features of Colours and Foxy Foxy.

At this instance, the children depart on a new game: Foxy Foxy, which develops out of this version of Tag.

Theresa: Mother.

Ruby: Mother.

Danette: Okay, who's gonna be the fox?

Theresa: I will.

Danette: Okay.

The children again use their fashion of calling out to determine the role distribution. The children are very cooperative in dividing the roles among each other.

[At this point I had to exchange the tape in the tape-recorder, therefore a few moments of the interaction are missing in the transcript.]

DMH: What do you call that?

Danette: Foxy Foxy

DMH: What is this?

Danette: It's just like Colours.

DMH: What is Colours?

Danette: See, if the fox, calls colours, [...] every child receives a colour from the mother. And they catches you you're a devil, if you're back home, you're an angel.

Michalla: I'm the fox.

Danette: Okay.

Theresa: I'm mother, I'm mother, I'm the mother.

Danette: Okay give 'em colours.

Ruby: Don't give 'em double colours.

Danette: Yuk.

Theresa: Take it or leave it.

I ask the children to explain the game they are just about to play. Danette explains.

Theresa whispers the colours into the others' ears.

Danette: Okay, I know. Alla come here, you knocks on her back. You're ready?

Michalla: Ya. Knock, knock.

Theresa: Who's there?

Michalla: Knocksy, foxy.

Michalla employs some linguistic play by assimilating the role of the fox, and the sound of knocking.

Theresa: Come in. [...]

Danette: Would you come on and guess the colours? They're ordinary colours, like blue and green, and black, and orange, and red.

Michalla: Pink?

Danette: Go catch 'em. [screams, giggles]

Michalla: Orange?

Theresa: No.

Michalla runs after Danette.

Michalla: Green?

Theresa: No.

Michalla: Uhmm, yellow?

Theresa: No.

Michalla: Blue?

Ruby: Mother, I'm the mother. I wants to be the mother.

Ruby runs, but reaches the homebase before being caught by Michalla.

The older ones depart on the game.

Danette: Come on, now. Let her be, she got to be the fox.

Danette: Give us a colour.

Theresa: What's your colour?

Ruby: Shhh. Shut up.

Danette: Hurry up, would you?

Theresa: Knock, knock.

Ruby: Who's there?

Theresa: Knocksy, Foxy.

Ruby: Come in.

Theresa: How many colours do you have today?

Ruby: Three.

Theresa: Gold? [spits]

DMH: Why do you spit on the floor?

I was curious to know the meaning of the spitting incident.

Theresa: That's when I spits.

Theresa explains.

DMH: Huh?

Theresa: Just water.

DMH: Why do you do it?

Theresa: That's just part of the game.

DMH: Why?

Theresa: Foxy Foxy is trying to kill everybody and stuff. So he's sort of naughty.

Theresa: Alla, let's play Witch in the Well.

Michalla: Okay!

The mention of the evil figure triggers a round of Witch in the Well.

The Performance

When looking at a performance event such as the one above, one has to consider adjustments that are made by the actors to fit the event's environment. A play performance environment may include simply physical features such as the surface of the play area, objects such as fences, walls, or trees to name just a few, and moreover the presence of other people, who may have an influence on the children's play performance, for example other children, who do not belong to the group of "insiders" of a peer group or adults.

My first impression of the children was that they ignored my presence completely, as they seemed to be so deeply engaged in their game of Tag (at that time the children already knew me from previous play sessions I attended). The fact that they perked up when I talked to their mother about her childhood games made me realize that children, even if it seems that they are completely absorbed by their activity still remain very conscious about their immediate environment. I can thus not clearly state whether the children monitored my moving about with the tape recorder and taking photographs, but at least they were not preoccupied with the recording devices as in early stages of my

