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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

PLAY AND CULTURE IN A RURAL KENYAN COMMUNITY: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

by

Maureen Elizabeth Kendrick

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *Play and Culture in a Rural Kenyan Community: An Ethnographic Study* submitted by Maureen Elizabeth Kendrick in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in International/Intercultural Education.

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For those children whose lives are filled with war and suffering . . .
and who will never know the carefree spirit of play.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between play and culture in a rural Kenyan community. The community represents two vastly different cultures. One is a more modern and technologically advanced culture, and the other is a more traditional farming culture. Ethnographic methodology was used to investigate children's play behavior in two school playground settings. Data sources included: observation, participation, informal interviews, and informants. A componential analysis of the resulting data revealed several types of games and non-game activities. These included games of skill, games of strategy, singing games, games of chase, make-believe play, and imitation of domestic, technical, and athletic skills. Activities involving large play equipment and other play materials were also evident. Resulting data were also analyzed according to gender, socioeconomic, cultural, and developmental factors. The implications of these findings for future research and for education in developing countries are also considered.

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I am deeply indebted to the children in this study, who were as curious about me as I was about them. They taught me much about play and welcomed me into their world as if I were one of their "sisters". I am also grateful to their parents and teachers for their assistance and wonderful hospitality (*Ninashukuru*).

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The Research Question and its Significance

My research interests were initially kindled by the film *"Salaam Bombay"*, which I saw a number of years ago. The movie depicts the lives of street children, who must engage in a daily struggle for survival. What struck me about the film was that, amidst the chaos of street crime, drug dealers, and prostitutes, children still played. Prior to seeing this movie, I had paid little attention to children's play other than as a supervisor on school playgrounds. My knowledge of children's games included only those of my own childhood and those that I had taught as a physical education teacher. I had also occasionally observed children "playing house" or "school", or imitating something they had seen on television or read in a book.

I assumed that children's play was largely an innocent endeavor and that their play portrayed only positive aspects of their lives. I also assumed from my own childhood that play was a form of escapism; it was an opportunity to live in and experience a fantasy world -- a world far removed from reality. I learned, however, that although the street children of Bombay "played house", their version of this was much different than my own. For these children, "playing house" involved the roles of a "prostitute" and a "john" instead of those of "mother" and "children". I found myself fascinated by the ways in which culture influences children's play and began questioning foreign friends about their childhood games and observing children's play from a newfound perspective.

I began to immerse myself in the cross-cultural literature on children's play and found that the more I became exposed to the topic, the more that my interest grew. I became fascinated by the relationship between play and culture, and became aware of the complex and multi-faceted interplay between them. I became particularly interested in investigating the play of African children and there were several reasons for this. First, research on African children's play was limited to only a few studies, most of which had either examined games in a superficial manner (i.e., games devoid of their social or cultural context) or only alluded to games in discussing a larger area of study (e.g., child-rearing). Also, although very little attention had been focused on the non-game activities of African children, it was generally concluded that make-believe play was non-existent in East Africa. For example, Castle (1966, p. 114) makes the following observation:

> Few parents encourage spontaneous play, for children are regarded as little adults who should engage as early as possible in the useful tasks of the home. Playing is too often regarded as a waste of time when the serious job of living makes such insistent demands; and, anyway, it is impossible for a tired mother to play with her children even if she believed in its value. Here is a world where utility rules. Moreover, there is hardly an article or tool in the peasant homestead whose use demands any of the finer skills; weeding when he is tiny, and hoeing when he is older, are a child's sole

opportunities for using his hands; crayons and paper are unheard of in the peasant's home.

While reading this literature, I began to consider the issue of cultural bias on the part of researchers and found myself questioning the validity of such conclusions. I wanted to investigate play and culture and to allow them to be revealed in a way that was as free as possible from the distorting effects of cultural bias. An investigation of children's play in rural Kenya, using participant observation, therefore seemed to be a valuable undertaking. In the present study, I endeavor to answer the research question: "How are cultural elements reflected in the play behavior of rural Kenyan children?"

Delimitations: The Parameters of the Study

It is important to consider a number of delimitations in the present study. First, the study focuses specifically on the activities of children *as they define them*. That is, activities involving the assistance or leadership of adults are not included because it is felt that these activities would not accurately represent the activities of children as they themselves define them.

Second, this study specifically includes children in the first four school classes and it is not intended to include older grade groups. Additionally, only the activities of rural children are recorded in this study and therefore the activities of urban children are necessarily excluded.

Third, because the purpose of this study has been primarily to determine how cultural elements are reflected in children's play, developmental aspects of children's play are mentioned only briefly (see "Developmental Stages" in Chapter Five).

Fourth, because only those tribal groups were observed that lived in the area where research was conducted, the study's findings are not necessarily indicative of children's play in other parts of Kenya. Similarly, the study includes data from children's play on two select school playgrounds and it therefore excludes children's play as expressed in neighboring schools and in surrounding villages.

Finally, the description of children's play activities in the present study is not meant to be exhaustive. Observations occurred over a three month period during the second school term. The record of activities is therefore merely a "slice" of a particular time and place.

The Limitations of the Study

Any research endeavor is limited by its method because a method is grounded in a set of assumptions that necessarily influence the research direction and the obtained results. In the present study, both data collection and data interpretation are influenced by the researcher's own culture-bound preconceptions. Although some ethnocentric preconceptions are unavoidable, I

have attempted to minimize such influences through a rigorous process of self-reflection and a continuous monitoring of my field notes. As well, in order to inform the reader of my perspective, I have provided a description of the background that I bring to the research situation and I have presented the data description and the data analysis separately. It should be emphasized, however, that the effects of one's own cultural experiences cannot be entirely suspended during the research process. As Kelly-Byrne (1989) points out, as teachers, researchers, and members of other communities, we can never act as neutral beings when we interact with children. Rather, we act as informed professionals who "run the risk that our biases, needs, and vulnerabilities will blind us or color our vision" (Kelly-Byrne, 1989, p. 30).

It is also possible that participants' behavior may have been influenced by my presence and appearance. Specifically, it is possible that children may alter their activities in the presence of someone unfamiliar. By developing rapport, following entree-gaining techniques, and being aware of my physical appearance and behavior (e.g., manner of dress, speech, eye contact, etc.), however, the possibility of this influence occurring has been minimized. It should also be noted that the presence of an interpreter/informant (i.e., one of the teachers) may have affected children's natural behavior.

Overview of the Study

The organization of the research study is as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction. An introduction to the research question and its significance are provided in this chapter. Delimitations and limitations of the study are also presented.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature. In order to provide a context for discussing the relationship between play and culture, theoretical perspectives on each concept are reviewed and their significance discussed. A model of the distinguishing characteristics of play is also presented, followed by frameworks for analyzing games, "gaming" rules, imitative play, and make-believe play. The significance of studying play is then discussed, and finally, the relevant cross-cultural literature on children's play is reviewed. This includes five major areas of study: play group composition, games, imitative play, make-believe play, and play materials.

Chapter 3: Methods. In this chapter, a conceptualization of the underlying assumptions of ethnography is presented within a framework of four dimensions: inductive-deductive, subjective-objective, generative-verificative, and constructive-enumerative. Issues of validity, reliability, and generalizability are also addressed. The particular ethnographic method used in this study -- a method involving a simultaneous process of description and analysis -- is then described. This is followed by a discussion of the procedures used in conducting the research, which include gaining entree, data sources and collection, method of analysis, and arrangement of the data. The setting for the research and

portraits of the participants are then described. Finally, the researcher's background is outlined in order to make my preconceptions explicit to the reader.

Chapter 4: Data Description. This chapter provides a description of the play activities observed. The activities are initially categorized according to whether they involve formal, informal, or tacit rules. Further classification is based on the unique characteristics of each activity (e.g., singing, make-believe).

Chapter 5: Data Analysis and Discussion. In this chapter, the data are analyzed according to gender, socioeconomic, cultural, and developmental factors. The study's main research findings are also discussed.

Chapter 6: Conclusion. This chapter addresses the study's new research findings as well as the implications of the research results for education in developing countries. Future research directions are also considered.

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Play and Culture: Theoretical Perspectives

Although play (including games, sports, and aesthetic activities) has been described by anthropologists, it has not commonly been an important subject of anthropological study (Norbeck, 1975). Perhaps one notable exception is Margaret Mead who, for many years, had an interest in the general topic of play. Generally, interest in studying human play has been more recent and, to date, has included a wide range of topics such as the biological significance of human play, the relationship between play and psychopathology, play elements in the stages of rites of passage, ritual humor, play as inverted behavior, and the play of children (Norbeck, 1975).

More recently, anthropologists have encouraged the study of play as a topic that is not only important but necessary (e.g., Ager, 1975; Norbeck, 1975; Schwartzman, 1975). In particular, Norbeck (1975, p. 3) argues that "play is a conspicuously striking and universal kind of human behavior that is genetically based and culturally modified". Moreover, he emphasizes that if anthropology's objective is to gain an understanding of human beings and their way of life, then the study of play is crucial.

The body of theoretical approaches to the study of play, however, has commonly been classified as underdeveloped (Mouledoux, 1975). In fact, many contemporary theories of play are typically an attempt to transpose play phenomena into the terms of theories derived from other areas of study. Such examples include attempts to apply psychoanalytic, information-processing, cognitive, role-, or learning theories to play (Mouledoux, 1975). Invariably, in such cases only those aspects of play that fit the preconceived theory are considered.

Piaget's developmental orientation is an example of the limitations of such an approach (Mouledoux, 1975). More specifically, in his structuralist approach, which emphasizes the universals in play forms, he has been criticized within the anthropological literature for ignoring variations in the content and meaning of play activities and for not addressing the possible relationship between form and content or meaning (Mouledoux, 1975). Mouledoux also argues that Piaget's specialized emphasis has generally lead to a lack of appreciation for the attractions and pleasures of play.

Callois' theory of play can be contrasted to Piaget's theory in that it is inductive and derived from play activity itself, and thus, is open to a whole range of recorded and observable phenomena (Mouledoux, 1975). Moreover, Callois (1961) argues that Piaget's theory does not encompass games of chance and more specifically, concerns only the play activities that West European children engage in during school recreation periods. It would seem, then, that Piaget's theory of play is not a particularly useful one for the anthropological study of play.

Huizinga (1950), however, provides a potentially valuable and interesting perspective in the anthropological study of play. His goal was to ascertain how far culture itself represents the character of play. He carefully described his work as concerning the play forms *of* culture rather than the play forms *in* culture, which suggests that he acknowledged that play is a vehicle for many activities known by other names (Norbeck, 1975). Huizinga examined ritual, law, war, politics, knowledge, imagery, philosophy, and various fields of aesthetics, and concluded that "the spirit of playful competition is, as a social impulse, older than culture itself and pervades all life like a cultural ferment" (1950, p. 198). In short, he argued that play is the embodiment of civilization as it arises and unfolds (Huizinga, 1950).

Both Huizinga and Caillois support the view that a general relationship exists between play and a range of other cultural forms. Caillois (1961) specifically emphasized that what children express in play is the same as what is expressed in culture. Similarly, Slaughter and Dombrowski (1989, p. 304) contend that ". . . one implied goal of studying children's play can be the defining of culture, that is, the definition of the culture comes out of the study, as part of our understanding of the play itself." Mouledoux (1975) cautions, however, that to acknowledge the existence of shared elements between play and other cultural or symbolic forms is not to imply that they are the same or interchangeable. Of equal importance is that distinctions among different cultural or symbolic forms are a matter of exploration for the researcher and therefore, these distinctions cannot be presented as neat and simple definitions before research begins (Mouledoux, 1975).

Caillois (1961, p. 6) has also argued that "in effect, play is essentially a separate occupation, carefully isolated from the rest of life, and generally, is engaged in with precise limits of time and place. . . . Nothing that takes place outside this ideal frontier is relevant". Similarly, Huizinga (1950, p. 8) has proposed that "play is superfluous. The need for it is only urgent to the extent that the enjoyment of it makes it a need. Play can be deferred or suspended at any time. It is never a task." This notion that play and work are separate has been questioned in the literature. Denzin (1990), for example, proposes that the world of play is not distinct from everyday "taken-for-granted" reality but that it occurs in the immediately experienced "here and now". Furthermore, he argues that "play as playing is prospectively anticipated, retrospectively reflected upon, and in the specious present, experienced as -- to use Heidegger's term -- 'being in being'" (Denzin, 1990, p. 14). He also stresses that on *an a priori* basis, play cannot be distinguished from other everyday interactions, including conversation and other activities of habit. In other words, play and work cannot be viewed separately because one person's play may represent another person's work (i.e., non-play), and consequently, defining play is problematic.

The Distinguishing Characteristics of Play

In many of the existing formulations of play, the following attributes are commonly ascribed to play: 1) it is an end in itself; 2) it is played within the limits of time and space; 3) it lacks precise organization; 4) it is characterized by an absence of conflict; 5) it has freely accepted but completely binding rules; and 6) it is a voluntary activity (Berlyne, 1969; Caillois, 1961; Huizinga, 1950; Piaget, 1962, cited in Denzin, 1975). Stone (1969), however, seems to present the most comprehensive formulation of the distinguishing characteristics of play. The first characteristic, which he considers to be the most fundamental, is that play activities provide goods internal to those activities. Here, Stone has borrowed the term "internal goods" from MacIntyre (1981, cited in Stone, 1969), who defines the term as goods that are inherent to a particular activity and cannot be achieved through other activities. For instance, the goods internal to chess might include acquiring a particular kind of analytic skill, strategic imagination, and competitiveness. MacIntyre contends that internal goods can only be completely understood by those who have participated in such an activity.

The second characteristic of play is that it actively engages the world. Play is an activity that cannot be equated with just any form of leisure; it is one type of amusement and joy among many. Stone (1969) maintains that play is a pursuit that involves effort, exertion, self-restraint, and the ability to delay gratification.

A third characteristic of play is "non-algorithmic" social rules. Non-algorithmic implies that the rules of play are not exact but rather, that they are probabilistic and require a particular form of judgement or rationality. Stone (1969) suggests that one of the greatest charms of play is that its rules seldom determine its outcome. Similarly, Caillois (1961) describes play as being uncertain in that its results cannot be determined beforehand and, thus as Denzin (1975) indicates, innovations are left to the players' initiatives. Denzin (1980) also describes play as novel and emergent because it builds upon itself and has a sense of history unique to its participants.

That the rules of play are only learned through participation, is the fourth characteristic of play. Moreover, the rules of play are tacit in that their genuine understanding does not require thought. This is essentially based on Wittgenstein's premise that "Obeying a rule is a practice. And thinking one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule" (1953, p. 202, cited in Stone, 1969). Similarly, Caillois (1961) defines play as being governed by rules that serve to "suspend ordinary laws" and momentarily "establish new legislation". The rules of play are learned in groups or "bundles" because it is necessary to know many rules before it is possible to understand any one particular rule (Stone, 1969). This fact mirrors the fifth characteristic of play, namely, that play contains elements of repetition and creative excursion. This characteristic accounts for both the objectified, repeatable quality of play and its more subjective, creative quality.

Play "allows one to transcend the self, to be utterly serious over, and preoccupied with, something other than one's immediate and private interests" (Stone, 1969, p. 68). In this way, play is sublime -- its sixth characteristic. Gadamer suggests that in play one becomes "buoyant in the activity", caught up in the "to-and-fro, back-and-forth movement" of the activity (Stone, 1969). The rules of play seem to capture the players in a sense of liberation and unity of mind. Caillois (1961) proposes that this is the make-believe aspect of play; it is an awareness of a second reality separate from real life. Additionally, play is free, attractive, and joyous because players are not obligated to play.

Denzin (1980) also suggests that play is "embodied behavior" and that during play, participants experience themselves as "embodied, moving actors". Moreover, according to Denzin, the player's body positions and sensations constitute play's principal felt reality and thus, because play is experienced as an embodied experience, it also occurs within an "emotional" frame. In other words, players feel themselves playing and continue to play in order to achieve a particular emotional and recurring state within the situation.

The seventh and final characteristic of play is that it contains risk. Stone (1969) proposes that play is risky for two reasons. First, by is very nature, play involves an element of wager and uncertainty because the outcome of play is unknown when the player begins it. Second, regardless of how players play, they cannot be assured of internal goods. In addition, Borgmann (1984, cited in Stone, 1969) emphasizes that the nature of the internal goods of play is such that rewards are not always forthcoming and that play can sometimes be disappointing. Similarly, play has also been described as unproductive because it fails to create tangible goods, wealth, or new elements of any particular kind (Caillois, 1961).

Bateson (1972) also asserts that play involves doubt, risk, threat, and uncertainty. Denzin (1980) adds that play threatens the player's body and the player's perceived definition of self in the situation. Denzin also relates risk and doubt to competition and argues that players compete over the game's resources, over the play spaces that they will occupy in the play situation, and over play and in play itself. That is, he maintains that boasting and threatening are basic characteristics of play.

Frameworks for Analyzing Play

To explore how culture is reflected in the play activities of children in rural Kenya, a description of games and non-game activities is alone inadequate. Instead, it is necessary to move beyond simply describing play to analyzing the roles and values of a society as they are perceived by children (Ager, 1975). What follows are potentially useful frameworks for the analysis of various play forms such as games, "gaming" rules, imitative play, and make-believe play.

Analyzing Games

In Avedon's (1971) framework for analyzing games, he suggests that there are certain structural elements common to all games, regardless of the culture in which the games are played. He identifies seven invariant elements in games that are a consolidation of the work of Mead, Goffman, Berne, and others.

The first five structural elements of games identified by Avedon were originally suggested by Mead (1934), who contended that games were fundamentally a pattern of specific social situations or specific structural elements that influence behavior. According to Mead,

> [t]he game has a logic, so that there is a definite end to be obtained; the actions of the different individuals are all related to each other with reference to that end . . . so that they further the purpose of the game itself. They are interrelated in a unitary, organic fashion (1934, p. 158-159).

The first structural element evident in Mead's work is the purpose of the game or the *raison d'être*. A second element that he proposed is the procedures for action that players use to achieve the goals of the game. Third, he identified interaction patterns among players, which are affected by social processes. A fourth element involves the roles that players are required to adopt in game situations. The fifth element refers to the rules that govern actions.

Goffman, in his study of the sociology of interaction, confirms Mead's conceptualization of the structural elements of games (Avedon, 1971). Goffman, however, also proposed a new element that he referred to as fun or euphoria, and he argued that this element is essential to participation in a game. Although fun is subjective and is therefore not an intrinsic element in games, he maintained that other game elements must be manipulated for the participant to derive a sense of fun from the situation.

Blesty (1986) argues that Mead's description of role-playing is an accurate account of the way fun and play (i.e., games) are related. He proposes that each of the three acts that constitute role-play (i.e., taking the role of the other, taking the role of the generalized other, and the role enactment) result in types of fun that, when they occur together, constitute play. He does, however, qualify this argument by emphasizing that the three types of fun do not solely constitute true play (Blesty, 1986). Instead, it involves

> (a) embracing a novel object, (b) acting in the world as if that novel object were part of oneself so that the 'I' in the ensuing action is novel, and (c) validating that novel action so that the 'me' or reflected-upon self is also novel in the social world. (Blesty, 1986, p. 71)

Nevertheless, he emphasizes that fun in games should be understood seperately from fun in other social situations.

In contrast, although Berne was also concerned with interaction patterns (Avedon, 1971), his approach was unique in that he identified ostensibly non-game interactions as constituting games. More specifically, he indicated that although the intrinsic elements of games differentiate them from other social situations, these situations also possess the structural elements inherent to games and are, in reality, games. It should be noted that Sutton-Smith (1972a) argues that to impose rules and a fixed structure on non-game activities -- so that they resemble games -- is to inaccurately conceptualize "play" as consisting only of "games".

Overall, then, Avedon (1971) proposes that the following seven elements are invariant in games. First, all games have a specific purpose or *raison d'être*. This purpose may be universal for all participants or may differ according to roles. Second, procedures for action (i.e., specific operations or required courses of action) are required for any given game. Third, all games have fixed principles that determine conduct and standards for behavior, some games have explicit rules and others have implicit rules. Moreover, explicit rules may be so elaborate that a non-participant may be required to record violations of the rules or to enforce the rules (e.g., an umpire in baseball). In contrast, implicit rules may be private, internal, or idiosyncratic. Fourth, for all games, a minimum or maximum number of players is required for action to occur. Fifth, roles within games are essential for indicating the function and status of the participants and these roles may differ or be the same for each participant. Sixth, for each participant in a game, values are attached to the outcome of the action. For example, a kiss would be a pay-off in a game of spin the bottle. In other games, the pay-off may be related to the sense of fun that participants derive from the situation. Seventh, abilities and skills are required for participation and this includes aspects of the three behavioral domains (i.e., cognitive, sensory-motor, and affective) used in a given activity.

In addition to these seven elements, Avedon (1971) also identifies three subsidiary elements suggested by personnel in the field of recreation. The first of these is that all games involve interaction patterns and these can be located along a continuum ranging from actions that occur within the mind of the person, or involving the mind and part of the body but requiring no contact with another person or external object, to actions of a competitive nature between two or more groups. Also, games have physical settings or environmental requirements. For example, game actions may take place in human-made or natural facilities, or they may require environmental circumstances that are indispensable or obligatory (this element may not always be present). Last, many games require equipment to be used during the game's course of action. Depending on the game and on existing resources, equipment may be manufactured or improvised (this element may not always be present).

Although the analysis of game playing is a well researched area within the field of competitive sports, the study of games organized by children has not been a common area of study (Wolfe, 1983). Goldstein (1971) and others (e.g., Lancy & Tindall, 1975) contend that most folklore studies of children's games consist of a listing of game rules. He questions this approach and suggests that

the rules as described by informants are "the rules by which people should play rather than the rules by which they do play" (Goldstein, 1971, p. 90). To illustrate this point, he contrasts game rules and their use in children's counting out rhymes. He observed that children chose rhymes with different numbers of beats, depending on the number of players, and then added extra rhymes if the initial outcome was not the one that they anticipated (e.g., "My mother told me to pick this very one, two . . . ").