fieldwork. Therefore it is also safe to say that they did not perform the game for *me*, just because of my presence and interrogation. Their being already carried away playing Tag when I reached the scene certainly supported this circumstance. I was just another feature of the place of the event added after the activity was already well under way. Perhaps the presence of the mother in the background painting the fence, and being in their own backyard made them feel less concerned and therefore better able to concentrate on their game. In addition, I did not have the impression that the children's choice of games was influenced by my presence. The only interruptions occurred when I asked the children specific questions about their current activity and when their mother, Mrs Gambin, intervened when she disapproved of Ruby and Michalla discussing the borderlines of the homebase. Moreover, I assert that the children included my presence as an inactive insider as part of their performance. (At this point I should perhaps remind the reader of my position of being an honorary child in their activities, which I have discussed in the fieldwork section). Although I did not particularly engage with them in their activity, as I had, for example, in a game of Balance with Anne-Marie, Sheldon, Dennis and Kenny, the children's comments, which they easily accommodated to the flow of their play, showed that my interrogation did not interrupt them.

In the course of their game the children dealt with various moments that slowed down their performance. This is, however, part of the normal output action of the actor who in a game, and by the exchange of roles with other players, creates an input action which makes up the performance. The children did not count out to determine the first key actor in their play. Calling out the role of the tagger in the tag section or the mother in the Foxy Foxy section of the play session indicates that being 'it' is a somewhat prestigious role. I derive this conclusion from the fact that the calling out of roles appears at an unexpected moment. Detecting this moment displays the competence of the player in knowing the various elements in a play performance. In the case when Ruby announces that she is the tagger the children had already begun a game of tag. They were in what could perhaps be termed a standby mode when Danette answers my questions. Here I would like to add that Danette, being the oldest and tallest of the four children, may be seen as a leading figure. She also struck me as the most knowledgeable among her peers when she responded to my questions. It is furthermore interesting to note that after Ruby's assumption of the role of tagger the children mingle about in close proximity to the tagger, taking a high risk of being tagged. This is an indication of the willingness of the participants to reciprocate their roles, which is an important

element for the flow of the performance. A similar scene occurs when I am listening to Danette's explanations on Foxy Foxy, and Michalla suddenly announces that she is the fox. In both situations Danette's leading position in the group is evidenced by her taking on the responsibility of an interpreter who explains the ongoing events to me while simultaneously continuing to play and monitoring the role distribution among the other children.

A second aspect that surfaces with reference to the flow of the play performance is the argument between Danette and Ruby discussing the borderlines of the homebase and being rightfully tagged. The discussion is the result of a misunderstanding of a physical feature in the play area. A possible agreement of the two children, unfortunately, is interrupted by Mrs Gambin. Nevertheless, drawing on my observations from other similar situations in the children's play performances, I suspect that the children would have come to a solution in order to maintain the flow of their play.

Michalla's action of crawling under Danette's legs is an example of a movement as an input reaction of a player. Michalla is responding to the key actor in the scene, Ruby, the tagger who is chasing after her.

Michalla's input of seeking refuge under Danette's legs causes an ambiguity among the children. This is triggered by a mix-up of two different games: a version of Frozen Tag, and Hide and Seek. In this version of Frozen Tag, which I never observed as a game in the community, the tagged person gains immunity by crawling under a previously tagged person, who also, by this action, will regain his/her life in the game. In Hide and Seek the player spotted by the chaser runs for the homebase which would have been the expected movement as an input action in the flow of this round of Tag. The problem is resolved by Ruby shifting her focus to chase after Theresa for a moment, nevertheless while still monitoring the two others. Danette and Michalla are free again to be tagged by Ruby after their action and thereby feed back into the flow of the play performance.

A last example, a situation that occurs in Foxy Foxy, stands without an ambiguous element. Michalla, the fox, questions Theresa, the mother, about the colours of her children. After failing to guess the right colour assigned to one of the children, Michalla finally guesses the right colour. Being the current key actor in the scene the exchange of roles happens when the right colour is called. Ruby runs toward the homebase to avoid being caught by the fox. Ruby's response is her input

action to run. Her action feeds straight back into the flow of the performance as Michalla chases after Ruby, however unsuccessfully, as Ruby reaches the homebase before being tagged.

When I questioned Danette as to from whom they learned the games of Tag and Hide and Seek, Danette pointed to the fact that the children actually learn their activities from each other, which clearly points to a horizontal form of transmission among children, but also that they are aware of the means of transmission.