According to Goldstein, such practices necessitate a fundamental rethinking of the way in which games are characterized and their function in children's lives. More specifically, he argues that based on the rules of counting-out, the game is usually categorized as a game of chance. In analyzing how children use counting-out rhymes, however, he contends that this activity would more properly be characterized as a game of strategy. He concludes that if the play activities of children are a reflection of the adult world and its values and beliefs, then improper classification of a society's games may result in a false or inappropriate representation of the culture. This is a particularly significant point to be considered in the present study.

Analyzing "Gaming" Rules

Using Goldstein's theory as a starting point, Hughes (1991) develops a conceptual framework for studying children's gaming. She underscores the importance of studying children's games as unique social contexts, collectively constructed by the participants, rather than as a set of abstract rules. Moreover, she delineates three different rule systems that are implicated whenever games are actually played: game rules, social rules, and higher order gaming rules.

According to Hughes (1991), game rules set the scene and outline the sequence for action in the game. She cautions, however, that these rules provide an ambiguous framework for player action because the same or similar actions can be interpreted to mean different things to different players depending upon the situation (Hughes, 1991). This, she stresses, should be central in the study of children's gaming. She also emphasizes that another primary goal of gaming studies should be to describe how the social worlds of the players are integrated into particular games to produce different variations of the same activity (Hughes, 1991). That is, in the study of gaming, researchers should be concerned with three primary domains of meaning: the rules of the game (i.e., the game text), the rules of the social world in which the game is being played (i.e., the social context), and the domain of shared understandings generated from the interaction between game structure and social structure in particular times and places (i.e., gaming rules).

Analyzing Imitative Play

Christie and Johnsen (1983) argue, as have Schwartzman and other anthropologists, that play texts (i.e., play events) cannot be fully understood in isolation from play contexts (i.e., the social and physical settings in which play occurs). Similarly, Bruner (1983) maintains that children's play is a reflection of

the ideals and values existing in the adult society, which can be viewed as a socialization process that prepares children for adult roles in society. In other words, as Harkness and Super (1983) emphasize, play provides children with the knowledge required to successfully function as adults in a particular culture.

Analyzing Make-Believe Play

Schwartzman (1975) proposes four major perspectives for analyzing make-believe play: (1) the "upward" perspective (i.e., play is viewed as preparation for adult life), (2) the "inward-outward view" (i.e., play is interpreted as a psychological projection), (3) the "turn-about or backwards angle", (i.e., play is described as a game activity and then games are viewed as reversals of cultural systems), and (4) the "sideways perspective" (i.e., play is viewed a text). Similarly, Geertz (1973) suggests that make-believe play be viewed as a text or a story that participants "tell themselves about themselves". Schwartzman (1975) argues that the sideways perspective of play (as a text) offers a new and potentially useful method for studying and interpreting children's make-believe play.

The Significance of Studying Children's Play

The idea that children's play can be used as an articulation of teaching techniques and curriculum has also been explored. Although this was initially put into practice by Pestalozzi (Adelman, 1990), it was Froebel's ideas of play -- which were a modification of Pestalozzi's theory of children's interests and self-activity -- that became a medium for learning within the context of schooling. Froebel proposed that "play is the purest, most spiritual activity in [human beings] . . . , and at the same time, typical of human life as a whole -- of the inner hidden natural life of [human beings]" (Froebel, 1895, p. 86-87, in Adelman, 1990). Froebel also suggested that children attempt to maintain continuity in their lives by bringing playful activity to their formalized learning experiences (Zelan, 1966). For example, play allows children to achieve mastery over many aspects of themselves and their environment through symbolic enactment of roles, exploration of feelings using materials, and interaction with others (Garvey, 1977). These themes are typically repeated during several play episodes, which suggests that play is also cathartic for children because it allows them to re-experience and thereby resolve or master a difficult situation. In this way, play may also prepare children "inwardly" for the difficulties that may arise in the process of learning (Amonashvili, 1986).

Similarly, Froebel observed that the way in which children play often reveals their inner struggles (Adelman, 1990). It has also been noted that the developing self-image of children may be reflected in play behavior. In many ways, a child's growth and learning (e.g., through play) are an emergence of self inherent to the unique world of the child (van Manen, 1991). Equally significant is the fact that play is often the child's primary means of learning social expectations, attempting to understand culturally appropriate behaviors, struggling to learn to manage emotions, and gaining access to the techniques and skills of the world in which she or he lives (Michelet, 1986). Essentially, the

child's whole personality can be seen to be involved in play. In fact, Froebel (1885, cited in Adelman, 1990) has argued that in order to understand the "whole child", it is crucial to understand that the inextricable link between the "inner" and the "outer" of children's play has a visible and metaphysical aspect .

It has also been suggested that children's play can be used to enhance the understanding of the acquisition of culture. According to Harkness and Super (1983), the general orientation of the researcher in these studies can take one of two basic directions. First, the activities of childhood can be viewed with a long-range focus on the roles of adulthood and, second, the reverse can be applied whereby knowledge of the culture is used to interpret the structuring of children's play. In the case of the latter, they argue that to arrive at an adequate theory of child development and to analyze cultural systems, it is necessary to understand how experience is organized for individuals at different levels of their development. Specifically, they propose that the "developmental niche" provides a particularly valuable framework for analyzing aspects of childhood socialization and development. According to Harkness and Super (1983), the developmental niche can be conceptualized in terms of three basic dimensions: (1) the physical and social settings in which the child lives, (2) the culturally regulated systems of child care and rearing, and (3) the beliefs and values of the caretakers.

A Review of the Cross-Cultural Literature

As previously mentioned, play contributes to the physical development of children, their emotional well-being, and their socialization, learning, and creativity (Seagoe & Murakami, 1961). What is referred to as children's play is, in many respects, "the consciously patterned ways in which children relate to, and experiment with, their social and physical environment as well as their own abilities" (Leacock, 1976, p. 45). Although it has been suggested that cross-cultural studies of children's play can provide insight into the values and practices of a society (Schwartzman, 1978), few studies have examined the cultural variations inherent in the social behavior of children. Moreover, studies of play and culture have typically evolved as separate modes of inquiry (Schwartzman, 1984). Some researchers, however, have come to realize that integrated investigations that assume play and culture mutually influence one another are beneficial to the advancement of knowledge in both areas. It would therefore seem that the present study, which investigates cultural patterns in children's play activities, will contribute to the understanding of values and practices in other societies. Within the cross-cultural literature on play, five major areas can be identified: play group composition, games, imitative play, make-believe play, and play materials.

Play Group Composition

Play group composition has been identified as an important aspect of play and has received considerable attention in the literature. Farver and Howes (1988) examined cross-cultural differences in the social behavior of American and Indonesian children in America and found that although children in both

samples tended to interact in similar-sized play groups, fewer Indonesian children interacted with same age-peers than American children. Older Indonesian children, however, were more likely to interact with same-age peers than younger children. Farver and Howes, though, suggested that the variations in children's social interactions were shaped by social context. Specifically, child-care practices in Indonesia involve caregiving as well as play. Consequently, the older children in the Indonesian sample were aware that they were responsible for the younger children. In contrast, in the American sample, children had only to play.

In terms of age differences in play group composition, Liddell (1988) compared the social interaction patterns of children from two San groups (i.e., Kwengo and Sekele) in Namibia. It was found that Kwengo children's play groups were more segregated by age than play groups of Sekele children. Similarly, in a major study comparing children's play in six modern cultures (i.e., England, Norway, Spain, Greece, Egypt, and the United States), Seagoe (1971) found a positive association between age and social interaction. This relationship, however, was stronger for boys and for countries that historically had an English influence.

Sex differences in play group composition have also been examined. Farver and Howes (1988) found that both American and Indonesian children tended to interact with same-sex companions, and that older children in both cultures interacted with same-sex companions more often than younger children. They suggest, however, that these results may have been confounded because the low representation of girls in the Indonesian sample did not allow for significant interaction in mixed-sex play groups. Farver and Howes state that this finding suggests that sex segregation of play groups is influenced both by the society's sexual division of labor and by Islamic religious practices of sex segregation.

Noppe and Ray's (1990) study of cross-cultural interactions in an American daycare setting yields additional evidence that children's social interactions are often segregated by sex. Findings in their observational study comparing American and English-speaking Hmong-American preschoolers indicated that within both cultures, boys and girls tended to initiate social interactions more with same-sex peers.

Cultural differences have also been identified in the literature. Knopp Polgar (1978) observed social interaction between black and white sixth grade American boys during free play and discovered that children tended to group themselves according to color. This is consistent with the study by Noppe and Ray (1990) where it was found that both American and Hmong-American preschoolers tended to initiate social contact with the same-ethnic group during free play. It should also be noted that both of these studies emphasize the importance of cross-race or cross-cultural interactions for developing an understanding and appreciation of people with different backgrounds.

In terms of adult-oriented play groups, Liddell (1988) compared two San groups (i.e., Kwengo and Sikele) in Namibia. She discovered that Kwengo children had more interactions with adult females than did Sekele children. Also of significance is the finding that Kwengo females interacted in larger groups than Sekele females. Liddell ascribed these variations to different socialization practices within each group. In Seagoe's (1971) examination of six cultures, adult-oriented play was uncommon in Egypt and in Spain, particularly for boys.

Games

Play has frequently been described as a game activity (Schwartzman & Barbera, 1976) and both formalized games with elaborate rule structures and informal games with more idiosyncratic and spontaneously developed rules have been examined in the literature.

Types of games engaged in have been found to vary widely across cultures. Leacock (1976), for example, most commonly observed boys' soccer and a girls' ball throwing game (described as throwing a ball back and forth between two lines of players while trying to hit a centrally positioned girl before she can fill a bottle with dirt) in her observations of Matero children's games in Zambia. She also observed hunting games in which children attempted to catch rats and shoot birds. "Chitelele", a traditional women's singing and clapping game, and "mashasha", dancing as couples to jazz, were noted as well. Other games played by Matero children included marbles and jacks (played with stones) and checkers. Leacock identified "nsoro", a game in which players make long rows of holes in the ground and use pebbles as counters, as the most interesting of the African games. The object of the game is to "eat" all of the opponent's counters. Nsoro is learned by observation, with younger children observing older children, and older children observing a more complex version played by adults. Leacock suggested that this game may be particularly useful for making formal learning in African schools more enjoyable.

Similarly, Farrer (1975), in her observational study of Mescalero Apache Indians, concluded that knowledge of children's games is important for enhancing communication between teachers and students. She compared Mescalero-style tag with mainstream American tag and found that unlike American tag, Mescalero-tag is circular (i.e., played clockwise) as opposed to linear. Furthermore, bodies may touch during the game and calling out to negotiate rules (e.g., "That's not fair!" or "She's cheating!") is not permitted. Although the game is recognizable as tag, Farrer perceived the children as replicating cultural communication patterns, which often tend to be non-verbal. More specifically, she maintained that they replicate basic tenets of the culture that stress the importance of circularity, contact, and observational learning. Farrer also proposed that awareness of these patterns may have particular implications for non-Indian teachers.

Salamone (1983) observed traditional games in a multiethnic Nigerian community and concluded that these games reflected patterns present in adult

life. Most notable were girls' circle games that excluded members of the opposite sex. According to Salamone, such games are both a means for girls to establish social control, through the reinforcement of appropriate group behavior, and a reflection of the importance of cooperative effort. Alternatively, boys' traditional games included ring toss, a snail shell game, and a ground-nut (peanut) game. Each of these games is played in small groups (i.e., 3 to 5 players) and involves establishing the "prestige" of each player. Salamone emphasizes that boys' games also represent behavior appropriate in adult life. Moreover, he suggests that traditional games measure patterns of change in society and that games may be useful in easing ethnic interaction.

The patterns of change in the play behavior of children have also been examined by Lancy (1975). In his study of Kpelle children in a Liberian community comprised of two drastically different cultures, he concluded that games involving balls (e.g., soccer) and drawing in the dirt divided the modern culture from the traditional culture. He also noted that children were never taught to play games but rather, they learned them through observing older children. In addition, he found that younger children play games with simple structures and that overall, there is a developmental progression in game play. Developmental progressions in game play have also been discussed by Sutton-Smith (1972a) in his study of New Zealand children's folkgames.

Rosenstiel (1975) analyzed the traditional games of Motu children in Papua New Guinea and concluded that these games serve to reinforce the stability and continuum of the culture. In addition, the majority of games played by these children were games of skill and Rosenstiel suggests that these provide an introduction to achievement and basic survival skills required in adult life. Equally significant is the fact that no social distinctions, other than the division of labor, were observed between the sexes and that many games were direct imitations of adult activities (e.g., birth, feeding, widowhood, basket and pot making, sailing, and fishing).

Ager (1975) examined Eskimo children's play in Tununak and found that values such as initiative, memory, and physical strength, which are essential for hunting, were reflected in the types of games traditionally played by Eskimo children. These include games of physical skill, dexterity, and memory-attention. Moreover, the cultural values of individuality and self-reliance were expressed in the absence of humiliation for the losers and humor in game playing. Ager also proposes that this community's lack of emphasis on material possessions is represented by the careless attitude toward game equipment and game prizes and that the increasing interest in games of strategy suggests values associated with the modern world. Finally, she concludes that the preference for informal play activities may be a reflection of informal and permissive social relationships.

In observing Balinese children play, Storey (1973) identified three types of relationships among players: (1) the "it" figure versus the rest of the group, (2) each player for her- or himself, and (3) team versus team. She concludes that within the game structure, children are able to assume inferior and superior

roles and that because Balinese children are casteless until puberty, these games prepare them for positions that they will assume in the adult social order. Also, due to an increase in competitiveness in Balinese society, Storey argues that children in Bali prefer more competitive games rather than traditional games based on mythical stories.

Gender differences in types of games played have also been identified. Finnan (1982), for instance, found specific gender differences in styles of chase in her examination of fourth and sixth grade American children and Vietnamese refugee children. In both cultures, boys were observed as displaying an aggressive, physical style of chase, whereas girls were more passive and teasing. Four elements characterized the chase games of boys: 1) aggression, 2) physical contact, 3) absence of established safety zones, and 4) lack of permanent roles. In comparison, five elements characterized girls' chase games: 1) short and halting chases, 2) frequent permanent roles, 3) an established safety zone, 4) frequent assumption of fantasy roles, and 5) an underlying desire to involve boys in the chase. It should also be noted that boys were proud of their games and their status on the playground and expressed no desire to include girls in their play. Girls, on the other hand, were dissatisfied with their role on the playground and were envious of boys' play. Additionally, when boys and girls played together in self-structured chase games, the games lost the order and conformity characteristic of girls' play and became a mixture of both boys' and girls' types of chase. The lack of rules in these games forced boys and girls to use aggression to protect themselves and Finnan referred to this behavior as the children's response to preparing for new roles in a changing society.

A number of studies have identified game preferences as being influenced by cultural factors. In Seagoe and Murakami's (1961) study, first and sixth grade American and Japanese children were interviewed to establish specific game preferences. Categories for game preferences were: circle games, group activities, individual activities, team competitive games, individual competitive games, and games of intellect.[1] Findings were categorized by grade, sex, and urban-rural differences. Grade results indicated that group activities were preferred by Japanese children in both first and sixth grade. Another interesting finding was that first grade American children indicated a preference for circle games but that this was absent by sixth grade. This is most likely due to developmental factors.

When sex differences in game preferences are examined, American boys showed a stronger preference for team competitive games than Japanese boys. In contrast, American girls differed from Japanese girls in that they showed a higher preference for individual activities and circle games. Other unique differences involved the importance of individual competitive sports to Japanese boys and the lack of importance of circle games to American boys.

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[1]Seagoe and Murakami do not define these categories in their study.

Urban-rural differences were also examined and it was found that both urban and rural American samples emphasized team competitive games. In contrast, both urban and rural Japanese samples emphasized group game activities. Rural differences between both samples, however, were greater than urban differences. More specifically, one of the major findings was that the rural American group exceeded the Japanese group in their preference for individual activities.[2] This, however, may be related to the fact that in rural America, children may be more isolated from playmates because of greater geographic differences.

Seagoe (1971), in her study of six cultures, discovered that team games were the predominant preference of boys in the United States, England, and Egypt, but were less preferred in Norway. In contrast, girls seldom engaged in team games regardless of whether or not boys in that culture did. For boys, team games were particularly emphasized in the United States and England.

In the study by Finnan (1982), it was also found that Vietnamese refugee children had more restricted game preferences than American children. Vietnamese children frequently chose highly structured games, whereas American children chose spontaneous play. Finnan attributed the Vietnamese children's choice of play involving well-defined roles and boundaries to their lack of confidence with the American culture. That is, she felt that while the American children were secure within the culture and could transcend and modify the social rules to create novel play situations, the Vietnamese children found rule-governed games novel because they learned new social rules.

Imitative Play

Imitative play has traditionally been examined in terms of its relationship to adult roles (Harkness & Super, 1983) because children's play often has the important purpose of serving as a rehearsal for adult life (Schwartzman, 1978). Moreover, children perform many activities in imitating adults and this is consistent with the theory that children's play is anticipatory of adult life (Kenyatta, 1938).

In their analysis of Kipsigis children's play in rural Kenya, Harkness and Super (1983) examined how imitative play develops from its function in children's "developmental niches" (i.e., the child's physical and social environment, the culturally regulated systems of child-care and child-rearing, and the beliefs and values of caretakers). Children's activities were classified along two dimensions: active or quiet play and solitary or social play. It was found that at age two, children appeared to be involved in play activities approximately 40% of the time. By age three, however, children spent a

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[2]It was also interesting to note that this study included data from American children in Japan. Seagoe and Murakami denote that "Americans in Japan generally occupy a position between Japanese and Americans" (1961, p. 128). Typically, the play of these children was similar to the findings discussed, although to a lesser degree. However, the variety of activities was greater, play forms were more unique, and American games were played more frequently than Japanese games.

substantially lower percentage of time playing. This trend continued through to age six and by age nine children were spending only about 10% of their time playing and 50% of their time in work activities. Harkness and Super's observations of play were often within the context of work, and they concluded that socialization of Kipsigis children emphasized work rather than play.

Miracle (1976) also found that in Aymara societies in South America, children are allowed to play only after finishing all work. He also noted that work and play were often integrated and that children learned agricultural skills, marketing practices, animal husbandry, and boat-building skills from a variety of play activities. Children also imitated adults by constructing buildings and alters. Miracle (1976) concluded that children's play and games serve three essential functions in Aymara society: (1) to reinforce the adult non-adult dichotomy, (2) to teach children skills necessary for adult life, specifically that work is highly valued, and (3) to teach children cooperation and interaction among peers.

Bloch (1984) observed Senegalese children in imitative role-play involving adult work activities such as house construction, cooking, grinding grain, preparing food, washing clothes, housekeeping or hunting. An interesting finding was that both male and female children engaged in cooking and food preparation, and that this activity was encouraged by adults. Furthermore, despite the scarcity of materials available, it was observed that children were inventive and engaged in complex representational play activities. As a result, Bloch concluded that these children are able to adapt to their environments and be creative in locating play materials.

Similarly, Shoemaker (1984) noted that Chama Indian children in Northern Bolivia were ingenious at using handmade play materials to imitate the adult culture. Interestingly, many new imitative activities emerged as a result of her presence in the community. For example, children were observed fashioning two-way radios from string and match boxes and also imitated airplanes launching, flying, and landing. Play houses, cooking utensils, and hunting equipment were also commonly used. Jackson (1984) also concluded that Guarayu Indian children are imitative in their use of play materials and she observed children using bright orange-red blossoms to make artificial lips and using large palm pods to make canoes. Houses, dolls, and cooking equipment were also used in imitation of adults.

In her study of Balinese children, Storey (1975) observed imitative play such as temple festivals and work activities. Temple festivals included cockfights, cremations, dance, music, drama, and shadow puppet shows, whereas work activities might involve pretending to prepare and sell food at a food stall that was set up on the side of a street. In the case of the work activities, however, she noted that children only participated in activities that they were not expected to participate in on a regular basis. In other words, children who set up food stalls (*warungs*) did so because it was a novelty. Interestingly, Lancy (1975) notes an absence of children's play imitations of adult roles (e.g., leatherworking) that cease to exist in the larger society.

In Seagoe's (1971), it was found that imitative play was frequently observed among girls in all of the cultures examined except Egypt, where it was not observed in either sex. She attributed this finding to the fact that girls were under more home direction for longer periods of time than boys. Similarly, Bennett, Baker, and Nelson (1988) found imitative play to be common among young Yu'pik Eskimo girls. They engaged in representational play through "storyknifing", which involved telling stories and drawing symbols in the snow to represent spoken language. Seagoe noted the importance of the storyknifing activity to parents, who believe that this activity provides a link to a more traditional Native society. For girls, it is a means by which to explore and construct meaning in their culture.

Make-Believe Play

Bruner (1976) emphasized that make-believe play is non-goal oriented and is therefore distinguishable from imitative play, where the goal (i.e., replicating adult life) is all important. Lancy (1975) contends that make-believe play is distinct from other play forms because it is the *conscious* dramatization of some real-life (and usually adult) activity. Newson and Newson (1979, cited in Davenport, 1983) also indicate that imaginative play is characterized by a lack of rules or by rules that are private, internal, and idiosyncratic.

Child (1983) compared cultural differences in the play activities of English and Asian children of similar age and gender. A checklist of 141 items was used to record the play behavior of children in a constant setting (i.e., Birmingham playbuses). The results indicated that make-believe play was more common among English children than among Asian children. Child attributed the low incidence of make-believe play for Asian children to the fact that they do not reside in a distinct world of childhood that is separate from an adult world to the same extent that English children do. That is, Asian children are responsible for chores at a very young age and many Asian mothers did not appear to encourage play as often as English mothers did. Asian children were also not encouraged to actively experiment and think independently and were instead rewarded for dependence on adults and conformity to peer group norms. Child maintained that these factors may also have accounted for the difficulties that Asian children experienced in choosing play materials and deciding when to change activities.

Similarly, Davenport (1983) observed a low level of make-believe play among Sikh children in a multi-ethnic nursery class in Britain. These children, however, were observed as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group and their parents were also interviewed. Davenport concluded that variations in play occur as a result of differences in parents' priorities (e.g., tolerance to noise, toys and equipment provided, and play areas established). These results should be interpreted cautiously, however, because Davenport did not share the same first language with the children and consequently, difficulties were encountered in classifying make-believe play . That is, discussions between children may have contained role-playing and make-believe content

but these may not have been classified as make-believe play due to the observer's inability to understand the dialogue.

Ariel and Sever (1980) examined how urbanization, modernization, and formal education are reflected in the spontaneous play of traditional Bedouin Arab children. They recorded children's verbal and non-verbal play behavior and scored these protocols on three dimensions: contents of make-believe play, color (i.e., the degree to which play is lively, interesting, flexible, imaginative, clever, etc.), and dynamity (i.e., the unwritten laws of play created by the children in order to control and regulate social interaction). Five to six year old Jewish and Arab children of various ethnic backgrounds were observed at home and school, individually and in groups. Ariel and Sever (1980) noted a striking similarity between the make-believe play of Sinai Bedouin children living in an encampment in the Sinai Desert and Bedouin children living in an urbanized area. Specifically, both groups rated low on color and dynamity and their play content most often involved the theme of motor vehicles. In contrast, the play of kibbutz children, who belong to the predominant "Western" social group in Israel, was colorful and dynamic and involved a rich variety of themes. These differences are primarily attributed to the culturally prescribed patterns of verbal and non-verbal interaction among the child's role models and to the socializing practices of the adults.

This study presents a number of important theoretical and practical implications regarding children's make-believe play in other cultures. First, it is argued that the content, structure, and development of individual and social play are culture-bound, not universal, and this severely limits theories of the structure and development of play (e.g., Piaget's theory). Also, if make-believe play is to be used as a diagnostic and therapeutic instrument in clinical settings, it should be examined separately for each sociocultural group because the language of make-believe play is culture-bound in both contents and structure. Last, an enriched environment and formal education alone do not seem to create more dynamic and colorful or richer play among children in traditional societies. Moreover, this should be a concern to educators who are interested in sociocultural integration problems.

Udwin and Shmukler (1981) examined the influence of sociocultural, economic, and home background factors on children's ability to engage in make-believe play. This observational study included four different nursery schools: group one consisted of Israeli middle-class West European children, group two consisted of Israeli lower-class preschoolers from immigrant families of Middle Eastern and North African origin, group three consisted of white South-African middle-class children, and group four consisted of white South-African lower-class children. It was found that socioeconomic class was the predominant variable in determining levels of make-believe play. In this study, the general impression of the middle-class children was that they engaged in an animated and make-believe play sequence that involved a distinct and elaborate story line. In contrast, the lower-class children displayed much lower levels of make-believe play. Moreover, when make-believe games did occur, they tended to be static and lasted only for short periods. Udwin and Shmukler

(1981, p. 71) concluded that "imagination requires stimulation from the environment in the form of parental encouragement and contact, a close but nonintrusive parent-child relationship, and either peer contact or opportunity and space for practice of make-believe in private in order to flourish". They also caution researchers against generalizing from white, middle-class samples within the area of make-believe play.

Lancy (1975) in his study of the play behavior of Kpelle children in Liberia describes make-believe play as "an alternatively collapsing and expanding process". He indicates that a distinct pattern of behavior is evident in the child's progression from "playing at work" to adopting adult work roles, and that make-believe play is integrated into this process. The following is an illustration of this process: A child of three observes a blacksmith at work, a child of four imitates the activity, a child of eight engages in make-believe play with his friends and pretends to be a blacksmith, a child of ten becomes a blacksmith's helper, a child of twelve is taught the skills of blacksmithing, and a child of eighteen becomes a blacksmith.

Play Materials

The focus of studies examining the play materials used by children include areas such as types, preferences, and influences of parents. Additionally, these have often been discussed in relation to children's skill development and imitative play behavior.

In an exploratory study by Prosser, Hutt, Hutt, Mahindadasa, and Goonetilleke (1986), the play material preferences of four and five year old Sri Lankan and British children were compared. Preferences were ranked by frequency of use and categorized as either high (ranked 1 to 7.5), medium (ranked 8 to 18), or low (ranked 19 to 25). The results indicated that both Sri Lankan and British children had a high preference for cooking implements, edible household consumables, and empty commercial containers. Both groups demonstrated a medium preference for pictures, books, and free construction toys. Both groups also indicated a low preference for commercial dressing-up items and public large play equipment. In terms of differences between groups, Sri Lankan children demonstrated a high preference for "domestic spares" and "hardware rubbish", whereas British children demonstrated a low preference. Moreover, while British children exhibited a high preference for electrical entertainment devices, Sri Lankan children exhibited only a low preference. A criticism of this study, however, is that the degree to which these findings have been influenced by the children's familiarity with and access to materials such as electrical entertainment devices and hardware garbage, was not considered.

Play material preferences have also been examined by Mergen (1991) in his survey of teen-age American students. Seventy-five percent of respondents were African-American and 25% were white. They were asked to list three activities they enjoyed doing indoors alone, three activities they enjoyed doing indoors with others, three activities they enjoyed doing outdoors with others,

and three favorite toys. Respondents were also asked to answer these same questions with reference to activities performed five years earlier. While boys recalled playing with toy soldiers/action figures and bicycles five years earlier, these materials had been replaced by new choices such as footballs, basketballs, cards, baseballs, and computer games. Similarly, girls also altered their preferences and discarded previous favorites of jump ropes, swings, and slides for cards, roller skates, basketballs, and computer games. It is also interesting to note that toy soldiers/action figures and video games were exclusively preferred by boys, whereas jump ropes, dolls, and jacks were exclusively preferred by girls.

In the study by Davenport (1983), it was found that the play materials of Sikh children were greatly influenced by parental preferences. Messy materials such as sand, paint, plasticine, and glue were not regarded by parents as suitable home play materials and were therefore not provided. Picture books and manipulative toys were also infrequently available. Drawing and scribbling, however, were popular with all children. Davenport attributed this to the fact that drawing and scribbling materials were viewed by parents as requiring little space, not involving noise, and easily cleared away. In terms of the study's shortcomings, a further discussion of the Sikh culture would have been beneficial in analyzing the results.

In her examination the play materials of African children, Leacock (1976) most commonly observed boys searching for materials to create such things as musical instruments (made from oil tins, pieces of rubber or plastic, and light wires), and stilts and pole-vaults (made from poles). Leacock noted that the most characteristic African toy was the wire car and that typically, boys begin making wire models of cars and trucks at approximately eight or nine years of age. Additional observations involved both boys' and girls' use of clay to make cattle and other objects. Gender differences were evident here, with girls characteristically making dolls and utensils, and boys making cars. Similarly, although both sexes were observed rummaging for tin cans, boys typically stacked the cans to construct towers, whereas girls filled the cans with water and poured it back and forth.

Bloch (1984) also examined African children's play materials and found that although these children had only an occasional ball or plastic doll, this scarcity of manufactured toys did not hinder their play. For example, children used baskets, large discarded gourds, and old cardboard cartons to construct small houses or a marketplace from which to sell make-believe vegetables and fish. Tin cans, cartons, shoe boxes, and empty food containers became trucks, cars, wagons, and drums. As well, pieces of concrete blocks or bricks served as a basis for house construction.

Shoemaker (1984) found that Chama Indian children in Northern Bolivia spent many hours fashioning toys from raw jungle materials. Commonly observed were umbrellas, play houses, and eating utensils made from papaya and banana leaves; toned whistles made from small reeds; bracelets strung from colored seeds, alligator teeth, and tiny shells; simple objects molded or

carved from clay; and hunting equipment such as bows and arrows, sling shots, and toy guns.

In a similar study of Guarayu Indian children in Central Eastern Bolivia, Jackson (1964) observed children making play houses from sticks; cooking utensils from gourds, pottery clay, and seed pods; and dolls from corn husks and discarded rags. Bows and arrows were common as well and these were used for shooting lizards and small game. Also noted were tops, kites, stilts, windmills, badminton shuttlecocks, and merry-go-rounds all designed from local raw materials. Another interesting observation was the use of live insects and birds for action toys.

Storey (1975) also observed play with animals in her study of children's play in Bali. Activities observed include shooting dogs with sling-shots, kicking dogs, mutilating lizards, and playing catch with baby birds, and she notes that this "cruelty" was accepted by the Balinese. Other play materials such as kites and pinwheels made from bamboo and flowers, and seesaws and slides were also common.

Among the Kpelle, Lancy (1975) notes an absence of traditional play materials such as dolls for girls and tops for boys. He points out, however, that any object that a child plays with becomes a toy in that instance, and therefore toys are an important part of make-believe play. He specifically describes the wheel and the ball as being "revolutionary" in children's play practices.

Possession and exchange of play materials has also been examined. Navon and Ramsey (1989) observed the behavior of Chinese and American preschool children and hypothesized as to whether possessiveness was an innate human characteristic or merely a reflection of a possession-oriented society. In general, Chinese children were observed to be less "property-conscious" than American children. Furthermore, although both groups of children were involved in taking materials from others, Chinese children reacted less often to such acts and were involved in fewer disputes over materials. Both groups also differed in their reactions to the equity of peers' shares of materials. For example, Chinese children often spontaneously redistributed materials, including those currently in their possession, when it appeared that another child did not have sufficient materials. In contrast, American children were observed relinquishing possession of materials only upon request. A significant finding was that during cleanup, American children typically insisted that it was another child's responsibility, whereas Chinese children engaged in disputes demanding their "right" to clean up. Navon and Ramsey attributed the differences outlined above to the children's reflection of the established priorities in their respective cultures.

Conclusion

In summarizing the research on children's play in other cultures, a number of conclusions can be drawn with respect to the five areas examined. In play group composition, it has been found that, generally, most children's play

groups are segregated according to age, sex, and ethnicity, and that inclusion of adults varies across cultures. In terms of children's games, game types vary widely between cultures and game preferences vary in relation to age, sex, urban or rural location, and culture. Levels of make-believe play have also been found to vary with culture. Additionally, imitative play is typically influenced by children's observations of adult roles. Similarly, children's play material preferences are often influenced by adult roles and by the existing resources within a culture.

In examining the cross-cultural literature on children's play, a number of methodological shortcomings are evident. First, because play has been defined in various ways, methodological problems are inevitable in cross-cultural research (Prosser, et al., 1986). For example, categories formulated to classify behaviors for one particular culture may be inappropriate for classifying behaviors in another culture. In the present study, a "discovery" approach will be used to categorize play activities rather than imposing preconceived categories on play prior to observation.

A second problem involves cultural bias on the part of researchers. It has been noted that anthropologists' perspectives on play often reflect their culture as much as that of the society being studied (Schwartzman & Barbera, 1976). This occurs when researchers' cultural biases and preconceptions are not controlled for and made explicit to the reader. This can affect both data collection and data interpretation. In the current study, the researcher's biases and preconceptions will be clearly outlined (see Chapter 3).

Third, methodological problems have been identified in studies where researchers have not shared the same first language with participants. Sharing a common language seems to be a particularly important consideration in recording and understanding dialogue in children's make-believe play. In fact, this shortcoming may have influenced earlier anthropologists to conclude that make-believe play was absent from particular cultures (e.g., Ebbeck, 1973; Castle, 1966; LeVine & LeVine, 1963). In the present study, although English is shared by the researcher and the participants in one of the observational settings, it will be necessary to study Kiswahili prior to entering the field and to arrange for assistance with language interpretation.

A fourth shortcoming is that much of the cross-cultural research has investigated groups of same-age children in Western school settings and these findings have then been generalized to other cultural settings. Thus, additional research in non-Western societies is necessary to expand the limited body of knowledge concerning play in other cultures. In the present study, observations will therefore be undertaken in a Kenyan community.

Fifth, researchers commonly describe games and non-game activities as "static artifacts" of culture, devoid of any context (Goldstein, 1971; Hughes, 1991; Lancy & Tindall, 1975). That is, although the rules and implements of play are described, researchers neglect to extend this by describing the participants, their motives, the conditions before and after play, and the

variations in rules and structure over time. In order to understand Kenyan children's play in its entirety, the broader social and cultural context in which play occurs will be carefully considered in the present study.

A sixth problem is the relationship between play and games. Specifically, play has frequently been viewed as a game or sports activity and consequently, a collection of games in a given society is also considered to be a description of children's play (Schwartzman & Barbera, 1975). Because formalized games tend to be more amenable to collection, accounts of other types of children's play have often been excluded. This is particularly characteristic of children's play in African societies, where researchers have focused very little attention on the description and analysis of non-structured play activities (i.e., non-game activities) (Schwartzman & Barbera, 1975). Thus, observations of children's play in the current study will include both games and non-game activities.

The purpose of this study, then, is to explore how cultural values and practices are reflected in the play activities of children in a rural Kenyan community. An exploration of children's play activities in a non-Western culture will expand the body of knowledge regarding play in other cultures. Also, children's games will be described within their social and cultural context, an approach which has not previously be undertaken. Finally, the inclusion of both games *and* non-game activities in the current study will compliment previous studies of African children's play, which have focused only on traditional games.

CHAPTER 3
METHODS

Metatheoretical Considerations

The methodology used in any research should be intrinsically related to the basic assumptions about the nature of the problem being studied (Cusick, 1973). To answer the research question being explored in this study: "How are cultural values and practices reflected in children's play activities in rural Kenya?", descriptive data are required. The research methodology best suited to the study of group activity and that which best enables the researcher to understand the participants' perspective, is ethnographic research.

The methodology of ethnography has typically been developed and utilized within the disciplines of anthropology and sociology. Wilcox (1982) defines ethnography as being a descriptive endeavor in which the ethnographer attempts to accurately describe and interpret the nature of social discourse among a group of people. Jorgenson (1989) indicates that the methodology seeks to discover, make accessible, and reveal the meanings (i.e., realities) people use to make sense of their everyday lives. This focus on individual meaning is derived from the theory of symbolic interaction and a thorough understanding of ethnography also requires an understanding of this underlying theory.

The theory of symbolic interaction has its origins in the American philosophical school of pragmatism, in the sociological interpretation of ecology (i.e., the study of the relationship between an organism and its environment), and in the field methods developed in anthropology (Craib, 1984). Although several forms of interaction exist (e.g., those presented by Mead, Parsons, and Goffman), Blumer (1969, cited in Craib, 1984, p. 73) seems to present a particularly useful formulation of interactionist assumptions:

> 1. Humans beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that things have for them.
> 2. These meanings are the product of social interaction in human society.
> 3. These meanings are modified and handled through an interpretive process that is used by each individual in dealing with the signs each encounters.

In short, people act on the basis of their definition of the situation, and "how each situation is defined depends on the meanings of the relevant objects -- things, events, people, institutions, ideas, oneself" (Shibutani, 1968, p. 25). Moreover, for the investigator to understand the meaning of these actions, it is necessary to approach the situation from the position of the "actor", that is, "through the eyes and experience of [the individuals] who have developed the activity" (Blumer, 1969, cited in Craib, 1984, p. 74). In other words, the investigator must grasp the actor's definition of the situation (Shibutani, 1968).

In placing the individual meaning of everyday life first, ethnographic methodology differs from approaches that begin with concepts defined in terms of

existing theories and hypotheses (Jorgenson, 1989). In general, methodology used in ethnographic research has been conceptualized as being fundamentally different from the methodology used in physical science (i.e., positivistic) research and is sometimes regarded as nonscientific (Jorgenson, 1989). Typically, ethnographic methodology has been considered "special methodology" which has been uniquely adapted to the distinctive character of human existence. The humanistic characteristics of ethnography, however, do not imply that these methods are less "scientific" than other research methods (Jorgenson, 1989). Rather, the ethnographer's assumptions about modes for identification, organization, and data analysis are unique and often dictate the approach taken in designing the study (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). To facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of ethnographic research, it is necessary to define its relationship to other existing research practices.

Goetz and LeCompte (1984) conceptualize the underlying assumptions of ethnography within a framework of four dimensions including an inductive-deductive dimension, a subjective-objective dimension, a generative-verificative dimension, and a constructive-enumerative dimension. They indicate that typically ethnographic methodology is found closer to the generative, inductive, constructive, and subjective ends of the continua than physical science methodology.

The inductive-deductive dimension refers to the point at which theory becomes part of the research process (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Although Fetterman (1989) suggests that no study -- ethnographic or otherwise -- can be conducted without an underlying theory or model, in ethnographic research it is not necessary that the theory be an explicitly anthropological or sociological one (i.e., a "grand" theory); it may also be an implicitly personal one. Regardless of the theoretical approach used, its purpose is to assist the researcher in defining the actual research problem (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). In purely deductive research the aim is often to find data to substantiate a theory, whereas in purely inductive research, the goal is to develop a theory to explain what was studied.

The generative-verificative dimension refers to where evidence is located within a research design including the extent to which results of the study may be generalizable to other groups. Generative research is concerned with the discovery of constructs and propositions that use one or more data bases as the source of evidence. Verificative research, however, commonly attempts to generalize beyond the scope of a single study. Often, generative research is not grounded in an explicit theoretical framework, whereas verificative research tends to begin with a set of theoretical propositions. Thus, generative research is often inductive, whereas verificative research is frequently deductive. The fact that generative research does not begin with some theoretical proposition is also a criticism that has been directed to certain social science and educational studies (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

Zelditch (1962, cited in Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) describes the constructive-enumerative dimension as the ways in which the study's units of analysis are formulated and delineated. Specifically, a constructive strategy is

aimed at discovering the specific units of analysis as they become apparent during the course of observation and description. In comparison, enumeration uses previously determined or defined units of analysis in a process of systematic counting.

Finally, research designs may also be located along a subjective-objective continuum. In locating ethnographic research along this continuum, it is necessary to consider its specific goal of reconstructing the categories that participants use in conceptualizing their own world view. Ethnography, then, tends to be more subjective, than objective, in that ethnographers use strategies to elicit and analyze subjective data. As well, the model for ethnographic research is commonly based on a phenomenologically-oriented paradigm (Fetterman, 1989), which can be starkly contrasted to a positivistic paradigm (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). For example, positivism assumes the existence of an objective reality, whereas phenomenology accepts multiple realities. Moreover, although people act on their own individual perceptions, and their actions have real consequences, phenomenology views the subjective reality each individual experiences as no less real than the objectively defined and measured reality of a positivistic paradigm (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

The above comparison between experimental (i.e., positivistic) research design and ethnographic research design serves to illuminate the components of each. The differences between both approaches to research are further articulated by Mishler (1984, cited in Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) who states that ethnography commonly emphasizes qualitative methods, validity of results, holistic analysis of phenomenon, and process variables, whereas experimentation stresses quantitative methods, reliability of measures, analysis of parts or components of the phenomenon, and outcome variables. It is important, however, to emphasize that quantitative and qualitative methodologies are not antagonistic in purpose but complimentary in nature (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). More importantly, although it is clearly evident that ethnography differs from experimentation and other positivistic designs, what should be stressed is that it is these differences that result in ethnography's important contributions to scientific advancement (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

Validity

The issue of validity is an important one for the researcher engaged in any form of scientific research. In ethnographic research, validity is dependent upon the degree to which the description "rings true" to natives and colleagues in the field (Fetterman, 1989). Fetterman also points out that although readers may disagree with the researcher's interpretations and conclusions, it is crucial that they still recognize the details of the description as accurate. Cusick (1973) suggests that it is important for the researcher to avoid over-inferring within the description section of the ethnography so as to allow readers to draw their own conclusions from data that have been presented in as realistic and complete a manner as possible. This, he stresses, is a major test of validity.

Fetterman (1989) notes that the credibility of an ethnographic study is also greatly enhanced by using verbatim quotations where possible. He indicates that these quotations allow the reader to judge the quality of the work and it is therefore essential to choose quotations that are representative of the particular event or situation described.

Validity is also enhanced by the fact that the researcher's close proximity to a situation allows description and explanation to take on a first-person quality that other methodologies lack (Cusick, 1973). Moreover, Babbie (1986) indicates that "being there" is a powerful technique for gaining insights into human interactions. Similarly, Cusick suggests that "perceptions have a validity that is simply unapproachable by any so-called standardized method" (p. 232) and that the comprehensive measures that are available to the field researcher can reach a depth of meaning that is generally unavailable to surveys and experiments.

Reliability

Although field research measurements are in-depth, they also tend to be very personal. Babbie (1986) points out that this can pose potential threats to reliability. Cusick (1973), however, suggests that because researchers are the actual instruments used to measure the phenomenon, as they become more aware, they also become more valid and of necessity, more reliable.

Homans outlines six guidelines of subjective adequacy that should be followed in order to enhance the reliability of a study (Cusick, 1973). First, time is an important consideration as the more time researchers are able to spend with a group the more likely they are to obtain an accurate perception of the situation. Similarly, Werner and Schoepfle (1987) indicate that reports based on longer periods of study in the field tend to be more accurate (i.e., native-like) than those based on shorter periods of study. A second consideration is that the closer researchers work geographically to those they study, the more accurate the interpretations made. Third, researchers should attempt to observe many instances and varieties of social situations within the community's social structure in order to increase the accuracy of the interpretations made. A fourth consideration is that it is important for researchers and their participants to share a common language. This consideration is also directly linked to the first consideration, as it is reasonable to assume that the more time researchers spend in the field, the more proficient they will become with the language (Werner & Schoepfle, 1987). Fifth, the greater the degree of rapport between researchers and those participating, the greater the accuracy of the report. Finally, researchers must strive for consensus regarding the correctness of the meanings they interpret from their observations.

Goetz and LeCompte (1984) indicate that because ethnographers may use a wide variety of data collection techniques (e.g., observation, participation, interviews, informants, etc.) the data collected with one technique may be used to cross-check the accuracy of data collected with another technique. Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggest that this process, referred to as triangulation, also assists in minimizing the influence the researcher's preconceptions regarding the culture

being studied. Werner and Schoepfle (1987), however, caution that in the ethnographic process, even the most well-trained ethnographers must overcome strong cultural presuppositions. It therefore becomes necessary for researchers to take steps to prevent their "culturedness" from interfering with the fidelity of the description.

Werner and Schoepfle (1987) indicate that although the influence of the researcher's own cultural preconceptions is unavoidable, it can be controlled. Preconceptions are commonly controlled through a process of self-awareness which occurs during the data gathering/data analysis cycle. In order to accomplish this process, it is necessary for the ethnographer to record data in three separate texts (Spradley, 1980). Field notes are the first text and contain records directly from observations and interviews, while the second text contains daily accounts of the researcher's perceptions, interpretations, and problems that arise during fieldwork. It is also necessary to keep a third text in the form of a daily journal that contains records of the researcher's experiences, ideas, reactions, fears, mistakes, feelings, and confusions regarding specific encounters. It should be noted that each entry in any of the three texts should be dated and consistently cross-checked in order to expose any discrepancies between the observations and interpretations of specific ethnographic events. Moreover, making an introspective record of fieldwork will enable the researcher to take into account the influences that their personal presuppositions and feelings may have on the research (Spradley, 1980).