Theresa's naming of a few ball games during the conversation I had with Mrs Gambin, and her repetition of the opening rhyming *formulae* points to the child's role of a "new insider." In this context I would like to draw on Erich Fromm's concept of the "having" and the "being" modes.[133] Theresa displays her competence in two ways. In the first instance while listening to my conversation with Mrs Gambin, she repeatedly names a variety of ball games. This clearly shows that she has become familiar with the general play and game activities pool present among the children of the community. Secondly, Theresa

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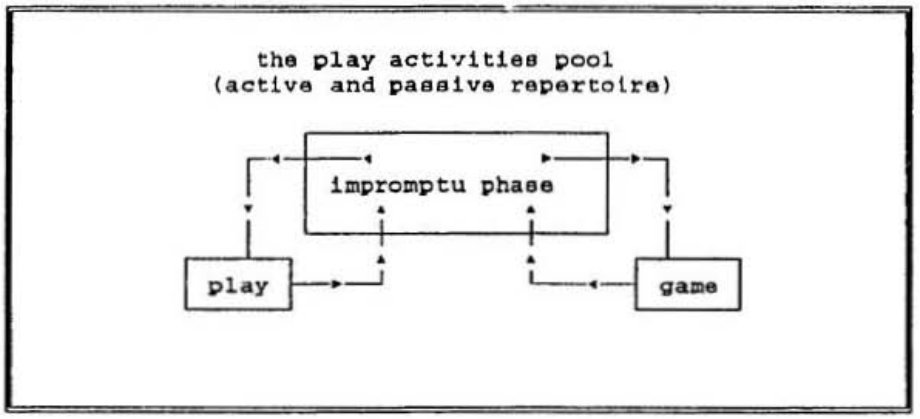
133 Cf. Erich Fromm, To Have or To Be? (New York: Harper & Row, 1976).

gains her competence by rehearsing the various steps of a game while the game is played by her slightly older playmates, who will also coach her, once she is involved in a game that is new to her. At this stage in her attempt to acquire the characteristic skills that are needed in a particular game, Theresa *has* the competence to be part of the game performance. Without the others' assistance she may not yet be able to comprehend the entire flow of the performance of the game which entails the proper exchange of roles and the appropriate output and input actions required. She will *be* competent, however, once the others see no more need to assist her.

Linguistic play in the form of an echoic word play occurs in Michalla's assimilation of the name "foxy" and the verb "to knock" which can be interpreted as an attempt to combine two *formulae* in the game: the required knocking to gain the mother's attention in the imaginary house and the identification of the fox as a character in the game, whose questioning for the right colour will cause the game to be carried further to the next step: chasing the person that has been supplied and identified by the mother at the outset of the game.

Above I have explained and analyzed the elements that show the intrinsic flow of performance within a children's play session. From my observation of the children's activities in Southern Harbour I also saw more general patterns of flow that surfaced between clearly separable play and game activities, which are shown in a diagram below.



The flow of elements between play and game activities.

Play Activities Pool

Earlier on I mentioned the play activities pool. It is an element that represents the entire omnipresent pool of play and game activities. It consists of all game and play activities currently present in the repertoire

of the children, as well as game and play activities which may not be current among the children, but which are part of the oral tradition of the community's children.

Because certain game and play activities are not currently found in an active mode within the repertoire of the peers does not mean that these activities have no potential to become part of an active current repertoire again. They are stored in a passive mode from which they may be drawn at any given time by the children.[134] They can either be triggered subconsciously by a certain combination of play elements during the children's activities or consciously by remembering them.

Such a situation arises in the above discussed play session of Danette, Ruby, Michalla and Theresa when Michalla crawls under Danette's legs thereby drawing on her knowledge of Frozen Tag and Hide and Seek. The knowledge of these two games and their similar features allows Michalla to fall back on these games and apply their rules from the activities pool as it represents a common base of knowledge for all of

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[134] Cf. Carl W. von Sydow, "On the Spread of Tradition," Selected Papers on Folklore Published on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday, ed. Laurits Bødker (København: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1948) 12-13. Kenneth S. Goldstein, "On the Application of Active and Inactive Traditions to the Study of Repertory," Toward New Perspectives in Folklore, eds. Américo Paredes and Richard Bauman (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972) 62-67.

the participating children. The knowledge of both Frozen Tag and Hide and Seek also functions in the disallowing of Michalla's action, as the other participants remember and apply the rules of the game actually in progress, thereby incidentally preserving the distinctiveness of each game.