Generalizability

One of the chief goals of science is achieving generalizability of findings (Babbie, 1986). In ethnographic field research, there are three main problems associated with generalizability (Babbie, 1986). First, observations made by the researcher tend to be too "personal" to produce results that could necessarily be replicated by another independent researcher. Observations often become more valuable as a source of insight than as support for a theory or objective truth. Also, the comprehensive understanding of situations that field researchers investigate are less generalizable than results based on rigorous sampling and standardized measurements. Finally, because participants are often a unique sample, the study may lack generalizability (Babbie, 1986; Cusick, 1973). Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that regardless of the uniqueness of the situation, it is essential that a description of a social phenomenon be intelligible to those who have never participated in the situation described.

Method and Procedures

Ethnographic research, like all forms of science, involves a variety of non-rational factors such as artful judgements, decisions, and skills (Jorgenson 1989). This would seem to be particularly true of observational methods, which are commonly used in ethnographic studies, because practice of these methods is dependent upon the ethnographer's ability to adapt skillfully to the concrete conditions of daily life. The practice of observational methods, then, involves the use of a wide variety of skills including non-rational factors that can affect many

aspects of the study. Moreover, the very nature of observation does not lend itself to being outlined as a series of highly mechanical steps that when followed, will inevitably result in competent observational research. In fact, the precise procedures for observation are not specifically outlined within the literature.

Jorgenson (1989) suggests two reasons why specific procedures for observation have not been formulated. First, ethnographers have tended to resist developing definitive procedures and techniques for observation because the practice is regarded as "artful and inappropriate for any kind of linear, mechanical presentation" (1989, p. 8). Instead, observation is considered an apprenticeship that is learned vicariously through the observations of master practitioners (Jorgenson, 1989; Spradley, 1980). Learning the technique also involves reviewing classic studies that exemplify the procedure (e.g., Cusick, 1973; Mead, 1930; Whyte, 1943) as well as gaining direct experience in the field (Jorgenson, 1989).

The second reason that observational procedures are not definitive is that a wide variety of characteristics and dimensions such as the insider's world view, the natural environment of daily life, gaining entree, establishing relationships, choosing informants, the level of participation and observation, additional methods of data collection, logic of discovery and induction, and interpretation of theory, have received selective and differential treatment within the literature (Jorgenson, 1989).

In terms of the level of participation and observation chosen by the researcher, Spradley (1980) identifies five types of participant observation that vary along a continuum. The first type of participation, nonparticipation, involves the collection of data by observation alone, whereas the second type, passive participation, involves a situation where the ethnographer is present at the setting of observation but does not participate in any way other than as a bystander who records events and other data from an observational post. In the third type, referred to as moderate participation, the ethnographer seeks to maintain a balance between being an insider and being an outsider, between participation and observation. In the fourth type, active participation, the ethnographer seeks to become an integral part of the situation under study in order to fully understand the cultural norms governing behavior. Complete participation, the final type, is the highest level of involvement and often results when researchers study situations in which they are already ordinary participants.

In order to facilitate an understanding of the techniques involved in doing research of this nature, Spradley (1980) and Dobbert (1982) make useful distinctions between the role of the participant observer and the role of the ordinary participant. First, Spradley distinguishes the participant observer from the ordinary participant by outlining the reasons each participant has for engaging in a social situation. According to Spradley, the participant observer typically enters a social situation with two purposes in mind: (1) to engage in activities that are appropriate to the situation, and (2) to observe these activities, the people involved, and the physical aspects of the situation. In contrast, the

ordinary participant joins that same situation with only one purpose: to engage in the appropriate activities.

The second distinction, outlined by Dobbert (1982), involves how each participant organizes information. For example, while the participant observer may systematically organize information about the situation based on a framework taken from social science theory and methodology, the ordinary participant may organize information only for the purposes of accomplishing goals that are defined by the situation itself. According to Wilcox (1982), the researcher's knowledge of existing social theory guides the study and dictates what observations will be made. As noted earlier, however, the theory need not be a "grand" one.

A third distinction made by Dobbert (1982) is that the participant observer has been trained to make detailed records of many aspects of the situation that the ordinary participant may take for granted. In other words, it becomes necessary for the researcher to attempt to make the "familiar strange" and to notice that which is often taken for granted by ordinary participants. Geertz (1973) points out that inquiry of this sort involves a "thick description" which distinguishes between a wink and a twitch, or a parody of a wink and a wink itself. Thus, according to Geertz, a participant observer must include both meaning and behavior in observational descriptions (Wilcox, 1982). In other words, general assumptions about the role of play cannot be made, and instead, it is necessary it find out what play means in particular situations (Kelly-Byrne, 1989).

Fourth, according to Dobbert (1982), participant observers must periodically abstract themselves from the situation in order to review the recorded information from a more neutral position. She also makes the distinction that compared to ordinary participants, participant observers must consistently monitor observations for evidence of their personal prejudice. A prejudiced stance whereby the situation is not illustrated as it would appear to an insider, is indicative of some failure on the part of the researcher as a participant. Personal prejudice will be discussed in more detail at a later point.

Gaining Entree

Ethnographic fieldwork begins with gaining entree. Dobbert (1982) cautions that these first contacts can be "delicate" and that it is essential to establish rapport with participants from the outset. In gaining entree, I established my position in the rural community as both a teacher (i.e., volunteer) at one of the local schools and as a researcher. The research process began, as Dobbert suggests, with mutual introductions and a general discussion of the purpose of the research, the researcher's presence and position, and issues of confidentiality.

Every ethnographer must also consider a number of ethical issues when doing fieldwork. Spradley (1980) underscores the importance of adhering to the ethical principles set out by the Council of the American Anthropological

Association. Throughout this study, these guidelines were carefully followed, as outlined below. To begin with, my primary responsibility was to the participants of the study. This included safeguarding their rights, interests, and sensitivities, as well as their privacy and anonymity. Thus, it the present study, pseudonyms have been assigned to the schools and the participants involved in the study. Also, as mentioned previously, the purpose of this study was explained to the participants and a final report will be made available to those involved. I also took steps to ensure that the expectations of both the researcher and the participants were clearly understood by everyone involved.

Another important condition of doing ethnographic research is that the researchers and their participants share a common language (Cusick, 1973). In the area of study, English and Kiswahili were both official languages and although English was shared by the researcher and the participants, some comprehension of Kiswahili was also necessary in order to establish rapport and to better understand activities on the playground. In preparation for the study it was therefore necessary to develop a working knowledge of Kiswahili. It should be noted, however, that assistance with language interpretation was readily available in instances where children did not speak English fluently or when they spoke in their tribal language.

Data Sources and Collection

The data collection process began from the very first contact. The first stage in this process involved recording the setting, which included physical patterns, censuses, and rhythms that revealed the formal and informal schedules or calendars guiding children's social behavior (Dobbert, 1982). Recording the physical patterns of the setting included mapping the actual layout of the two school settings. In taking censuses, the age of the children on the playground was recorded in order to select participants for observation and to develop an understanding of social-group relationships. It should be noted that only children in the first four school classes were included in the study because it was felt that this age group would engage in a wider variety of play activities than the next lower age group (i.e., infancy to preschool) or the next higher age group (i.e., Classes Five to Eight). Calendars and schedules (e.g., daily school routines, school calendar information, holidays, etc.) of both schools included in the study were recorded in order to provided a foundation for understanding the basic rhythms of the groups. This step was particularly significant because the overall goal of this study was to collect data that represents normal rhythms of children's activities. It was therefore essential to be aware that children's behavior may be strongly influenced by natural changes in these rhythms (e.g., holidays, exams, weather patterns, etc.).

After completing these initial steps, the second task in the ethnographic research process consisted of collecting observational data. As the purpose of the present study was to observe children's play as it occurs naturally, only those activities that children played of their own accord (i.e., without the assistance or leadership of adults) were recorded. Because there was minimal playground supervision and very few adult-organized activities in the two settings where

fieldwork was conducted, the playgrounds were managed almost entirely by the children themselves.

Observations of children's play (i.e., games and non-game activities) included details of behavior prior to play, of play initiations, of play behaviors, of play terminations, and of behavior after play. As well, information such as name of the activity, duration of the episode, objects used or constructed, dialogue, and role descriptions were also recorded. Although most data were collected using observational methods, information garnered from informants and informal interviews was also used to validate observational data and to assist with language interpretation. It should be emphasized that a "cultural insider" (i.e., a teacher from one of the schools) provided ongoing assistance with data interpretation. The triangulation process described above served to enhance the overall accuracy of the interpretations made.

Data collection occurred over a three month period (i.e., the duration of the second school term) and observations were made at various times of the day. The children's play activities were typically recorded during school break times, that is, in the morning before school began, during the morning recess break, during the lunch hour, and after school during "games" time. In using participant observation, I chose to take the role of passive participant, rather than a more involved participant role, because it was felt that engaging in children's activities as more than a bystander from an observational post may possibly influence the children's natural behavior. It should be noted, however, that in order to establish and maintain rapport with the children, I did not resist their occasional invitations for me to join their activities. This participation was also beneficial in developing a more complete understanding of certain activities (e.g., *Kalongo* and *Break Break*).

In the data collection process, the following cycle, which closely follows Spradley's suggestions, was used. Although data collection procedures are outlined separately here, it should be emphasized that in ethnographic research, the processes of data collection and data analysis occur simultaneously (Fetterman, 1989; Spradley, 1980). First, data were initially gathered by making broad descriptive observations of children's play activities. Spradley refers to these as "grand tour observations", which provide only the most general features of the activities observed. Next, data were then analyzed in order to formulate what Spradley refers to as "grand-tour questions", which lead to more focused observations. He refers to these as "mini-tour observations" which deal with smaller units of experience and are drawn from specific information previously discovered. Finally, these mini tour observations were then analyzed in order to formulate "mini tour questions" which allowed for more selective observations to be made in the field.

In general, observations were based upon the activities of both individual children and children in groups. In order to understand children's activities as a whole, in the context of their natural setting, precise categories for observations were not predicted in advance. In fact, Wilcox (1982) cautions that ready-made instruments and overly precise formulations of problems may prematurely "close

off" the process of discovery. Kelly-Byrne (1989) argues that when doing ethnographic research, it is counterproductive to impose preconceived categories of what people or situations are all about. It was therefore necessary to discover what was significant to observe, and thus, I did not use a precisely structured instrument for recording my observations. Instead, play activities were recorded in note form, as they occurred. As soon as possible after each field session, field notes were translated into an expanded format (Spradley, 1980). It was felt that recording observations in this manner would provide a richness of data that would otherwise be unattainable. It is important to emphasize that prior to undertaking field observations in Kenya, a study in a pilot setting was conducted.

Presentation of the Data

Method of Analysis

Analysis of any kind involves a particular way of thinking and "refers to the systematic examination of something to determine its parts, the relationship among parts, and their relationship to the whole" (Spradley, 1980, p. 85). In order to describe children's activities as a whole and to determine how culture is represented in these activities, it was necessary to search for patterns existing in the data. The following steps, which are similar to those described by Spradley (1980), provide a more specific description of the procedures used to analyze the recorded observations.

1. Data were analyzed to discover common patterns in the children's play activities. These patterns were then used to facilitate further analysis and understanding of the activities, which also lead to more focused observations in the field.

2. Several patterns were chosen for more in-depth investigation, which included discovering as many different elements of each pattern as possible (e.g., games, make-believe play, imitative play). Following this step, more selective observations were made.

3. A componential analysis was performed in order to organize and represent the patterns discovered. This analysis involved systematically searching for common characteristics in the different play activities. These characteristics were then used to classify the play activities into appropriate categories (e.g., games with the common characteristic of singing were categorized together).

4. The play activities were then analyzed according to gender, socioeconomic, cultural, and developmental factors.

5. The play activities and their linkages to the cultural situation as a whole were then analyzed.

Arrangement of the Data

In the present study, data are arranged according to the categories established during the componential analysis. This includes specific observations of the children's activities and is also expanded to include children's accounts of the situation as well as those of other informants. As the goal of ethnography is to combine the view of an insider (i.e., the children) with that of an outsider (i.e., the researcher), an explanation of the observations from both the children's perspective and the researcher's perspective has been provided (Wilcox, 1989). The overall intention of the study is to convey to the reader both a deeper and fuller description of the situation than could be provided by an ordinary participant, and a broader and less culture-bound description than could be provided by an ordinary insider.

Portraits of the Participants

The Setting

The location of this study is the north-western part of Kenya in what was known as the "White Highlands" (a predominantly European settlement) prior to Independence in 1963. The community where observations were conducted is at crossroads between two drastically different worlds: a modern university community and a traditional farming community. Since about 1991, a number of political and tribal conflicts have erupted between the two predominant tribes in the area: the Kalenjins and the Kikuyus. Many of the children involved in the study have either witnessed or experienced the violence of these clashes. Although a number of people in the area indicate that the clashes are a result of land disputes, it would also seem that the violence is reflective of political unrest and public outrage towards President Moi's policies and practices. It should also be noted that a large number of world-class athletes originate from this region and can often be seen training in the countryside.

In the location described above, two school playgrounds were selected as observational settings. Several factors governed my selection of these settings. First, because I was foreign to this culture and did not speak any of the tribal languages, it was felt that observations would best be conducted in a school playground setting, where English and Kiswahili were commonly spoken. Second, an important consideration in the research process was that children be familiar with my role and presence in their community. I therefore wanted to select schools that were part of the community in which I lived. Third, it was essential that observational data represent the diversity of people living in the area. What follows, then, are portraits of the study's participants, namely, children in the two school settings and the researcher.

Children at the Tannery School

It is predominantly people from the Nandi tribe (a Kalenjin sub-tribe) that reside in the area surrounding the university. Most of these people are involved in maize and wheat production, and animal husbandry (primarily cattle), although

some of the men also work for the local East African Tanning Company. In 1959, a primary school was built in this area to accommodate the children of the tannery workers. (In the present study, this school will be referred to as the Tannery School). Students attending this school are largely from the lower- and lower-middle socioeconomic classes, and although each student is expected to wear a school uniform, only about half of the families are able to afford uniforms *and* school fees for their children. Children whose parents cannot afford proper uniforms sometimes wear a part of the uniform (e.g., boys may wear school shorts and girls may wear a school sweater), which have been repaired and handed down from child to child in the family. As well, only about one student in fifty owns shoes and socks; the rest arrive barefoot to school each day.

The school building, which has not changed a great deal since 1959, is constructed primarily of wood and mud. Each Friday, children "re-smear" their classroom floors with a mixture of water, mud, and dung, to clean and reseal any cracks in the surface. Open doorways and windows provide light for the classrooms and the corrugated metal roof serves to keep out the rain. The playground is covered in long grass with a few bare dirt spots where the grass has been permanently worn away. There is no modern play equipment on the playground but the children have adapted one of the empty classrooms into a play area that contains an improvised seesaw and a make-shift stationary bicycle (*baskali*). At the front of the school is a garbage pile where the children often search for materials with which to construct toys. There is also a *shamba* [garden plot] and the headmaster's homestead in front of the school. Because this is mostly a farming area, flat playing surfaces on the playground are almost impossible to find.

There are approximately fifty students in each classroom, although enrollment tends to decrease yearly[3] by five to ten students. These student are forced to drop out for a variety of reasons (e.g., girls may be required to assist with childcare and boys may be needed to tend cattle). Classrooms are generally small, dark, and crowded. A few pictures from magazines and newspapers are sometimes posted on the back walls of classrooms. Chalkboards, which were the teachers' main instructional aid, are of poor quality (at best) and writing is only clearly visible to some students. Adding to these difficulties, it is necessary for several students to share resources such as bench desks, books, and other supplies. In terms of the primary language of instruction, Kiswahili is used and English is taught as a seperate subject. The school staff emphasizes athletics rather than academics, and corporal punishment is practiced in the school.

Many of the students walk several miles to school each day from their rural homes, which are mainly traditional African homesteads (mud houses with thatched roofs). These students generally have very little direct exposure to outside influences such as Western culture, television, and storybooks. At home, children are expected to assist with daily chores such as farming, tending to

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[3]The fact that fifty-five students were enrolled in Class One and only eight students were enrolled in Class Eight is also an indication of the high drop out rate in this school.

livestock, preparing food, caring for children, and gathering fuel and water for cooking. Thus, very few of these children have any free play time after school.

Children at the University School

The university staff is mainly composed of four tribal groups: Luos, Luhyias, Kikuyus, and Kalenjins. Africans from Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and Uganda, and foreigners from India, Sweden, America, and Britain, are also represented. A primary school was established on the university compound in 1985 for the university staff's children. Children attending this school (which, in the present study, will be referred to as the University School) are predominantly from the middle- to upper-middle socioeconomic classes. School fees are high and proper uniforms are mandatory. Many of the students indicated that they owned several school uniforms and they appeared to display little concern about maintaining a clean uniform.

The school building is a modern facility equipped with indoor plumbing, electricity, a home economics/staff room, a library, an art room, and a secretarial staff. Classrooms are relatively large and spacious, and students have their own desks and books. A large chalkboard, in good condition, is mounted just behind the teacher's desk and the walls have many glass windows and displays of students' work. The playground is open and spacious with a variety of play areas, including a tarmac section for skipping, a slide and seesaw, and a field where older boys play football (Canadian soccer).

Each of the first four classes has an average of thirty-five students. In contrast to the Tannery School, English is the language of instruction in the classroom and Kiswahili is taught as a separate subject. It also important to note that students are expected to speak in English at all times, including during break time on the playground. Like the Tannery School, corporal punishment is used at the University School. At the University School, however, academic pursuits are emphasized over athletics.

Many parents of children in this school are well educated and have travelled to or lived in places such as Europe, America, and Canada. Often, both parents are employed. Some of the students have also been exposed to foreign cultures. Almost all of the children live in modern homes equipped with indoor plumbing, electricity, modern cooking facilities, televisions, and live-in maids. Unlike children at the Tannery School, these children are not normally expected to assist with household chores and afterschool hours are usually spent doing homework, watching television, or playing with friends.

The Researcher

A unique aspect of participant observation research is that the researcher is also a participant. Researchers are not neutral beings, however, and bring several aspects of their experience to bear on the decisions that they make in the field (Kelly-Byrne, 1989). Thus, one of the most crucial steps in conducting ethnographic research involves researchers becoming aware of their

preconceptions regarding the situation being studied (Fetterman, 1989). Although, as noted earlier, some preconceptions on the part of the researcher are inevitable, controlled preconceptions can serve to focus and limit the study. Uncontrolled preconceptions, however, can undermine the quality of the research and ethnographers must therefore make their preconceptions explicit.

In the present study, preconceptions were monitored by recording data in three separate texts, which, as outlined earlier, include: 1) condensed observational descriptions (i.e., field notes), 2) perceptions and interpretations, and 3) a journal outlining personal feelings and experiences. As well, informants were used to validate data obtained through observational methods (i.e., triangulation) -- a process that safeguards against biases influencing interpretation. It is also important to emphasize that being aware of my preconceptions was not only essential in preparing for the study but that it was essential throughout the research process.

What follows is information that I feel affected my role as a researcher, as well as the roles of others in the study. Prior to undertaking this study, I taught in a primary school for four years and was also involved in teaching university students for two years. Thus, I had experience in dealing with children from various age groups and backgrounds. My teaching experience, particularly in physical education and drama, facilitated my ability to understand how children think and play. I also feel comfortable with children and in conducting research, was able to shift from my adult position of power and control to one in which I was accepted into the activities of children on the playground.

Although these factors may have positively affected my relationship with the children, other factors may have negatively affected this relationship. Specifically, I was Canadian and new to the Kenyan culture. Although I was familiar with the Kenyan school system and the country's history of colonialism, I had not anticipated some of the residual resentment towards foreigners. Initially, my foreign status prevented me from understanding many aspects of the culture. Also, because I was female and travelling without a husband or family, I tended to "raise a few eyebrows" in this largely traditional community.

My role as a volunteer teacher and researcher in the schools generated excitement and enthusiasm from students. The teachers, however, seemed more apprehensive and suspicious of my presence at first. In fact, early in the research process, I discovered several University School teachers surreptitiously examining my field notes on one occasion when I had momentarily left them in the staffroom. The teachers seemed particularly concerned about my perceptions of their culture and teaching practices. I attempted to establish rapport with the teachers by making my playground field notes available for them to read and by focusing on the positive aspects of their culture and school system. Shortly thereafter, the teachers seemed more accepting of my presence and readily offered me their assistance. My parting from both schools indicated to me that I had come to be accepted by both staff and students.

Most of the children came to understand me as a foreigner who was different from others that they had met. Specifically, although they knew that I was an outsider to their culture, they also knew that I was interested in learning about them and their activities. They were particularly enthusiastic about my willingness to play with them. As Pelto and Pelto (1978, p. 182) point out, "Success in the art of fieldwork depends, to a considerable extent, on establishing a very special role that legitimizes a kind of information gathering behavior that was not part of social expectation within the community." It is my hope that the descriptions presented here will make explicit to the reader my preconceptions and vulnerabilities so that my findings may be compared with those of other studies of this culture.

CHAPTER 4
DATA DESCRIPTION

The classification of games and non-game activities into appropriate categories is often problematic, particularly because play consists of a series of complex behaviors that may be manifest in several sources (Sutton-Smith, 1972a). Moreover, a classificatory system, whether based on the psychological, historical, educational, or structural characteristics of the games, is arbitrary and therefore some overlapping between categories is inevitable.

The system of classification presented here (see Table A-1 for summary) is based, for the most part, on the structural elements of the play activities. The activities are initially categorized according to whether they have formal, informal, or tacit rules. Additional categorizations are based on the unique characteristics of each activity (e.g., games involving singing are grouped together, activities involving make-believe aspects are grouped together, etc.). Where possible, the names of the activities have been provided by the children who play them. In instances where the children indicated that they did not know the name of the activity that they were playing or that their activity had no name, I have taken the liberty of supplying one.

Formal Games

Games of Skill

In all games, participants must possess certain abilities and skills in order to engage in the activity. The games included in this category require sensory-motor skills and abilities such as bodily movement, manipulative motor skills, coordination, sequences or patterns of movement, endurance, vision, or hearing (Avedon, 1971). It should be added that the games listed here are predominantly the games of girls in Classes Two and Three.

Kati[4]

Kati was one of the most popular games played by girls of all ages. I observed the game being played almost everywhere: in cities and villages, along roadsides and ditches, and on almost every school playground that I encountered. In fact, *Kati* was so popular at the two schools where field work was conducted that it was not uncommon to observe several games being played at one time by different groups of children. On the Tannery School playground, long, oval-shaped dirt pits have been permanently worn into the grass where, I am told, *Kati* has been played for many years. At the University School, *Kati* was played in a variety of areas ranging from the tarmac, to the front entrance enclosure, to the remote areas of the grass playing field.

This African dodgeball variation can be played with a minimum of three players or in teams of two or more. The purpose of the game is to avoid being

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[4]This word means "middle" in Kiswahili.

hit by a ball that is being thrown back and forth between two players. One Class Four student described the rules of the game as follows:

> One person stays in the middle and then the others stay outside and throw the ball and if the ball catches that person, she will go out and the next person comes. When she is knocked, she goes out and another one goes in . . . like that until everyone is knocked. Then the ones who were catching, they come inside and they play.

I observed five variations of these basic rules. The first variation, where "some people play that if you catch the ball you add more marks" was commonly observed at both the University School and the Tannery School. In this variation, the middle player's score is calculated according to the number of tosses that she is able to avoid and the additional points that she has earned for catching the ball in her skirt (e.g., five points was usually awarded for each catch).

I also observed the game played with two players in the middle. In this second variation, the outside players must "knock" each of the two players before their team is permitted a turn in the middle. If one player is knocked out, she may only return to the middle if her partner is able to avoid ten throws of the ball.

A third variation is played with several people in the middle. The object of this variation is for the two outside players to use the ball to "catch" as many people in the middle as possible. No score is recorded in this version of *Kati* and the last player to be caught wins.

In the fourth and fifth variations, players keep score by using bottle caps and sticks, respectively. In the bottle cap variation, the middle player must stack ten bottle caps while simultaneously avoiding being caught by the ball. A point and the right to continue playing are earned each time all ten bottle caps are stacked. This may be done by a single player or by a team of players whereby each team member stacks as many bottle caps as possible before being "knocked out" by the outside players. The next person in the middle continues to stack the bottle caps from where the previous player left off. This fourth variation of *Kati*, which was only observed at the Tannery School, generated a great deal of excitement as the players shouted "Panga, panga" [arrange, arrange] to encourage their teammates to stack the bottle caps faster. Many of the people in this community fondly tell stories of how they would rush off to school each morning just so that they could have an opportunity to stack the bottle caps. In the fifth variation, which is similar to the fourth, the score is recorded according to the number of times the middle player or her teammates are able to pick up ten sticks that have been placed in the centre of the playing area. I am told that the fourth and fifth variations of *Kati* are the more traditional versions of the game.

The children at both schools are quite ingenious at locating and making do with local materials such as sticks and bottle caps; even the ball that they use

for *Kati* is made using local materials. At the University School, for example, girls would make a ball using a sock stuffed with paper. Because most of the children who attended the Tannery School arrived barefoot each day, socks were not a readily available resource for making a ball. Instead, these children would reuse plastic bags found in the garbage pile at the front of the school, as reflected in the following observation, which was made just prior to a game of *Kati*: "A group of girls are suddenly yelling and cheering. They have gone to the garbage pile and are collecting bottle caps and plastic bags to make equipment for playing *Kati*." On another occasion I also observed two young boys attempt the task of making a ball. Their efforts, however, resulted in a ball that was too large, lacked roundness, and fell apart easily.

Kati seemed as popular a game to watch as it was to play and situations such as the following were commonly noted on the playground at Tannery School: "Several girls stand and watch the *Kati* game. Pairs have their arms draped over one another's shoulders as they watch." Although this game was typically played by girls, it was also common to observe boys as spectators. For instance, "A few boys who are watching are playing with sticks and walking barefoot in a nearby puddle. . . . Some boys who are sitting on the sidelines take time out to wrestle, while others sit quietly chewing on small sticks as they watch."

Kora

Kora is another game of skill where children, most commonly girls, use existing local materials to make required equipment. In fact, it was the equipment noted in the following observation that first attracted my attention to this game: "A small group of girls are sitting huddled together in front of the school. Another girl returns to the group from the woods with a handful of large, brightly colored yellow berries."

The rules for this game are very similar to the North American game of jacks. To start the game, the players dig a small hollow in the dirt where they place an even number of berries or small stones. Procedures for play are as follows: The player must toss a berry in the air, remove all ten of the berries from the hollow, and then catch the berry that has been tossed. The player then proceeds to replace the berries in the hollow by tossing a berry in the air, picking up and dropping one berry into the hollow, and then catching the berry in the air. Once all ten berries have been replaced, a second round is played by returning the berries to the hollow in clusters of two. For each round following the first, the player is permitted two tosses in the air, the first to organize the berries and the second to return them to the hollow. During round three, berries are returned to the hollow in clusters of three (and for round four, in clusters or four, etc.). Each player is allowed three errors before she must pass the play over to the next person. Players also keep their own score and may continue their next round from where they previously failed.

Are You Ready?

A group of three boys are playing over by the back corner of the school. One boy is standing over a shallow hole that has been dug into the dirt and the other two boys are waiting in the field. A stick about twelve inches long has been placed across the hole. The boy by the hole asks the two fielders, "Are you ready?" and they reply, "Yeah." He then takes a longer stick (about 2 feet in length) and uses it to flip the short stick out to the fielders who scramble to try to catch it.

This game, which was played exclusively by boys in the Tannery School, requires physical skill in both batting and catching. This is evident in the following description of the game's procedures. Initially, if a fielder succeeds in catching the stick, it is automatically his turn to bat. If he fails, however, he may earn a second opportunity to bat providing that he is able to throw the short stick and hit the batting stick, moving it from where it is positioned across the hole. The batsman continues only if the fielder is unsuccessful in both of these attempts. For the second stage of batting, the batsman flips the short stick just in front of himself and then bats it out to the fielders. During this stage, if no one catches the stick it is thrown back to the batsman for him to hit into the field again. If the batsman succeeds in hitting the stick, he then measures the number of bat-lengths between the batting hole and the location where the short stick lands. This number is recorded in the dirt beside the batting hole. This batsman then repeats the three batting stages outlined until either he makes an error (i.e., he misses the stick when he bats) or a fielder puts him out. Each player maintains a record of his own score by marking it in the dirt beside the batting hole.

Skipping[5]

In the area of Kenya studied, when the long rains stop and the weather is cooler, *Skipping* comes into season and it was a popular activity for girls at both schools. One informant on the University School playground described *Skipping* as follows: "One person catches at the end of the rope. One person catches at the other end of the rope. One person plays in the middle." At each of the schools, the girls skip through rhymes and what follows is the rhyme most frequently heard on both playgrounds:

Bubble gum, bubble gum, number 28.
I went for a walk but now I stop.
Underbreak. (the girl stops, trapping the rope between her feet)
Blueband, bye bye zero.
Zero point zero is around. Around and around.
I am a girl, I go to school.
These are the actions I must do:
Salute for the king and bend for the queen,

[5]Because skipping does not always involve singing, it has been categorized as a game of skill rather than as a singing game.

Close my eyes and count fifteen.
So 1, so 2, so 3 . . . so 14, so 15. (jump out)

It is interesting to note that the words in this rhyme were pronounced somewhat differently on the Tannery School playground because the girls at this school were generally exposed to fewer opportunities to practice English language pronunciation than the girls at the University School. Additionally, lines of the verse were often omitted or changed. It was significant that the girls from the Tannery School replaced the line "I am a girl, I go to school", with "I am a girl, I work for the factory."

Another popular rhyme at the University School was:
Sea shell, cocoa shell, I will turn it over.
Here comes a teacher, a teacher with a red blue band.
She said, "Now it's time for maths: 1+1=2, 2+2=4.
Now it's time for English, spell cat: C-A-T.
Spell dog: D-O-G.
Now it's time for P.E. Clap your hands, turn around, touch the ground.
Now it's time for going home."

On both school playgrounds, girls also engaged in simple counting exercises where they competed to determine who would be able to jump the rope the greatest number of times without catching her foot. Whenever someone tripped on the rope, the other participants would announce, "Burnt!" and the person in the middle would then have to "catch" on one end of the rope.

For the girls at the University School, making the skipping rope seemed as enjoyable as *Skipping* itself and they would often use a homemade rope even when someone had a commercial rope. In fact, I observed girls twisting grass into rope long before I observed them *Skipping*. For instance:

Fourteen girls are working together to make a long rope, with three of the girls teaching the others. Sarah says that she has learned to do this from her grandmother. The girls take several long blades of grass and quickly twist the stands together. When Sarah comes to the end of the length of grass, she shows me how to weave in new strands of grass to continually add to the length of the rope. As the bell for "parade" (home time assembly) is sounded, Sarah carefully takes the rope and places it inside her bookbag. . . . [The next day during games], the girls continue their twisting of the grass into a skipping rope.

Several days later, the rope was ready and the girls used it to skip on the tarmac. As the rope wears and eventually breaks on the hard surface of the tarmac, the girls work together to repair it. In contrast, the bark ropes made by the girls in the Tannery School were much more durable than the grass ropes. To make these durable ropes, I am told that the girls strip pieces of bark from trees and tie them together. These ropes were so durable that I never had occasion to observe girls making them or repairing them.

Although *Skipping* was almost exclusively a girls' game, on one occasion I did observe boys participating on the playground at the Tannery School:

> The Class One teacher suggests that the students try a *Skipping* game that she used to play. She tells them to crouch down and try to jump over the rope while maintaining this crouched position. The students attempt this but soon become too frustrated to continue. The teacher shrugs and says, "I guess they don't know that one," and the students then move off on their own to skip. They transform her suggestion into a new activity where Samwel attempts to skip as though he is a frog. He crouches down low and jumps as the rope turns around. Each time that he lands, he is on his hands and feet. The boys have become particularly interested in this game and are reluctant to take an end when they miss the rope. . . . Andrew stops skipping and goes to join another game. The two boys who remain tie one end of the rope to a tree; one boy turns the end while the other practices jumping. They continue to attempt to perfect their crouched skipping style. . . . The boys do not recite rhymes to accompany their jumping.

Maukamoo

In front of the Tannery School there is a large area of leached, red soil where the grass has been worn away. It is here that the children draw patterns in the dirt for various games of skill that they play. One of these games is *Maukamoo*, the pushing game, which is most frequently played by girls. On one occasion, however, I did observe a pair of boys assisting the girls in drawing the 2X4 rectangular grid on which *Maukamoo* is played. In this game, as in several of the games previously described, the children use local materials such as stones and sticks.

In *Maukamoo*, play begins by tossing a small stone or stick into the lower right box of the rectangular pattern. The player then pushes the object from the first box into each of the other boxes while hopping on one foot. She is only permitted to stand on both feet in the upper corner boxes and at all other times must stand and push with the same foot. If the object is successfully pushed into the finish area, which is just beyond the eighth box, then she may begin a second round of play by tossing the object into the second box. This procedure continues throughout all eight boxes or until the player or object lands on a line.

Break, Break

In this game of skill, I discovered through participation that a substantial degree of physical ability is required. This game, like Maukamoo, involves the use of a grid drawn in the dirt. This grid is four squares by four squares and the girls who play the game can often be heard whispering "break break dash" as they jump from one square to the next. The purpose of this game, which is played in pairs, is to step in all sixteen boxes in the grid-pattern twice, going first forward then backward, without either stepping on a line or destroying the synchronously patterned movements. More precisely, the two girls must move

in opposite sideways directions across four squares, then move forward one row and cover the next four boxes. This is repeated until each girl reaches the box that is diagonal to the one in which she started. The pattern is then continued with the players moving sideways and forward, then sideways and backward. When both players arrive back at their starting position, each player scores one point. A second set can then be played with each player starting on the side to the left of her first round starting position. The pair may continue playing until one of them steps on a line, which disqualifies both, or until they become "too tired to continue". The goal of the next pair to play the game is to exceed the first pair's score.

Wrestling

Wrestling was a popular game among boys at the University School. The following play episode is an example of boys playing *Wrestling* "like you see on T.V." (i.e., World Wrestling Federation style):

> A small group of boys (Classes 3, 4, and 5) are wrestling near the flag pole at the assembly area. One boy struggles to lift his opponent off the ground, then suddenly drops him and throws himself on top. I inquire, "Where did you learn to wrestle like that?" and the boys explain that they enjoy watching wrestling on television[6] and they proceed to name several WWF wrestlers. The boys continue to wrestle, playfully calling one another names like Hulk Hogan.

King on the Mountain

The purpose of the common game *King on the Mountain* is for each player to compete to establish a position of power over the other participants. This game of asserting dominance over a group was only observed on the University School playground and was most commonly engaged in by boys. The following illustrates the game:

> A Class One boy climbs on top of the round rock by the school wall and struggles to maintain his position by resisting being knocked off by any of the other players. There is a great deal of laughing and squealing but very little talking. Two boys begin wrestling a few feet from the rock, while the others threaten the position of the boy on top of the rock and attempt to push him off. The "king on the mountain" challenges the others and warns them, "I'll come with great force!" Another boy stands on top of the rock and calls, "Come, come!" daring the others to push him off. There are now two boys on top -- one in Class Five and the other in Class Two. "Don't disturb us, we are the bosses," they announce but the others attempt to remove them regardlessly. The pair on top of the rock stand back to back and, referring to their new strategy, pronounce, "Like this." Suddenly, another boy manages to push them both off. "No, like this!" he boasts and everyone laughs. "New champion!" someone shouts as the other two boys fight to regain their position on top of the rock.

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[6] I am told that WWF wrestling is one of the most popular programs in this community.

During another episode of this game, I also observed girls participating in the activity. Their participation was, for the most part, accidental:

> A small group of Class Two girls are playing *I Went to London and I Saw* on the round rock when several boys intervene and start rallying for a position on the rock. This is transformed into a game and although the girls are tentative at first, their demeanor reveals their enthusiasm as they attempt to defend their position on the rock. Gradually, the girls become more assertive with the boys and when they succeed in pushing them off the rock they proclaim, "We are not playing with Class Three boys!" Within a few minutes, however, this game results in an all boys' game of *King on the Mountain* and the girls join the game of *Hide the Stone* that is being played beside the rock.

Singing Games

Similar to the games of skill, several of the games described in this category also require certain physical skills and abilities. They are, however, uniquely characterized by the element of singing and have therefore been categorized separately. The games listed here include both cooperative and competitive games and are played almost exclusively by girls. Although only three games have been described in this category, it is significant that singing was one of the most popular pastimes of African girls and they often sang as they walked to school and during other play activities. Most girls took particular delight in participating in adult-organized singing games. It should be noted, however, that because this study is concerned with the games and non-game activities that children play of their own free will, adult-organized singing games will not be described here.

Kovta[7]

In examining the patterns that children had drawn in the leached red soil, I also noticed a circle of approximately three feet in diameter divided into quarters. Inside the circle, several footprints were marked in the soil. A few days later, I observed two young girls performing what appeared to be a dance in the circle. They were singing:

> *Nili enda Nairobi.* [I went to Nairobi.]
> *Nika kuta maichana.* [I met a girl.]
> *Nika mwambia atiere.* [I told, let me tell you.]
> *Sikujua ni mkikuyu.* [I never knew it was a Kikuyu[8].]
> *Wamama wamama.* [Mothers, mothers.]
> *Wababa wababa.* [Fathers, fathers.]

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[7]Many of the children who attend this school experience difficulties with English language pronunciation. *Kovta*, the name of the play activity, is actually a mispronunciation of the English word "quarter", which refers to the circle pattern that the children drew in the soil.
[8]One of the African tribes living in this area of Kenya.

Tingiza tingiza. [Dance, dance.]
Hatujambo hatujambo. [How are you? We are fine.]

The partners begin the dance with one foot on either side of the cross lines in the circle and each successive movement is a half-turn counter-clockwise, alternating forward, then backward. The last line of the song, "*hatujambo*", is a cue for the partners to greet one another. At this point in the song, if the partners are back to back, the greeting consists of clasping hands. If they are face to face, the greeting is more complex and involves first touching the partner's shoulders (i.e., right hands to right shoulders, left hands to left shoulders) and then clasping hands (as Kenyans commonly do when they meet).

Many of the children on the playground seemed as entertained as I was in watching this activity and situations such as the following were commonly observed: "A group of girls encircle the pair who are dancing and participate in the singing. A couple of boys are also watching and although they keep their distance, they mouth the words to the song as they watch."

Rafiki Yako Nani?

Rafiki Yako Nani? was another traditional singing game that was played by girls at the Tannery School. Similar to Kovia, this game was a popular activity for spectators who also enjoyed participating in the singing. This game was unique, however, because it included an element of suspense, as illustrated in the following:

> Dorcas, one of the Class Three girls, organizes a group of girls into two opposing lines and the members of each line link together by placing their arms over one another's shoulders. She then takes a stick and draws a line in the dirt separating the two groups. The participants and spectators both appear very excited. The participants begin singing lines of a song back and forth like a conversation between the two groups. The first group asks, "*Rafiki yako nani? Rafiki yako nani?*" [Who is your friend?] The second group replies, "*Rafiki yetu* Kiplimo. *Rafiki yetu* Kiplimo." [Our friend is Kiplimo.] Kiplimo steps forward from her group. The second group then asks, "*Tuliem chakuswa ninani atam leta?*" [Who will bring the chosen one?] (repeated three times). The first group responds by calling, "Cheptoo!" Cheptoo moves forward to greet Kiplimo. The second group bids goodbye to their friend, "*Kwa heri, kwa heri, kwa heri, -- kwa heri, kwa heri, kwa heri, -- kwa heri,* Kiplimo!" After the goodbye is sung, the two selected players clasp hands in greeting. The girls then engage in a tug of war, with each one struggling to pull the other over the line in the dirt. The spectators can be heard shouting words of encouragement to the girl of their choice. This round ends with Jeptoo successfully pulling Kiplimo over the line. Suddenly, the girls fall back, knocking over several people in the first group and everyone bursts into laughter and cheering. The girls quickly reorganize and again begin to sing, "*Rafiki yako nani?*"

Hand-Clapping Games

Hand-Clapping Games were also played by girls at the Tannery School. These games were static and were most commonly played by pairs of girls, although on occasion, several pairs would join together to play a game. The chant most often used to accompany the hand-clapping was "All the people of the nation come together. . . " This line was repeated for several patterns of hand-clapping, and although the girls also chanted other lines in this game, their pronunciation of English words was often difficult to distinguish and it was therefore not possible for their teachers or for me to accurately record all of the words in the chant. It should also be pointed out that girls most often engaged in *Hand-Clapping Games* in order to pass the time while they waited for their turn in *Skipping* or *Kati*.

In and Out the Bamboo Forest

Singing games were also observed on the University School playground. *In and Out the Bamboo Forest* is a girls' group game sung in English:

In and out the bamboo forest. (sung three times)
You are my partner.
Tappy tappy tappy on my shoulders. (sung three times)
You are my partner.

The game begins in a circle of at least ten girls, with one girl leading the procession by singing "In and out the bamboo forest" as she weaves in and out of the circle. On the first "You are my partner", the leader stops in front of the nearest girl and the next line of the song is sung with the partners facing each other. The second "You are my partner" is the cue for the new girl to join the procession. As they continue, each girl in the line chooses a partner in the circle until everyone has joined the procession. The last girl remaining in the circle is placed in a "limelight" role:

> Everyone in the procession circles around the last girl and sings "In and out the bamboo forest" to her. The girl seems somewhat self-conscious in this special position and she often glances away, casting her eyes down at the ground. When the group sings "You are my partner", she looks up; her face beams and her singing voice becomes noticeably louder as she joins the procession.

Games of Strategy

In this category, games are characterized by abilities and skills within the cognitive domain. These abilities and skills may involve figural, symbolic, semantic, and behavioral informational content, as well as operational processes such as cognition, memory, divergent and convergent thinking, and evaluation (Avedon, 1971). Generally, these games require strategic abilities that enable the participants, who are most typically girls, to exert control over the outcome of their game.

Hide the Stone

A game of strategy observed among Class Two girls at the University School was *Hide the Stone*. The cognitive abilities and skills required in this game include a combination of operational processes such as memory, convergent thinking, and evaluation. The following observation illuminates some of the cognitive strategies employed by the participants:

> Alissa decides on which game to play and invites me to come and watch. She organizes her group of six friends into a circle. Everyone sits down and they bend over so that their heads are to the ground. They cover their eyes with their hands while Alissa searches for someone to hide the stone behind. She watches to ensure that no one is peeking, "Cover your eyes! Hellen, you are still peeking. I'll not let you guess!" Alissa hides the stone behind Susan, then says, "Wake up. Where is it?"

Whoever successfully guesses where the stone has been hidden is allowed to hide the stone next. Although there is a certain element of chance involved in making a correct guess in *Hide the Stone*, I have categorized this game as one of strategy because in observing the activity, I noticed that most of the girls had a tendency to "peek", as Hellen did, in order to determine where the stone was being hidden. In addition, it was not uncommon for the girls to hide the stone behind their best friend. Susan, for example, was Alissa's best friend. Also, because the stone was never hidden behind the same girl twice within three rounds of play, the girls could, through memory and process of elimination, determine where the stone had been hidden.

Hide and Seek

Like *Hide the Stone*, *Hide and Seek*, is also a game of strategy. Although most of the children that I observed in this area of Kenya typically played *Hide and Seek* according to the traditional rules, the girls at the University School adopted a more challenging set of rules. Specifically, they played by a rule that whoever was hiding was permitted to switch coats or sweaters with another player in order to disguise her identity from the seeker. The seeker must then correctly identify, by name, the player that she has located. Because the hiders require strategic planning skills to successfully disguise their identity from the seeker and the seeker must employ strategic skills to correctly identify the person she has discovered, these rules result in a more challenging game of *Hide and Seek*. It should also be pointed out that for the seeker, strategic skills may involve an evaluation of friendships in order to determine who is more likely to switch clothing with whom, the ability to remember what individuals were wearing, and divergent thinking skills. The following observation is an example of how two girls collaborated to disguise their identities:

> The small girl who is it has her face pressed against the school window and counts to thirty as she waits for the others to find hiding places. Two girls run to hide in the ditch by the edge of the tarmac. Both are wearing

their grey school uniforms and one of the girls is also wearing her school sweater over her jumper. She takes her sweater off and hands it to her friend to wear so that they are both disguised from the seeker.