The play activities pool not only encompasses the entire play and game repertoire passive or active in the children's oral tradition but also bears an established perception of rules and conventions as exercised in the broader adult community context, which I have discussed in Chapter Three.[135]

A new idea for a game or play activity may be introduced by a participant. The idea is processed by the other participants and results in a feedback that will determine which activity to choose. The decision making on which activity to choose is additionally dependent on various current external conditions which include the basic physical set up, such as the common gathering place, the surface and surrounding of the space where the children are gathered, plus the availability of objects that have a potential to be incorporated in their activities. For example, if

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[135] Cf. pp. 193, 198.

the children meet between stages, a pile of lobster traps and the fishing gear may be recognised by the children as potential objects to depart from on a game of Hide and Seek, or in the game of Witch in the Well where a ladder left in the back yard of the house serves as a dividing line behind which the witch dwells and awaits the children sent to fetch water from the well for their mother.

Impromptu Phase

This element represents a free floating stand-by position that remains the linking element among all game and play activities. It can be considered a base from which the children depart on their activities. It is characterized as prelude and postlude before and after a play or game activity as well as an interlude between different activities, or may equally take the form of an intermittent stage when a play or game activity comes to a halt for some unforeseen reason.

In the above Tag and Foxy Foxy scene the impromptu phase appears at various stages throughout the session. At the beginning, for example, when I talk to Mrs Gambin about her childhood games, at that

point the children had already engaged in a game of Tag. The session again moves to the impromptu phase briefly when Michalla mixes features of a game of Colours with the current Foxy Foxy and again at the end of the transcript above when the children depart on a game of Witch in the Well.

Generally, whenever I approached the children with the question what they were doing, their frequent response "nothing" indicated that my presence shifted their activity to the impromptu phase, temporarily, from which they were later able to resume their current activity. This was usually expressed by the children using the term "okay" or "alright" when I asked them to carry on and not to worry about my presence. On some other occasions the children departed on a new activity, especially when my interrogation triggered a different activity, or when I asked them specific questions about their games. This was then indicated by little phrases such as "We'll show you" or "You don't know that?" which hinted at their surprise that a particular game or a play activity was unknown to me, or that I only vaguely knew what it was all about.

The duration of the impromptu phase may be for only a few moments, or linger on as a prolonged stage without being a play or game

activity, as will be defined subsequently. Since the impromptu phase is also characterized by a gradual blending in and out of an actual play or game activity, one has to clearly define the borderlines where or when an impromptu phase turns into a play or game activity.

Game

Game in the context of this study may be defined as an activity that is characterized by previously laid out rules of conduct that determine the current performance of the participants in form of movement and figures of speech. There is only a little flexibility to alter the rules during the ongoing game activity.[136] If one interprets game in contrast to play, game evolves as a more structured and clear-cut form of an activity where the borderlines between the impromptu phase and game can be clearly detected.

Game is also characterized as an activity the outcome of which it is possible to predict, as a certain goal is to be reached by an individual participant against other participants, or by a group of participants

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136 Cf. my paper "Hopscotch in Harlow."

against another group. The game will end after certain sequences of movements, figures of speech, scoring of points, conquering of territory, or a combination thereof has happened.

Play

Play is also characterized by a set of rules. They are, however, in contrast to game, less predefined at the start of an activity, or within it, and leave ample or even unlimited room for flexibility, alteration, and especially *ad hoc* improvisation in as much as the play situation calls for. There is no defined goal to be reached. The improvisational talents and creativity as performed by the participants, the influence and strategies applied by individual or teamed group members and their status (for example, Danette in the above discussed play session), have a much stronger directional influence during a play session. In contrast, one may argue that in a game context the participants share rather equal positions during the course of action, whereas in a play activity context the individual participants are more likely engaged in competition deriving from their display of creativity and intuition as opposed to game activities characterized by predefined rules.