Strategic Positioning

Strategic Positioning was a technique commonly used by girls at the University School for selecting roles, particularly in games for which an "it" figure must be chosen. For instance, *Strategic Positioning* was used to determine who would "catch" in *Skipping*, who would "call" in *I Went to London and I Saw*, who would be "it" in games of chase, and who would count in *Hide and Seek*. For *Hide and Seek*, One Class Three student listed *Strategic Positioning* as a "rule". She described the procedure in this way: "You make a line. When you are last you are the one who is going to count." In *Skipping*, *Strategic Positioning* was also used to establish positions, for example:

> A group of Class Four girls have decided to play *Skipping* during games time. The activity begins when Flora shouts, "First!" and starts running across the tarmac and into the field. She is followed by a group of girls who are rallying for positions behind her. She checks to see who is behind her and then suddenly stops, causing the line of girls to come to an abrupt halt. The first two girls in the line, Flora and her best friend Sarah, are first and second in the *Skipping* sequence and the last two girls in the line, who are not particularly popular, must take the ends of the rope.

It should also be noted that for the game *I went to London and I saw*, the caller role also determined by someone shouting, "First!". In this situation, instead of using the line formation, everyone scrambled to find a standing position on the round rock where the game was most often played. The last one to find a position on the round rock became the one designated to call, "I went to London and I saw".

Trust

One of the most interesting games of strategy observed was *Trust*, which was played almost exclusively by girls at the Tannery School. The procedures for playing this game are outlined in the following observation:

> Joan organizes a group of Class Three girls into a circle and everyone sits down with legs outstretched and feet converging in the middle. She stands in the centre of the circle and, maintaining a still body position, falls into someone's outstretched hands. She is passed around the circle and must trust her classmates to catch her. Those in the circle call, "*Kuja, kuja*" [come here], wanting her to be pushed in their direction next. She lands in someone's hands and is greeted, "Hello, hello sister!"

The group attempts to maintain the momentum and continues to pass Joan from person to person around the circle. Where she eventually falls determines who will have the next turn. Although the common group goal is to prevent the

middle person from falling, the obvious pleasure on the face of each person who had an opportunity to be in the middle indicated that there is also an individual goal in this game. Moreover, during initial observations this game appeared to be more a game of chance than a game of strategy. After further observations it became apparent that strategies to cause the middle person to fall were frequently used by the players in the outside circle. Common strategic behaviors noted include players retracting their outstretched arms when the middle person was pushed towards them and players allowing the weight of the middle person to collapse their supporting arms. It is also noteworthy that children who engaged in these strategies were never reprimanded by the group and also, that the strategies seemed to be an integral part of the game's procedures for play.

Games of Chase

I Went to London and I Saw

On the north side of the University School, there was a large white rock in the ground several metres away from the school wall. This landmark was not only a common place for children to sit and socialize but was also the exclusive site for a popular girls' game of chase called *I Went to London and I Saw*. A Class Four student described the procedures for this game as follows:

> To play this game you require one person who will catch. You can take a stone . . . and divide the place into two parts. The behind part [the rock] is called the "home" . The one catching goes into the front part [the school wall] and says, "I went to London and I saw". While she is speaking, the others come out to the front part and become statues. If any of them move, she goes and holds the hand of the one catching. The one catching turns around and says, "I went to London and I saw". While she is speaking, one of the others may go and "out" the hands of the two people in front. As soon as she does so, the one catching chases the others. If she gets anyone before she has gone into the "home", the one she catches is the next one to catch. If not, she catches again.

Many of the girls also play with the rule that when you are in a statue position, if you smile, or even "if you show your teeth", you can be accused of having moved. The girl who is it obviously requires a "quick eye" if she is to catch any of the players moving. Similarly, the other players must carefully plan their behavior and movements, including facial gestures, if they are to avoid being caught when the "catcher" turns around.

Puss

Children in the Tannery School enjoyed animal-oriented games of chase, where the participants adopted the role of an animal and then enacted the chase according to their role. One example is a game called *Puss* that was typically played by girls:

One of the Class Three girls has a sweater tied around her eyes as a blindfold and she is crawling on her hands and knees making cat-like noises, "Maa, maa". The others call to her, "Puss, puss, puss," encouraging her to move in their direction and to attempt to catch them. Whomever she catches becomes the puss next.

1, 2, 3, All the Girls Run Away

The phrase "1, 2, 3, all the girls run away!" was a signal for a game of chase among a group of girls on the playground at the University School. This game of chase was often more spontaneous than the two previous games of chase described:

> As Ellinor is jumping in and out of the ditch near the school wall, she suddenly turns around and shouts, "1, 2, 3, all the girls run away!" Everyone sprints across the field to get away. . . . Someone initiates another game of chase by saying, "I'm not going to catch," and Ellinor decides to be it. When she catches one of the other girls, they must stand with their legs apart. She explains this rule to me, "If someone enters you, [she points to the space between her legs] you can continue." Two other girls together call, "1, 2, 3, all the girls run away!" and everyone races beyond the corner of the school to a point where they are no longer visible.

Informal Games and Non-Game Activities

Make-Believe Play

Rich Man

The activity *Rich Man* is a dramatization of a thief who steals from a rich man and is then later chased by the police. The activity, which was played by girls at the University School, involved complex role-playing, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

> Alissa is the arbiter and she assigns roles to all of the players. No one objects. "Edith, you are a rich man. I'm the police chief." The rich man sits in a dug-out area approximately ten yards from the school. The other players have taken their shoes, sweaters, and book bags and have scattered them around the rich man. Suddenly, two thieves run into the rich man's house and steal some of the items. Four police officers chase after the thieves while two other police officers and the police chief go to the rich man's house to question him about the robbery.
> Police Chief: "What did they take?"
> Rich Man: "Some shoes and a sweater."
> The police officers attempt to find the stolen goods and capture the thieves. When they locate the thieves they take them over to the small alcove in the school wall that has been designated as the jail and reproach them, saying, "You will be in jail for six months for stealing!" Unexpectedly, one of the thieves escapes.

Police Officer: " Why are you out of jail?" The police officer chases after the thief, who manages to stop at the rich man's house and abscond with some of the other objects.
Police Officer: "He has stolen again!"
Police Chief to Rich Man: " They have stolen your bag and your sweater."
Police Chief to thieves: "You will steal again!"

Kalongo

"'Playing house' is a rehearsal for adult life by children around the world" (Leacock, 1976, p. 467). Young girls who attend the University School refer to playing house as "kalongo" and as one Class Three student described, it is "a game of mothers, fathers, and children". The rules for *Kalongo* are implicit in the social and technical practices of this particular African society. In the play episode below, a group of Class Two girls became engaged for an extended period in a dramatization of African social practices:

The girls decide to play *Kalongo* and they spend time selecting roles because everyone wants to be the central mother. Alissa acts as the arbiter and appoints herself as the central mother then assigns other roles to her classmates. No one protests.
A: "Me, I'm cooking. Now I'm eating." She demonstrates. "I wash the dishes."
The mothers all instruct their children to put on their sweaters (i.e., school sweaters) and then Alissa orders her child, "Come and eat your food, you know I've left it there. Now I'm going to town to buy some things."
O: "Even me, I'm not going."
Everyone goes over to Alissa's for supper and she offers each person a spoon (imaginary), then picks grass and puts it onto paper. She serves this *sukuma wiki*[9] to each of her guests.
A: "Put this on the table, then you eat," she directs one of her guests before explaining to everyone what each room in her house is.
A: "This is the bedroom. Come and sit here and eat (she points to the kitchen). Our father bless this food."
"Knock, knock."
"Come in."
One of the other mothers, Odini, drops something off at Alissa's. Alissa is sitting in her kitchen with her baby on her knee and she tells her other two children to go out and play. Later she calls to them, "It's night, come and sleep in the bed." Another mother comes to her door and requests to borrow something. Alissa speaks crossly to her, "You are making me go to the kitchen at night!" She hands a spoon (imaginary) to the mother then puts her children to bed. Each family goes to their own home to sleep. The children all lay down and their mothers cover them with blankets (sweaters).

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[9] *Sukuma wiki* means, literally, "pushing the week". It is the name for cooked, leafy green vegetables and is one of the most commonly eaten foods in rural Kenya.

"Knock, knock." One of the mothers comes to Alissa's and drops off a pencil. Everyone wakes up and goes through a washing routine. Next, Alissa goes out the door and over to the next house to find her daughter. "If you go to that house, me, I'll come and get you! It's time for eating," she scolds.
A: "Are you going to school today, Joanne? Yvonne, is your child going to school? Why not? They have a test today. Go to school."
To the other mothers she explains, "I'll stay with you, we'll go to town."
Alissa then switches to the role of teacher and she greets the children in the classroom:
"Good morning, Class Two."
"Good morning, teacher."
"You may sit down."
"Thank you, teacher."
She singles out one of the children, "Come and recite the alphabet." The student complies, then the teacher praises her and directs the other students by saying, "We clap for her." The next student she requests to recite the alphabet makes an error and she reprimands her, "When you remember, you come back. Good. Now sit down." She reminds the class, "Remember you must pay school fees tomorrow." While school is in session the other mothers socialize with one another and then go to work. Two of these mothers pretend to be writers. Alissa is now teaching a physical education class now, "Free space, calisthenics. . . just continue, I am talking with one of the parents." Then she tells one of the children, "Come to our house [after school] because your mother is going to Nairobi." She proceeds to direct her class in a game of Ring Around the Rosie. Several mothers come to the class to bring rubbers for their children because they think that it is going to rain.
Alissa gives directions to her daughter, "Jackline, you cook food because I'm going to Yvonne's."
The mothers who were writers have now become nurses. The other mothers come to Alissa's to pick up their children.
A: "This one is sick in the stomach." She takes her child to the hospital. One of the nurses (Yvonne) gives the mother some medicine and tells her when to give it to her daughter.
A: "Irene, you said you are sick. Come, we go to the hospital." The child has stomach problems and must be left at the hospital.
A: "When will she come out?"
Nurse: "Thursday. Go and prepare food."
A: "I'm going to cook for our sick child in the hospital."
One mother wraps her school sweater in a coat and cradles it in her arms like a baby and asks one of the other mothers to "bring tea and bread."
Another child is brought to the hospital by her mother, who announces, "We must go to Mombasa for two months to special doctors." The girls go far out into the field. They turn back periodically to check what I am doing.
Mother: "Why are you crying?"
Child: "I want water." The mother gives her child water.
"Knock, knock." Someone is at the door.

"Okay, go to sleep," the mother says to her child. The others come into the room and explain, "We go home."

During one particular episode of *Kalongo*, I was invited to participate with a group of Class Two girls. This not only permitted an opportunity for me to "rehearse" some of the social practices that I had learned, it also provided me with more of an insider's perspective on the activity. What follows is a recount of our play episode:

> Class Two girls construct the outline of a house using a pile of straw that has been left on the field. They invite me to play and suggest that I come to their house to visit.
> I knock on the door, "*Hodi*?" [May I enter?]
> Alissa smiles and replies, "*Karibu*." [Welcome.] She greets me at the door and invites me in before proceeding to show me the house by naming each room. When I notice that there is no toilet, I inquire, "Is the toilet outside?" They all giggle and quickly restructure the house to include a washroom. The girls spend the next five minutes experimenting in the bathroom and pretend to be urinating and defecating. Everyone's attention becomes focused on whoever is using the bathroom and there is always an uproar of giggling to accompany their bathroom sound effects. . . Alissa makes tea by mixing water with dirt and grass and brings it to me to drink. The girls watch me intently as I put the cup to my lips; they seem almost afraid that I might drink the "tea". . . . Several of the girls sit in the room with me while Alissa returns to the kitchen to prepare food.

During fieldwork on the Tannery School playground, I did not observe children playing kalongo. I did, however, frequently discover kalongo artifacts such as tin cans, plastic bags, sticks, and stones that were organized in the grass near the homes of children who attended the Tannery School. The arrangement of these artifacts was often similar to the traditional cooking facilities that I encountered in many of the mud houses in the village.

Mother and Child

Similar to *Kalongo*, *Mother and Child* is an activity that involved girls in a dramatization of domestic life. In this activity, however, only the main roles of "mothers" and "children" were portrayed, whereas in *Kalongo* other roles such as aunt, teacher, doctor, and nurse, were also enacted. What follows is an example of young girls playing *Mother and Child*:

> Class two girls are using plastic scrap pieces, bottles, sticks, dandelions, dirt, and water to prepare food. They put water in a bottle, then dirt and proceed to mix the ingredients together before pouring them out onto plastic scrap pieces (plates). They tell me that they have made *uji* (a porridge beverage) to feed to their children. School sweaters are used as blankets or to make beds for the children. The mothers care for their children by putting them to bed, covering them, fixing their hair, taking their

shoes off, and pulling up their socks. Irene and Alissa direct the activities of the other girls, telling them what to do and how to care for their children.

King and Horses

This make-believe activity was observed on the University School playground and the participants were exclusively Class Four and Five boys:

> One boy, followed by two other boys with passengers on their backs, leads a procession around the perimeter of the school. The boy riding at the front of the group is referred to as "king" and the others are his men. The boys attempt to find out how far they can travel on horseback before their horses collapse. Periodically, they stop and change positions. A smaller boy tries to carry a larger boy on his back but he collapses and requests that his passenger get off. Another boy is riding on a horse composed of three boys but the horse, unable to hold the boy's weight, continually falls down and everyone bursts into laughter. The horses change positions and are then able to successfully carry their passengers long distances.

Make-Believe Games of Chase

The games described in this category are unique, and are therefore categorized separately, because they involve *both* make-believe roles and the element of chase. These are exclusively the games of boys.

Cops and Robbers

An integral part of most games of *Cops and Robbers* is the element of chase. Boys on the University School playground commonly engaged in games of *Cops and Robbers* involving a chase that was more complex and more rule-oriented than those games of chase previously described. In addition, the actual style of play and the rules established in the game vary according to the participants. For example, the purpose of the following game of *Cops and Robbers* was for the cops to capture the robbers and to prevent them from escaping by binding their hands:

> The robbers have stolen money from the bank and are being pursued by the police. When the police catch a robber, they "rough him up", throw him on the ground, and use a piece of string to bind his hands together in front of him. The robber is then forced to lay on the ground and as he attempts to wrestle his hands free, one of the cops shouts, "You can't escape, don't even try." The cops, upon discovering another robber, bellow, "Another one!" and a new chase is begun.

Some of the boys on this playground used sticks as weapons against the robbers and this encouraged a more thrilling game of chase, as evidenced in the following episode:

> Standard Four boys are playing on the hill by the entrance gate and many of them are carrying sticks. The boys with sticks are chasing after others who are unarmed. When the police succeed in capturing a robber, they beat him with the sticks and then allow him to escape so that they can chase after him again.

Similarly, boys in the Tannery School also engaged in chases involving armed cops and robbers:

> Three boys are playing *Cops and Robbers*; one boy plays the role of the thief and the other two assume the role of cops. The cops drag the thief to an isolated part of the field where no children are playing and begin to beat him with a stick. They then throw him on the ground and sit on him. When they are finished, the cops run away and the thief chases after them.

On the University School playground, games of *Cops and Robbers* were also played according to more well defined rules. For instance, one Class Four informant gave the following explanation of the rules in his game:

> Someone would make rules and we obey the rules. We could tie a sweater or a piece of cloth on our head so that the person you could chase doesn't know you. When chasing you must remove your shoes and socks. When chased, then you must chase the person until you catch the person and the robbers must obey the rules and if you were told "Do this", you must do it because you are not a cop (G. K.).

Another student in Class Four cited the following as an important rule in cops and robbers: "When the robber has been caught by a police, the other robbers will come to save you by passing under your two legs" (R. S.).

Simba na Mbwa [Lion and Dogs]

For several days I observed a boy on the Tannery School playground being chased by five other boys. I learned later that this boy was the fastest runner in Class Three because his classmates were seldom able to catch him. Initially, this game appeared to be a simple chase episode. During later observations, however, a combination of animal-like sounds and the expression on the chasee's face suggested to me that he was not only being chased but that he was a lion being hunted by a pack of wild dogs. Thus, this game, which is described below, is another example of a chase that involves assuming the role of an animal:

> The "lion" zigzags across the field, dodging the wild dogs that are hunting him. The dogs are seldom able to maintain the lion's pace and although they try diligently to catch him, they often retreat laughing because they lack the endurance. The lion's eyes look wild and fearful and he makes growling noises at the pack of dogs encircling him. The dogs often gang up on him in groups of two or three but the lion is very adept at defending

his position and the dogs are unable to tackle him. Suddenly the lion snorts loudly, challenging the dogs who have made a circle around him.

It is also significant that during each successive episode of this activity, the same boy always adopted the role of the lion because, as his classmates explained, "He is the fastest runner, so he always gets to be the lion".

Games of Chase

Although all games of chase are based on the elements of chase and interlude, they are not all simple dashes across a playground (Finnan, 1982). Games of chase "differ according to the sex of the participants, the ratio of chasers to chasees, type of flight, purpose of the game, provocation, and use of space" (Finnan, 1982, p. 362). What follows outlines the continuum of informal games of chase (excluding make-believe games of chase) observed in the two primary school settings. The games range from simple spurts across a field to more complex, rule-oriented interactions. The majority of these games of chase were observed at the University School.

Mushroom Tag

This game of chase was a quick, spontaneous sprint across a field on the University School playground. It involved a group of boys in Class Four who were on their way to play organized football (i.e., the Canadian version of soccer):

> Four boys are laughing and throwing mushrooms at one another as they proceed toward the football field. Each time a boy is hit with mushrooms, he gathers more mushrooms and attempts to tag another boy with them. The tall boy seems annoyed that he has been hit in the back of the head with mushrooms and he stops to pick the white pieces out of his hair. When the boys can no longer find whole mushrooms, they resort to picking up the broken pieces so that they have something to throw at each other. As the boys get progressively closer to the football area, it is difficult to identify who is it because all three are chasing each other and throwing mushroom pieces.

Chase Challenge

Spontaneous games of chase involving girls at the University School were also observed. For example, the following chase episode was the result of a teasing incident between two girls:

> Four Class Two girls are sharing a green mango during lunch break. They are plaiting the grass and pretending that it is the head of their baby. Three more girls join in when they see me. Alissa has a plastic container with liquid in it and she intentionally spills it down the front of her dress and then laughs and looks at the others for their reaction.
> C: "I know you putted water. Don't cheat me."

A: "No. I used Coca-cola."
M: "Look at mine." Matilde says, stroking the grass she has plaited.
H: "Let me plait this one with Claris."
C: "Me, I'm not plaiting with anyone." She teasingly slaps her friend Hellen.
Alissa spits coke again and laughs.
C: "You are slopping on me. What is wrong with you? I will beat you!"
Alissa runs across the field and Claris chases after her. They both return to sit by me.
C: "We run again." This time Hellen runs away screaming. The other girls select partners to chase and then dash off in all directions. After each chase episode, the girls return to sit by me. Some select new partners to chase while others prefer to just sit.

"Playground Police"

At the Tannery School, another game of chase involving police transpired after the Class Three teacher suggested that the children in his class speak only in English when on the school playground. Following this suggestion, four Class Three boys appointed themselves as "playground police" and engaged in the following chase:

> The group of boys acting as police manage to single out several boys who are not speaking English on the playground and they drag the culprit to the Class Three teacher. Samwel, the arbiter, repeatedly accuses, "This boy is talking Kiswahili." The boy who is caught looks both annoyed and worried as he struggles to be free of the police's grasp. . . .When this boy is taken to the teacher, he is soon released and the four acting as police decide to pursue him again. Once the culprit is captured, he is forced to return to the teacher to be properly reprimanded. This boy now seems very annoyed -- almost furious -- and he refuses to appear before the teacher again. The "game"[10] turns into an argument and the captured boy leaves in disgust. The others choose not to pursue him and instead continue with their game by seizing Samwel, their leader, and accusing him of speaking in Kiswahili. Samwel seems quite agreeable when the others command him to "Go to the teacher!"

Play-Fighting

On both school playgrounds where field observations were conducted, boys frequently engaged in one-to-one *Play-fighting* games. Although I observed a variety of play styles and episodes, the common goal in these activities was for one boy to catch and physically overpower his play opponent. At the University School, for example, boys used sticks to represent guns and swords in old-fashioned dueling matches:

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[10]Although "the accused" in this game does not identify the activity as "play" per se, I have chosen to include the activity as an example of a game of chase on the Tannery school playground.

> Two boys are enacting a mock duel; one boy has a stick and the other has a branch. Kelvin chases his opponent and bellows, " Let me teach you some manners!" He threateningly waves the branch at his opponent. The other boy swings a long stick back and forth as though it is a sword. Kelvin challenges him, "Just come!". His opponent now has two sticks and with one used as a sword and the other used as a gun he chases after Kelvin.

Other *Play-Fighting* games of chase at the University School typically involved short, spontaneous chases followed by tumbling interludes on the ground.

Boys at the Tannery School also participated in *Play-Fighting* using improvised weapons. For example, the boys at this school were commonly observed carrying tall staffs that were used as spears and sticks. They also tied strips of bark onto the ends of sticks and used them like whips. These boys appeared very aggressive in their enactment of this struggle for power:

> Two boys carrying whips are chasing one another. They run amongst games of *Kati* and when they come to an open area, the tall boy jumps toward his opponent and kicks his leg high in the air. He misses his opponent and the chase continues with the boys covering a lengthy distance by running behind the school and in and out of other activities. Frequently, they stop and snap their whips or jump in the air and try to kick one another.

<u>"Who was it?"</u>

The young girls at the University School were particularly curious about my presence on the playground and they would frequently gather around to watch me write in my notebook. During the early stages of my fieldwork, this curiosity developed into a game that became a routine aspect of my being on the playground. This game of chase, unlike those previously described, does not involve a running flight from the chaser:

> I am sitting on the round rock by the school and several girls (Classes 2, 3, and 4) are peeking over my shoulder attempting to read what I am writing. One of them touches my hair and I turn around quickly to see who it is. This soon develops into a new game that is initiated by someone either touching me or attempting to read my notebook. Each time someone "provokes" me, I turn around and attempt to grab the nearest girl. They scream, trying to escape my reach.

Whenever this group of girls would see me sitting on the round stone, one of them would initiate this game of "Who was it?" and during the course of my fieldwork, the activity evolved into a more complex, rule-oriented game of chase. This is evident in the following play episode:

> Several girls come and sit on the grass near the round rock and someone behind me tugs on my hair. I whirl around to catch anyone who is near

> and I manage to capture one of the girls. I explain to my prisoner that I am tired of cooking and I ask her if I can take her home so that she can cook for me. She responds enthusiastically, "Yes!" I ask, "What will you cook?" She replies, "*Ugali*" [maize meal] and I release her. The game continues with another girl tugging on my hair. I reach around to capture her and when I do, I ask, "What will you cook for me?" This girl bursts into giggles and shouts, "YOU!" I hold onto her, refusing to let her go. The other girls try to rescue her from me. Soon, some of the girls begin to assist me by capturing the culprits who have tugged on my hair and then depositing them into my lap for questioning.

Pillar to Pillar

For this game of chase, the children at the University School made use of the structural network within the inner courtyard of the school. The courtyard consists of a series of sidewalks that interconnect the classroom doors. Above the sidewalk there is a covering supported by round pillars that are situated approximately eight feet apart. The purpose of *Pillar to Pillar* is to dodge from one pillar to another without being tagged by the chaser. The rules for procedure in this game, however, vary slightly depending on whether boys or girls are playing the game. What follows is an example of how boys play *Pillar to Pillar*.

> The boy at the far end of the pillars dances away from his pillar, encouraging the one who is it to attempt to tag him. The boys' voices become louder and more excited. Eric runs from the pillar into the grassy area and a chase ensues. Once he is caught, he takes the position of being it.

In contrast, girls played by somewhat different rules, as portrayed in the following excerpt:

> Many of the Class One girls are singing songs that they have heard during the older girls' (i.e., Classes Three, Four, and Five) competitive practice for singing games. They tease and mimic the girl who is it and try to encourage a chase. "Mar-y, Mar-y," is repeated over and over to the chaser. After Mary attempts to tag one of the other players, a small dispute arises over who is it. The others select the smallest player to be it and this girl accepts the role without dispute. The other players continue to tease her, encouraging her to chase them. They move about by creating a chain of people that connects back to a pillar. One girl explains that, "If you are touching someone, who is touching someone, who is touching a pillar, you are safe."

Imitative Play

According to Jomo Kenyatta (1938, p. 101), African children who engage in imitative play,

> . . . do most things in imitation of their elders and illustrate in a striking way the theory that play is anticipatory of adult life. Their games are, in fact, no more or less than a rehearsal prior to the performance of the activities that are the serious business of the [African] tribe[s].

Inventoried in this category are activities that involve imitating adult roles. These activities are divided into three groups: domestic skills, technical skills, and athletic skills.

Domestic Skills

Preparing Food

At the University School, girls were commonly observed pretending to prepare food, and in many instances, this activity was often performed in an "absent-minded" manner. For example, a Class Four girl, who was sitting and waiting for someone to pick her up after school, was observed nonchalantly mixing dirt and water in a bottle before pouring it out onto a scrap of plastic. Similarly, during lunch break, I noticed a Class Three girl using her plastic dish and leftover water to mix together grass and dandelions as though she was preparing a meal.

Plaiting Grass

The technical skills of plaiting were frequently practiced by young girls at the University School. For example:

> Six girls are sitting on the ground next to several clumps of long grass. They use water to wet the blades of grass so that the strands will stay together when plaited. The girls are very efficient at plaiting and boast that they have been plaiting grass since nursery school. When asked who taught them how to plait, they shrug and answer, "We just know from watching."

These plaiting skills were also practiced within the context of child care, such as in the following: "Class Two girls. . . are plaiting the grass and pretending that it is the head of their baby. 'If the baby cries, I'll cut the hair!' 'Look at mine,' Matilde says, stroking the grass she has plaited."

Technical Skills

Constructing Houses

Young boys frequently used existing local materials to practice the technical skills of constructing houses, which is an essential skill for men in traditional African culture. For example, at the Tannery School, a small boy used wooden poles and dry grass to construct a house under a tree:

> One small boy is building a house. He collects long poles and carefully props them up at an angle against the tree. Once the frame is complete, he steps between two of the poles and sits down on the ground inside his house. Many others come to help. One boy clears away the dry grass from inside the frame and the others use this grass to make walls between the supporting poles. More dry grass is pulled from the ground and is used to cover the poles. Some of the boys bring an old plastic sack to cover one side of the house. The small boy crawls inside his house and sits cross-legged while the others continue to cover the exterior with grass. They discuss what needs to be done and continue building in a very orderly manner. . . . A Class One girl who has been watching these boys construct the house decides to assist and as she reaches to grasp a branch on the tree, she accidentally falls on top of the house and knocks part of the structure down. One of the older boys grabs her and hits her, scolding her for what she has done. She doesn't appear to be alarmed by his reaction.

Boys on the University School playground used dirt and water to build a small house for grasshoppers. The structure of this house resembled the traditional mud houses that men build in many of the rural areas:

> Six Class Four boys have built a mud house in the soil next to the school. Small scraps of wood have been used to create a door in one of the house's four walls. The boys capture green grasshoppers and stuff them in through the door of the house. Each time they open the door, a grasshopper escapes from the small, hollow holding area. The boys explain to me that their purpose is to save the grasshoppers from ants.

Building With Wood

Scrap wood and improvised tools were commonly used by boys to practice technical skills required for construction. For instance, boys on the Tannery School playground were observed using rocks to remove old nails from wooden boards:

> Two Class One boys are constructing using old discarded fence posts and wooden boards from broken desks. One of the boys picks up a small wooden plank and practices hammering on a fence post while the other boy goes through the hole in the school wall into the empty classroom. The boy who was hammering follows his friend and they both return with additional pieces of wood. They embark on a new project and use rocks to pound the old nails out of the wood scraps.

The garbage pit between the school and the *shamba* (school farm) became the site where boys used long wooden fence poles to construct a bridge:

> Samwel is the self-appointed foreman and he gives directions to the others, ordering "*Wewe, kuja*" [You, come here]. Each time the builders lay a pole across the pit, they test its position and strength by jumping on it as

they walk across. The first bridge that they build is too unstable to walk along and they work together to build a second bridge. Again, they test its strength by jumping on it. This time they sing as they walk across the poles, "Ti-ti, ti-ti, ti-ti," and "1, 2, 3." Two other boys bring a wide log to contribute to the bridge construction. Samwel, who is standing beside the bridge, orders, "*Kuja*," [come here], to get everyone to move from the bridge deck. "*Wewe, leta!*" [you, bring it] he calls to someone to bring more wood.

Driving

In anticipation of their adult life, young boys also rehearsed the role of driving a car. For example, shortly after the boys had completed construction on their bridge, the next step in their play episode involved pretending to drive a car across the bridge:

> Samwel and four other boys remain on the bridge. They lean back and cross their arms at the back of their necks. Soon, two new boys come to join them and Samwel tells them to "sit properly". The boys begin to make car engine noises and pretend that they are driving around.

On the University School playground, boys were also observed rehearsing the role of driving:

> Class Two and Three boys are wrestling with one another and are rolling down the hill by the front gates. They start maneuvering up and down the hill and make car engine sounds to accompany their stops and starts. They start their engines and attempt to drive uphill. One boy makes sputtering sounds to indicate that he is struggling to drive his car up the hill. The other boys laugh at their friend's antics.

Athletic Skills

Racing

Many international athletes, particularly runners, live and train in this area of Kenya and young children enjoy practicing sports events long before they are old enough to be part of a competitive team. In anticipation of their adult life, children enjoy practicing racing and hurdle jumping. Racing is especially popular and children here seem to run everywhere they go. They also frequently challenge one another to races on the playgrounds and roadways and many of them expressed a particular interest in running alongside me during my early morning routine.

Jumping

Hurdle jumping was often practiced by the children at the Tannery School and it is interesting to note that both boys and girls were observed interacting together during this activity:

> The boys have built a hurdle stand and are practicing jumping over it. They have pushed two willows into the ground and are using a third willow as the crossbar over which they jump. The branches along the standing willows are used to support the crossbar and the bar can be raised or lowered using the side branches at the top and middle of the willows. Most of the boys are able to run straight towards the bar and jump over it. The children who are too small to jump the height of the bar run underneath it instead and also seem to derive pleasure from this. Some of the younger children pretend to jump even when the bar is down. . . . Eventually, the height of the bar is lowered so that more children can jump over it. A constant stream of children are now running and jumping over the bar shouting, *"Aruga!"* [fly or jump].

Large Play Equipment and Play Materials

Play Equipment

In the activities included in this category, playground-type equipment such as seesaws and slides is central to the children's play behavior. In these activities, the children either make use of existing playground equipment or improvised their own play equipment.

Seesaws

Most children enjoy playing on playground equipment such as seesaws and slides and the children at the university school were fortunate enough to have such equipment on their playground. It was only occasionally, however, that I observed children using this equipment. The following is an example of boys playing on the seesaw:

> Several boys have climbed onto the seesaw and are watching the girls' singing games. One side of the seesaw goes up and then bumps down on the ground. . . . They try to bump the seesaw hard enough so that someone in the up position falls off. When someone does fall off, everyone -- including the one who fell -- laughs.

Although the children at the Tannery School did not have manufactured equipment on their playground, they were resourceful at improvising play equipment. For instance, I commonly observed these children playing on a seesaw that they had made using a wooden plank and a hole in the wall of an empty classroom:

> The empty classroom at one end of the school has several boards missing along its walls. The children have taken the broken planks and using the lower cross beam and the hole in the wall, have improvised a seesaw. Two Class Two girls are riding up and down on the seesaw when suddenly a group of Class Three boys take over. There are four boys on each side of the seesaw; three sit and one stands. They try to bump the

plank hard enough against the ground so that the others fall off. When they succeed in knocking the standing person off, everyone laughs.

Slides

On the same occasion described above, these boys were also observed playing on the playground slide:

> The boys move away from the seesaw and perform cartwheels in the field before running up the slide. One boy runs up and is reprimanded by the boy at the top who has used the ladder and wants to slide down. Another boy walks halfway up the slide and does a somersault. Many of the boys then take turns standing on the slide and riding down in sock feet.

Although the students from the Tannery School had no similar playground equipment, they improvised a slide, which is described in the following:

> Children in Class One and Two are using plastic pieces from old containers to slide down a dirt hill at the side of the road. They sit on the plastic and take turns riding down the hill. I am told that sliding is best after it rains because the dirt turns to mud and the children can slide down the hill much faster.

Baskali

Wood scraps from broken desks were used to build a "*baskali*" [bicycle], which was a favorite piece of play equipment for boys and girls during break time. The following observation is an example of how boys "rode" on the *baskali:*

> The end piece of a desk and a wooden board have been used to create a bicycle-like structure. A boy sits where the desk seat was once attached and he rocks the board that has been placed across the horizontal board at the bottom of the desk. . . . Sometimes the two boys use the bicycle together; one boy sits and the other stands on the back as though he is being doubled.

Girls typically played alone on the *baskali* and it is important to point out that they were only permitted to use this equipment when boys were not playing on it. On several occasions, I observed boys taking a *baskali* away from a girl who had been playing on it. This action was never disputed by any of the girls, possibly because girls viewed the baskali as belonging to the boys because they had built it. Interestingly, young girls seemed to particularly enjoy "riding" on the *baskali* despite the fact that adult women in this culture would never be seen riding a bicycle.

Garbage Pit

When I arrived at the school one morning, I noticed that a pit, about three feet deep, had been dug in front of the school. This pit had been dug to bury the garbage that had accumulated between the school and the *shamba* [small farming plot] and it became a popular "piece of equipment" for children to play in and on. It is also interesting to note that on occasion both boys and girls were observed playing together at the pit. The observation that follows was recorded on the very first day that the children noticed the pit. During the days that followed, the children continued to play in a similar manner.

> One girl accidentally slides into the pit, "Ehh!" she smiles and climbs back out. The boys at the garbage pit seem very excited and call *"Kuja, kuja, natoka!"* [Come here!] to the other children. Everyone takes turns jumping over the garbage pit. First they jump the width and then the boys attempt to jump the length. Eventually, the boys jump only the length of the pit and the girls jump only the width. Some of the boys begin pushing and try to throw one another into the pit.

Play Materials

Handmade Dolls

Manufactured dolls were not common play items, and instead, many girls would make their own dolls. What follows is a Class Four girl's description of how she made a doll and how she used it during play:

> To make my doll I used a tomato sauce bottle, an old sock, some string, a colored pencil, and some pieces of cloth. To start with, I filled my bottle with some soil and closed the lid. Next, I stuffed some pieces of cloth into the sock and tied the neck with string. Then I took the sock and put it on top of the bottle. After that I drew a mouth, eyes, and nose on the face of my doll. Now, I needed clothes for my doll. I took the scraps of cloth and made them into a dress, then I sewed it onto my doll. an finally I added string on the head of it to make hair. Now my doll looked just like a doll brought from the shop. Playing with a doll is very exciting and mostly girls do it. Dolls are easy to make and fun to play with. To play with a doll, you can pretend to be the mother and the doll to be your child. You can pretend as if your doll were alive by telling it to sleep, play, eat, sing, and dance. (S. M.)

Grass Woven Objects

Young girls in Class Two and Three used grass to weave a wide variety of objects. It is interesting that this activity also included the rehearsal of language teaching skills that are essential for female adults. Although I have chosen to categorize this activity here, it is also possible that for girls, weaving grass is done in anticipation of adulthood. The following is an account of the activity:

Several girls in Class Three have woven long, stiff strands of grass into different objects and when they notice me outside, they present their creations. Jeptoo offers me an intricately woven item and explains that it is a chair for a cat. She teaches me the word in Kiswahili and says "*Kiketi*" as she points to the chair. I repeat, "*Kiketi*". Another girl produces an object that she has made. She puts it up to her mouth as though to eat it, then says, "*Maendi.*" After I repeat the Kiswahili word, she points to her object and explains in English, "maize" (corn). . . . Some of the girls sing religious songs as they sit and weave the grass.

Wire Cars

Many boys fashion wire cars[11] using salvaged materials. A Class Four boy at the University School recounted how he made his wire car:

> The material I used was a wire. I started to make the back of the car then I made up the front, then I made the tires. After I have made the whole wire car, I made steering. You push the steering and the car moves (M. K.).

Two other boys described the materials that they used to create their wire cars. One boy recalled: "I used such materials like wire, batteries, copper wire and bulbs. I tied the copper wire all around the car after making the shape. I play with it by pushing with a long wire" (T. S.) Similarly, the other boy explained,

> The materials I needed were wire and rubber. You have to cut the rubber into strips. You must make the wire straight before you use it. I took the wire and shaped the car and then I took the rubber and tied it around the car. Then I took another wire for shaping the tire. Then I took a very strong wire for the steering. It was very hard to curve the steering. It looks like a minibus but it is a *matatu*[12]. In the front there are lights from batteries. I can open the door and boot. I put in the windscreen (G. K.)

These boys also described where they enjoyed driving their wire cars. For example, M. K. said, "If you are lonely, you can ride around your compound or on the road," and G. K. explained, "If you are careful, you can play with it in the mud and rocky places. I like playing with it because it is fun playing in the mud with it." Similarly, T. S. also enjoyed driving his car in the mud, as the following indicates: "And even when you're bored, you can just take the toy and go play with it. When the rain had rained and then it stopped, you go in a muddy place and start playing with it. You will feel very enjoyable."

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[11] According to Leacock (1976) in her study of play in African villages, the wire car is probably the most characteristic of all African toys.

[12] A *matatu* is a truck used for public transportation.

Bottle Cap Yo-Yos

Another type of play material used at the Tannery School was *Bottle Cap Yo-Yos*, which were made by looping a string through two holes in a bottle cap. One end of the string loop was held loosely in each hand and then the cap is twirled on the string, which causes the string to twist. As the string is tightened, by pulling in opposite directions with both hands, the string unwinds and the cap spins rapidly. The momentum of the spinning cap causes the string to wind in the opposite direction and by pulling the string again the action can be repeated endlessly. One yo-yo was commonly shared among several boys.

Stilts

Stilts were also frequently shared among several boys; on one occasion, I observed a group of nine Class Four boys sharing one set of stilts. *Stilts* were usually made with scraps of wood and were sturdy enough to carry even the largest of the Class Four boys. Stilts were often used on the school' running track, which was uneven and marked by holes and rocks. Walking around the track on stilts was difficult and required skill and practice in order to avoid inevitable accidents. I often observed one boy walking around the track on stilts being followed by several classmates, who eagerly awaited their friend's mishap so that they too could have a turn to use the stilts.

CHAPTER 5
DATA ANALYSIS

The results of the study are analyzed according to gender, socioeconomic, cultural, and developmental factors. The results are then discussed in relation to the literature considered in Chapter Two.

Gender Differences

One of the most striking characteristics of play group composition was that play groups tended to be composed exclusively of males or females, and interaction between genders was not commonly observed. Also of importance was the fact that both the types of games and non-game activities engaged in and play behavior varied significantly with gender (see Table A-2 for summary).

Formal Games

Games of Skill

Girls engaged predominantly in formal, rule-governed games of skill. These games included a wide variety of skills such as throwing (*Kati*), hopping (*Maukamoo*), catching (*Kora*), patterned movements (*Break Break*), and jumping (*Skipping*). Boys, however, played only two formal games of skill: *Are You Ready?* and *King on the Mountain*. Both of these games required skills other than those outlined for girls' games of skill; that is, *Are You Ready?* involved hitting and *King on the Mountain* required physical strength and power. Overall, the skills required in the girls' games were less physically demanding than the skills required in the boys' games.

Although *Kati* and *Skipping* would ordinarily be considered girls' games, on occasion, boys were also observed participating in them. It is important to point out that when these games were played by boys, their style of play was notably different from that of girls. *Kati*, for example, became a much faster-paced and aggressive game of throwing and catching, and *Skipping* became simply a game of jumping over the rope without the accompaniment of songs or rhymes.

Games of Strategy

Girls also played more games of strategy than boys. The only game of strategy common to boys and girls was *Hide and Seek* but the rules for this game varied with gender. Boys, for instance, played by the more common set of rules, whereas girls enjoyed attempting to disguise their identity from the seeker by switching clothes with another player.

Three other games of strategy played by girls are *Hide the Stone*, *Strategic Positioning*, and *Trust*. Girls used *Strategic Positioning* for selecting the "it" figure in a number of different games; it is a significant finding that boys were never observed using these strategies and most often selected their own roles. This may be due, in part to the fact that boys played fewer games requiring an "it"

figure. Also of significance is that both *Strategic Positioning* and *Trust* were initially categorized as games of chance because during early observations, chance seemed to be the key factor in determining the outcome of these games. Following additional observations, however, it became clear that girls employed a variety of strategies that would allow them to control the outcome of the game.

Singing Games

Girls also engaged in both cooperative and competitive *Singing Games* and would often sing traditional African or spiritual songs while walking to school or while walking around the playground. Although boys seemed to enjoy participating in singing games that were organized by teachers, singing games were typically considered girls' games. Boys did not engage in them unless requested to by a teacher[13]. Although many boys avoided participating in singing games for fear of being ridiculed by their peers, they were frequently observed watching girls playing and occasionally participated in the game in a very private way, as illustrated in the following example:

> From a distance, several Class Two boys are watching their female classmates play *In and Out the Bamboo Forest*. The girls seem unaware of their audience. . . . One boy is looking on as though he is very interested in the activity. He mouths the words to the song and moves his body ever so slightly as he dances to their music. None of the other boys seem to notice.

Games of Chase

Formal games of chase such as *Puss, 1, 2, 3, All the Girls Run Away*, and *I Went to London and I Saw* were played almost exclusively by girls. Interestingly, although boys engaged in a variety of games of chase, none of their games were oriented by formal rules. Moreover, although girls played a variety of both formal and informal games of chase, it is noteworthy that only one game involved a vigorous physical chase (i.e., *1, 2, 3 All the Girls Run Away*). This pattern has most likely emerged as a result of traditional parental and teacher attitudes regarding girls engaging in rigorous physical exercise.

Informal Games and Non-Game Activities

Make-Believe Play

Girls and boys both enjoyed playing make-believe activities involving role-playing. The roles and content of the activities, however, varied with gender. For example, for young girls playing *Kalongo* (i.e., house) or *Mother and Child*, the role of "mother" was the most esteemed role and was preferred over the other roles of aunt, child, nurse, teacher, doctor, or writer. It is significant that despite preferring the traditional role of mother, these girls included many non-traditional female roles in their game (as listed previously). Also, although the leader

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[13] It is possible that these boys do not consider participation in singing games socially acceptable unless the games are sanctioned by a teacher.

assigned the role of "father" to one of the players, this role was never acted out and the person assigned to the role would gradually adopt a new one. It should also be emphasized that the content of many make-believe activities played by girls involved domestic themes.

Girls also frequently opted for "good-person" roles over "bad-person" roles -- a pattern that was evident in the game *Rich Man*, where the most preferred role was that of police chief and the least preferred role was that of thief. Alternatively, boys engaged in imaginative play that involved role-playing animals, "cops", and "robbers". In terms of role-play involving animals, boys highly valued the role of a powerful lion, whereas in games of *Cops and Robbers*, there seemed to be no strong preference for either role. As one Class Four student explained, "You just choose whoever you want to be. If you want to be a cop you can, or a robber, it doesn't matter." It should be emphasized, however, that overall, girls' games of make-believe involved both dialogue and the use of imaginative objects to a greater extent than did boys' games. Moreover, make-believe elements in boys' games were most often observed within the context of individual or team chases and these games are therefore discussed here as well as in Games of Chase.