As in game sessions, certain figures of speech are often necessary contributions to the play performance of the participants; but these too can be freely altered by them. They are not predefined as for example in acting games (roleplay) such as "Witch in the Well" or "Foxy Foxy;" they do, however, rely on the participant's own sociolinguistic abilities, or what Brian Sutton-Smith termed "negotiational competences."[137]

Play, by the lack of a certain goal, allows for a softer borderline between the impromptu phase and itself, whereas game being more governed by rules is easier separable from the impromptu phase. I have derived this distinction entirely from my observations of the playing children in Southern Harbour; obviously it may have application to children's play and game activities elsewhere.

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[137] Brian Sutton-Smith, "Ein soziolinguistischer Ansatz zum Verständis von Spielhandlungen. Handlungen, Theorie interdisziplinär, ed. Hans Lenk (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1977) 239-250. Within the frame of Del Hymes' sociolinguistic approach, Brian Sutton-Smith discusses the sociolinguistic abilities with reference to various developmental stages of the child. He distinguishes between four forms. "Spiel zwischen Mutter und Säugling" [play between mother and infant], "Spiel mit sich allein" [solitary play], see Vincy, in Chapter Two page 22. "Spiel des Aushandelns" [negotiating play], and "Spiel von Gruppen Gleichaltriger" [play of groups of children of the same age].

CONCLUSION

When I first set out to study children's games in Southern Harbour, a number of thoughts went through my head as to how to approach the children in order to collect their play and game activities. In previous fieldwork situations with children in St. John's and in England, I had known my informants before I researched their activities, as they were the children of friends of mine. In Southern Harbour I knew only two children, Wanda-Lee and Gayle Best, who I had met on an earlier occasion when visiting the community, and with whom I kept contact after my initial visit to the community. After I decided to research the children's play and game activities in Southern Harbour, I hoped that the sisters would introduce me to their playmates, and thereby provide access to the children's play and game repertoire.

In the back of my mind I carried a variety of theories on how to approach my informants. These theories dealt in most cases with adult individuals as informants rather than with children or groups. I quickly realized that I was not able to set up dates for interviews and play sessions as I had done before with adult informants, and I knew I had to approach the children whenever the occasion arose. My attempt to

approach a child. Vincy, in solitary play was unsuccessful. Vincy felt intimidated by my presence and interrogation, which showed me that I was on the wrong track in my approach. The only way to break the barrier between me as an adult and the children as informants was to reduce my adult presence as much as possible.

As the first step, I had to express my interest in the children's activity without giving them the idea that they would be supervised or spied upon by me as the adult, which could have made them feel less comfortable in my presence while going about their play. In particular, I wanted to observe their games without having the children feel that they had to withhold information from me just because I was an adult.

The theoretical background that discusses fieldwork with children is very lean and no comprehensive work has yet been published to tackle the problems that may arise when doing fieldwork with children as informants. As discussed in Chapter Two the most important strategy was to make the children comfortable with my presence, which meant reducing what I have termed the *psychological slope* to a minimum. Throughout my fieldwork I realized that addressing the children as full human beings was the most successful method. Addressing them that

way made the children feel that they could deal with me on much the same level as they would have with their own peers. Initially I approached the children by asking them what kind of games they played. The children usually listed a number of games, some of which I had known before from collections such as the Opies, Brewster, Gomme, Newell and others. Remembering games from my own childhood, also helped me to relate to their information and ask them detailed questions pertaining to particular games.

Since I was not only interested in the play and games as items, but in the actual process of how the children play their games, I needed to be close to the children while they performed their games. This was achieved on my part and that of the children. I benefited greatly from being a stranger in the community and somewhat exotic-looking. Plus, I was not going about the typical adult male occupations that the children were used to in Southern Harbour and their general cultural surroundings. This triggered an interest in me by the children which was evidenced by their questions about my background. In particular the fact that I came from a different country outside of the North American geographical context, Germany, made the children ask me a number of questions about my background and my country. The children asked me

frequently why I came to Southern Harbour, whereupon I told them that I knew Wanda-Lee and her sister Gayle, and that they were my friends. Nevertheless, the most important aspect of my conversations with the children, especially at the beginning of my fieldwork, was to tell them whenever possible that I was interested in *them* and the games *they* played, and that I wanted to write a book about it for which I needed their help to learn the games they played. As a result, in many situations the children asked me to participate in their games. In Chapter Two I have given an example when the children teach me how to play Balance.

My participation in a game was not always appropriate, because I was not competent to participate in game such as Foxy Foxy, or Witch in the Well, which are based on particular dialogues and movements which were unknown to me. My position as the participant observer was based upon the children's trust. It led to being granted the status of an "honorary child" by the children. This licence given by the children allowed me to monitor their play and game activities in as much as if I had been part of the core performance in the activities. Thus, what I intended to show in my fieldwork approach proved to be successful.

The games I observed in the community in the summer of 1987 are described and discussed in Chapter Three. I applied Iona and Peter Opie's, Roger Caillois' and Brian Sutton Smith's classification systems to my findings. I hoped, by doing so, to be able to derive a strong statement as to the nature of the community; in other words, I expected the community's culture to be reflected in the children's games. In retrospect, I realize that much more broader data is needed encompass such a question, especially since the community of Southern Harbour has become the home of many families that do not originally stem from the community but moved to Southern Harbour under the resettlement programme in the 1950s and 1960s. The data would have to not only cover the current children's games but also the reminiscences of the adult generation and their play and game activities from their childhood, and perhaps also the play and game activities of future generations of playing children in order to draw further assumptions about the community. Perhaps I may conclude from my observations of the children of Southern Harbour that there is no close fit between the fishing culture and the children's play and game activities despite my attempt to relate the children's play and game activities to community values.

My grouping of games in Chapter Three may be seen as a preliminary classification which is the result of a careful look at the characteristic features of the games, using the guidance of other classification systems by Iona and Peter Opie, Brian Sutton-Smith, and Roger Caillois. It would be further interesting to explore how game preferences in a community change over time with the different generations of playing children.

In Chapter Four I have explored the notion of performance of children at play. My attempt to draw upon previous performance studies proved not to be fruitful. The majority of performance oriented studies deal only with the major folklore genres: narrative and song. These studies consider performance styles and the performer-audience relationship in a unidirectional way. The performance of children's play and game activities is also based upon a performer-audience relationship. To further the play action the immediate exchange of roles and the omnidirectional character in the performance context show that the dynamics between performer and audience are different from the unidirectional adult performance as they feed back immediately into the ongoing play or game event. With my approach I was not only able to show the various dynamics of an ongoing play event, but also analyze

the various elements that provide the flow for the action during the performance. Furthermore, by looking at entire play sessions as opposed to single games as items, I was able to discover an overlying structure that allows the children to move between a variety of play and game activities in the children's common repertoire. Thus I was finally able to provide working definitions for play and game, which are the results of my observations of the children's play performances in the community.

Writing this thesis has triggered a number of other questions which I would like to pursue in future studies. For example, conclusions may be drawn not only from the conduct of how the children go about starting a particular activity but also their reasons for ending an activity that go beyond the simple exhaustion of a particular game. Furthermore it may be interesting to investigate activities such as Wrestlemania and Hospital. The research may show to what extent such games influence the oral tradition and that the results captured in the ongoing event allow for a deeper insight into the Folklore—Popular Culture continuum.

The most important conclusion of this thesis is that there is a further need to apply performance centred approaches to the study of children's folklore. Only an understanding of the actual intrinsic

mechanisms that occur in the children's play and game performances as part of their lore and creativity, will allow a deeper insight into the flow of knowledge, the means of communication and perhaps the reinforcement or assimilation of value systems in our societies. I also hope that this study has shown that children and their games represent an important subculture which deserves much more attention and appreciation, despite the fact that it remains closed for most adults.

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