Games of Chase

Many of the informal games played by boys involved spontaneous chases and although girls also engaged in games of chase, their style of chase was notably different. For instance, boys' games of chase often covered large areas of the playground (e.g., *Cops and Robbers*, *Simba na Mbwa*, *Mushroom Tag*, and *Play-fighting*), whereas girls' games of chase tended to be more stationary and were often confined to particular areas of the playground. Moreover, unlike boys' games of chase, girls' games, as mentioned earlier, rarely involved vigorous physical activity. It should also be emphasized that *Play-fighting* was the game that boys at both schools were most commonly observed playing.

Pillar to Pillar was a game of chase common to girls and boys at the University School, although the style of play varied with gender. For instance, when boys played this game, the chase episodes were often lengthy and extended beyond the designated pillar area and out into the grassy field. Boys also used taunting persistently to encourage a chase and disputes arose frequently over who was it or over boundaries . The following excerpt illustrates how boys played this game:

> One boy is it. Those running from pillar to pillar taunt him by singing "*Bobo billalr*"[14]. Their voices are mocking. The game suddenly stops and everyone stands around. It is no longer evident who is it. . . . Eric runs from his pillar into the grassy area and a chase begins. Once caught, he takes the position of being it, although it is quite obvious that he is reluctant to take the role. He tries to convince the others that he isn't it and the game

[14]This is a line from an adult-organized singing game that is often played during physical education.

becomes more confrontational and argumentative. He clutches a pillar and refuses to attempt to catch anyone.

Although altercations over who was it also arose when girls played *Pillar to Pillar*, their disputes were typically resolved relatively quickly and did not interfere with the general flow of the game. Other differences in play style included girls' use of teasing rather than taunting to encourage a chase and girls' shorter, less physical chases. In the girls' version of *Pillar to Pillar*, rule variations were also evident, as outlined in the following:

> Many of the Class One girls are singing songs that they have heard during the older girls' (i.e., Classes Three, Four, and Five) competitive practice for singing games. They tease and mimic the girl who is it and try to encourage a chase. "Mary, Mary," is repeated over and over to the chaser. After Mary attempts to tag one of the other players, a small dispute arises over who is it. The others select the smallest player to be it and this girl accepts the role without dispute. The other players continue to tease her, encouraging her to chase them. They move about by creating a chain of people that connects back to a pillar. One girl explains that, "If you are touching someone, who is touching someone, who is touching a pillar, you are safe."

Imitative Play

Many of the play activities observed represented a rehearsal of the social and technical skills required by adults in the culture. Boys commonly practice the technical skills of constructing commodities such as houses, bridges, bicycles (*baskali*), and seesaws that could later be used as large play equipment. In constructing, they were very resourceful at making use of available materials such as mud, scraps of wood, tree branches, and old abandoned desks and benches. Boys also enjoyed practicing driving skills and often incorporated this into other activities. In contrast, girls preferred to rehearse the domestic skills of food preparation and child care. These girls were particularly ingenious at using local materials such as plastic scraps, bottles, grass, dandelions, daisies, dirt, and water to prepare imaginary beverages and meals. Food preparation is an important aspect of the social and ritual life in Kenya. They also made use of the long grass in the playing field and plaited it as though it were the hair of a child. In terms of cross-sex role play, however, it is a significant finding that girls were not observed constructing and boys were not observed engaging in domestic tasks. This absence of cross-sex role play is likely a result of strong parental encouragement for girls to engage in activities that will prepare them for the roles of wife and mother -- essential roles for women in this African society. That is, girls would be discouraged from participating in "male activities" because such activities would not prepare them for domestic roles. Similarly, boys would avoid practicing "female activities" for fear of being socially ridiculed by their peers and family.

Sports practice was the only imitative activity engaged in by both females and males. Girls engaged most commonly in racing activities and on one occasion I also observed them hurdle jumping. In contrast, boys participated in

most sports activities and were notably more serious about perfecting their racing and jumping techniques. Additionally, because the rewards for elite professional athletes are numerous in this society, parents often encourage young boys to aspire to careers as track and field athletes. Girls, however, are not encouraged to excel in athletics because parents consider such activities inappropriate for girls to engage in. Moreover, parents may view girls' participation in sports activities as distracting them from domestic tasks and possibly inhibiting their opportunities for marriage.

Large Play Equipment and Play Materials

The lack of manufactured equipment and toys did not prevent many of these children from improvising their own toys by using local materials. Boys were particularly enterprising at using pieces of wire, batteries, and rubber to make wire cars. Boys also designed *Bottle Cap Yo-Yos* and *Stilts* made from scraps of wood. It was also common to observe boys searching through garbage piles and containers for any discarded items that might be useful for creating other toys (e.g., light bulbs, plastic bottles, tin cans, etc.).

Girls frequently rehearsed domestic tasks using dolls that were handmade from discarded plastic bottles, socks, string, and cloth scraps, and using small pieces of furniture and food items that were woven from stiff stems of grass. Girls were also seen searching through garbage and tall grass for abandoned scraps of plastic and bottles that could be improvised as cooking utensils or imaginary food items.

Although large play equipment was also a rare commodity, boys would use discarded scraps of wood for making seesaws and stationary bicycles (*Baskil*). It was observed that when the seesaws and bicycles were not being used by the boys, girls would be permitted to use them (although boys would readily reclaim their equipment whenever they desired). Even the garbage pit was occasionally used as play equipment and it is significant to note that boys and girls would commonly share this piece of equipment, as in the following observation:

> *"Kuja, kuja, natoka!"* [Come here!] the boys at the garbage pit call to the other children. Everyone takes turns jumping over the garbage pit. First they jump the width and then the boys attempt to jump the length. Eventually, the boys jump only the length of the pit and the girls jump only the width.

Play Group Interaction

As noted previously, play behavior involved very little interaction between girls and boys. When girls and boys did interact, it most often resulted from boys interfering with girls' games. For example, because many girls' games were stationary it was very common for boys to chase one another through games of *Kati* or *Skipping* and to interfere with the playing of the game. The girls tended to be quite passive about this and rarely chastised the boys or rarely asserted their right to play without interruption. Although boys' interference with girls' games

was often accidental, it could also be intentional, particularly in situations such as the following:

> Several boys are watching some girls play *In and Out the Bamboo Forest*. The girls seem oblivious to them. Some of the boys begin to sing along to the song. They mimic the girls and try to mix them up by laughing and changing the words. The girls seem frustrated but continue to ignore them.

A similar impediment to play occurred during an episode of *Rafiki Yako Nani?*:

> Despite interference from Class Three boys, some of the girls in Class One try to organize themselves into two lines. The boys persist by walking around the group of girls and snapping their hand-made whips. The brown girl organizes her classmates and they begin to sing the verses for the game. The boys continue to interfere. The girls try as best they can to ignore the boys' proximity. Although the game seems very disorganized, the young girls persevere.

On rare occasions, some boys would participate in girls' games. As mentioned previously, this participation would often alter the dynamics of the game, as is evident in the following observation of the game *Trust*: "One boy has joined the girls' game of *Trust*. When it is his turn to be in the middle, the girls really try to give him a faster ride than they would normally give. They rough him up a bit and seem to push him harder." Boys' participation in girls' games was so rare that when it did occur, it generated a great deal of excitement as evidenced in the following:

> Several boys are watching girls in Classes Two and Three play *Puss*. One boy decides to join in. The other boys seem quite astonished by this and although they are laughing, they watch him intently. The girl who is it manages to catch the boy (he seems to have deliberately let her). Everyone becomes very excited that this girl has caught a boy and they laugh when it is his turn to be the puss.

The following episode of *King on the Mountain* is another example of boys interfering in girls' play and is a rare instance of girls engaging in what is typically considered a boys' game:

> Some of the girls are playing *I Went to London and I Saw* on one of the round rocks. A group of boys intervene and start fighting for a spot on the rock. This transpires into a game and although the girls seem tentative at first, they squeal with delight as they attempt to maintain their spot. Gradually, the girls become more and more assertive with the boys and they laughingly push them off saying, "We are not playing with Class Three boys!" The boys assert their strength back and soon the girls give in and leave to join a game of *Hide the Stone*.

On the only other occasion when I observed a girl attempting to participate in a boys' game, she was physically reprimanded:

> One small boy is constructing a house. . . Many others come to help him . . . A Class One girl who has been watching these boys construct the house decides to assist and as she reaches to grasp a branch on the tree, she accidentally falls on top of the house and knocks part of the structure down. One of the older boys grabs her and hits her, scolding her for what she has done. She doesn't appear to be alarmed by his reaction.

Boys generally cooperated well with one another when playing in large groups to complete the construction of houses or bridges and it was often evident that they shared a sense of camaraderie. In fact, I frequently observed boys of all ages holding hands on the playground or sitting arm in arm as they watched one of the girls' games. Although there was a discernible closeness among boys, many boys also deemed it necessary to "act tough" and assert their power in order to secure the admiration of their peers. For many boys, acting tough meant showing little or no emotion in front of their peers, even when in physical pain such as in the following game of *Cops and Robbers*: "Class Five boys are chasing Class Two boys and putting them in jail. . . . The Class Two boys are attempting to act very tough and don't seem to mind being physically 'beaten' by the Class Five boys." Similarly, during the activity *King and Horses* one boy isolates himself from his playmates after being injured:

> . . . [A] boy is riding on a horse composed of three boys . . . [when] an older Class Six boy comes along and kicks [him] very hard. The boy dismounts the horse and goes off by himself crying. When he regains his composure, he comes back and continues to play as though nothing has happened.

Also of significance is the observation that boys who were accepted by their peers as leaders on the playground were admired most for their physical strength and/or athletic abilities. Samwel, for example, was a Class Three student admired by his peers for his ability to win play-fight (i.e., his physical strength) and racing (i.e., his speed) matches. Moreover, boys who were not adept at such skills were commonly ridiculed or ostracized by their peers. This is poignantly illustrated in the following episode of *Are You Ready?*:

> The boy in green shorts tries to throw the stick and continually tells the boy in red to move. The stick hits the boy in red and all three boys rush to wrestle over the stick. Two of the boys manage to get the stick away from the boy in red and he pretends to cry. The two other boys dispute with the batter over where the stick initially landed. The boy in red stands back and watches from the sidelines. He doesn't seem to be participating now. When the stick is hit in his direction, he manages to catch it and decides to rejoin the game. When he grabs the stick, the boy in blue kicks him. . . . The boy in red takes his turn at bat. He succeeds in hitting the stick but it doesn't go very far and the others laugh. . . . Two boys begin to argue about whose turn it is. *'Mimi, mimi!'* [me, me] they shout at one another. Suddenly the boy in red gets hit by the stick again. He becomes angry and

starts crying and kicking at the other players. One boy threatens him with a stick and drives him away from the play area.

Conversely, girls were usually admired and accepted as leaders by their peers because they were physically attractive or possessed academic or creative abilities. In addition, girls with these attributes were often given special privileges such as the following: "Jeptei and Jeptoo are never called for stepping on the line [in *Break Break*]." "Several girls in Classes Two and Three are *Skipping*. One girl on the end is not 'catching' properly. Jeptei tells her *'songa'* [move] and motions for her to leave. The young girl drops the rope without protest." "Dorcas is permitted an extra long turn (in Maukamoo)." "Alissa directs the others in the game. She chooses roles for everyone. No one objects or questions her." Some of these girls took advantage of their leadership positions and became "bossy" with their playmates, although no one was ever observed to object. Girls could also work very cooperatively with their peers and this was particularly evident when fourteen girls sat together without any disputes and plaited a lengthy skipping rope from grass. Girls also held hands and linked arms as a display of their friendship and sisterhood.

Socioeconomic Class and Cultural Differences

The University School's student population consisted of a broad mix of African tribes such as Kikuyu, Luo, Luhyia, and some Kalenjin. There were also students from the African countries of Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and Uganda, as well as students from India and Sweden. This mixture of ethnic and tribal groups is, generally speaking, also representative of both the elite (i.e., the upper socioeconomic class) and the University student population. In contrast, the Tannery School population almost exclusively consisted of students from the Kalenjin tribal group, which in this particular area was predominantly Nandi (a Kalenjin sub-tribe). Many of the Nandi people live a very traditional lifestyle and, by and large, tend to come from a lower to lower-middle economic class background. For these reasons, class and cultural differences will be discussed together (see Table A-3 for summary), although it should be noted that comparisons along tribal and ethnic lines were somewhat problematic because a child's tribal group was not always known. Cultural comparisons, then, tend, of necessity, to be more general than specific.

Formal Games

Games of Skill

Although games of skill were commonly played at both schools, these games were particularly popular among girls at the Tannery School. These girls engaged in several games of skill such as *Skipping*, *Kati*, *Maukamoo*, *Kora*, and *Break Break*, while girls at the University School tended to participate in only the two most common games of skill, *Kati* and *Skipping*. Overall, the games of skill played at both schools can be considered traditional games because members of the community would often reminisce about when they had played such games

as children[15]. At the Tannery School, *Skipping* rhymes in particular were part of the traditional culture as many of the rhymes were chanted in Nandi and Kiswahili. In contrast, *Skipping* rhymes at the University School seemed to be influenced more by British traditions than by African ones because most of the rhymes were repeated in English. It is also noteworthy that the Nandi teachers took great pride in the fact that many traditions in their culture were still being practiced and that the British influence was less apparent in their community than in the University community.

It is equally significant that boys on the University School playground were never observed participating and interacting with girls. Boys on the Tannery School playground, however, were occasionally observed *Skipping* or playing *Kati* with their female classmates. In general, interaction between girls and boys was more common at the Tannery School than at the University School. This may be due, in part, to stricter academic and behavior standards at the University School and to parents' concerns that their daughters may not complete primary school if they become involved with boys. Conversely, at the Tannery School, because the expectation is for daughters to become wives and mothers, parents may be less concerned about them completing primary school .

At both schools children used existing resources to make equipment for their games of skill and the materials selected were unique to each school environment. For example, girls at the University School would plait long grass into skipping ropes. This was more of a pastime, however, than a necessity as several of the girls owned commercially produced plastic skipping ropes that they occasionally brought to school. Moreover, the plaited grass skipping ropes tended to be fragile and only lasted through a few rhymes before needing repairs. In contrast, at the Tannery School, girls tied strips of bark together to make skipping ropes because the bark was durable and no other ropes were available to them.

Similarly, the type of ball used for playing *Kati* also varied between schools. On the University playground, for instance, girls made a ball using an old sock stuffed with paper, whereas girls on the Tannery playground formed a ball by using discarded plastic bags collected from the garbage pit. The materials used were reflective of what was available locally. More specifically, at the University School it was compulsory that students wear socks as part of their school uniform and socks were therefore common everyday items. At the Tannery School, however, where only one student in fifty may have a pair of socks (or shoes), plastic bags were much more readily available. It should also be noted that children at the Tannery School used local materials such as sticks, stones, and berries for other games of skill (e.g., *Kora* and *Mwakamoo*).

Boys at both schools also participated in games of skill and it is significant that in all of these games aggressive behavior was observed. For example, when *Wrestling* and *King on the Mountain* were played at the University School,

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[15]It is also interesting to note that teachers at the Tannery School commented on how children today play fewer games than children did a generation ago.

boys used aggression to overpower their opponents and to defend their position on the rock. Similarly, in *Are You Ready?*, which was observed among boys at the Tannery School, aggression was used to settle disputes over matters such as who had caught the stick first or whose turn it was to bat, as reflected in the following:

> Two boys begin to argue about whose turn it is. They repeat "Mimi, mimi" [me, me] over and over. Suddenly the fielder in the red t-shirt gets hit by the stick. He falls to the ground and the other two boys begin wrestling to retrieve the stick from him. The boy in red gets very angry and starts kicking the other two boys. The larger of the two grabs the stick and uses it to chase the boy in red out of the play area.

It should also be emphasized that the *Wrestling* style displayed by the boys on the University playground imitated the World Wrestling Federation matches that these boys watched on television. Similar modern *Wrestling* styles were not observed among boys on the Tannery playground and this is likely due to the fact that very few of these children have access to a television. Instead, their games of skill tended to be more traditional.

Games of Strategy

On both playgrounds, games of strategy were most often played by girls, although girls at the University School were observed to play a wider variety of these games. *Hide and Seek* was common to both groups but the rules by which it was played differed. For example, at the University School the girls invented a rule whereby the "seeker" had to correctly identify, by name, the person she had found. Alternatively, girls at the Tannery School played *Hide and Seek* by the more common and traditional set of rules.

Additional games of strategy played by girls at the University School include *Hide the Stone* and *Strategic Positioning*. In both of these games, the central person used covert strategies such as friendship ties and timing to control the outcome of the game. Similarly, in *Trust*, a game of strategy played by girls at the Tannery School, the players in the outside circle who wanted to have the next turn in the "limelight" position would use covert strategies (e.g., pulling your hands away when the person in the middle is pushed towards you or allowing the weight of the middle person to collapse your arm extension) to cause the middle person to fall.

Singing Games

Traditional African singing games were only played by girls at the Tannery School and this was likely a result of three factors: First, these children are taught traditional games and songs during physical education and music classes, and second, all subjects are taught in Kiswahili with the exception of English. Third, at home many of these children's parents speak only Nandi (or in some cases, another tribal language). Generally, extensive exposure to outside influences such as foreign cultures was quite uncommon in this rural community.

At the University School, only one singing game was observed and it was sung in English. This influence may be a result of several different factors. First, many of the children's parents had been educated in either Europe or North American and in most cases this likely resulted in a loss of traditional culture through the adoption of Western practices. Additionally, the children of these parents introduce new ideas on the playground. Also, most of the songs taught in music classes and competitive singing games[16] were of British or North American origin (e.g., "Lovely Ladies Dancing", "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush"). Next, all subjects, with the exception of Kiswahili, were taught in English. Finally, children were punished for speaking Kiswahili or their tribal language[17] on the playground.

Games of Chase

Family and school cultures may also affect the types of formal games of chase played. For example, at the University School, English games such as *1, 2, 3, All the Girls Run Away* and *I Went to London and I Saw* were probably originally taught to the children by foreign teachers or by teachers or students who had learned these games abroad. In contrast, on the Tannery School playground, Nandi and Kiswahili were the most commonly heard languages, with only a smattering of English mixed in. Thus, in *Puss*, which was the only formal game of chase observed, Kiswahili was the language of play. These girls likely originally learned this game in Kiswahili and therefore continue to play it in the manner in which it was taught. It is also significant that *Puss* was the only game played by girls at the Tannery School that involved role playing. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, *1, 2, 3, All the Girls Run Away* was the only game that involved girls in a vigorous chase.

Informal Games and Non-Game Activities

Make-believe Play

The most original and creative activities observed were played by Class Two girls at the University School. These informal non-game activities, which involved dramatic role-playing, dialogue, and the use of imaginary objects, include *Mother and Child, Kalongo,* and *Rich Man.* The "stories" dramatized in *Mother and Child* and *Kalongo* were particularly fascinating because the children directly imitated African home life. Significantly, no similar activities involving a "house" theme were observed at the Tannery School. The absence of such activities on the Tannery playground are most likely due to young girls choosing not to rehearse domestic tasks in their free play time because they are required to perform such duties at home on a daily basis. In other words, girls at the University School considered "playing house" a novelty because in most homes on the University compound, domestic chores were performed by live-in maids

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[16]This was an extra-curricular activity organized by the school's music teacher.

[17]It is interesting to note that many children did not speak their tribal language and some were only partially fluent in Kiswahili.

rather than by mothers or their daughters. It should also be noted that when these girls played "house", the role of "maid" was frequently included in the activity.

The absence of make-believe activities for girls at the Tannery School, however, would seem to suggest that creativity and originality may not be fostered in girls because teachers typically pay more attention to boys than they do to girls and this is compounded by large class sizes (e.g., in the lower classes the average class size is fifty or more) and a lack of books and resources. It should be emphasized, however, that these girls may engage in make-believe play within the context of work in the home environment. It is also possible that make-believe occurred on the school playground even though it was not observed.

The activity *King and Horses*, which was played by boys at the University School, can also be categorized as make-believe, although dialogue and imaginative objects were not used extensively in the activity. The content of *King and Horses* included one central character who played a king and several other participants who joined together to form a horse. It would also seem to be an important finding that no similar imaginative role-playing activities were observed among boys at the Tannery School.

Games of Chase

Informal games of chase involving imitative and imaginative role-playing were common among boys at both schools. *Cops and Robbers*, for example, was a game of chase observed on both school playgrounds, although differences in play style were evident. For example, the procedure of "roughing up the robbers" seemed less severe on the University School playground than on the Tannery School playground, as illustrated in the following observation:

> When the police catch a robber, they "rough him up", throw him on the ground, and use a thin piece of string to tie his hands together in front of him. The robber is then forced to lay on the ground and he attempts to suppress his laughter from the cop who is guarding him.

Also of interest is the fact that when this group of boys was asked "What gave you the idea for the cops to beat the robbers?", one boy replied, "I don't know, that's just what cops do." This would seem to suggest that the game of *Cops and Robbers* was an imitation of how these boys perceived the interaction between "cops" and "robbers" in their society. Alternatively, on the Tannery playground the following was observed:

> The cops drag the thief to an isolated part of the field where no children are playing and begin to beat him with a stick. They then throw him on the ground and sit on him. When they are finished, the cops run away and the thief angrily chases after them.

Although the boys at the Tannery School appeared to be more severe in their punishment of thieves, which again tends to be a more traditional practice, they seem to have ideas similar to those of the boys at the University School regarding how "cops" typically interact with "robbers". Two additional factors may also influence how these boys play. First, in this society, thieves are often burned to death by members of the community using a procedure called "necklacing", whereby the thief is restrained inside of an old tire and then lit on fire. Also, corporal punishment is practiced in both schools.

In *Simba na Mbwa* , which was played exclusively at the Tannery School, young boys imitated a pack of wild dogs pursuing a lion. In this chase, the boy who played the esteemed role of the lion was the fastest runner in Cl: . · Three and the other boys, who were not as quick, adopted the role of dogs. Being a fast runner and having lion-like strength and power were highly valued in this community and the admiration for the "lion" was evident.

Environmental structures on the University School playground inspired other unique games of chase. *Pillar to Pillar*, for example, was played within the school's inner network of concrete pillars. In this game, each pillar was considered a safety zone and the children would run along the concrete sidewalk, moving from one pillar to the next in order to avoid being caught by the chaser. This game would not have been possible at the other school because structures such as concrete pillars and sidewalks did not exist. Similarly, *Mushroom Tag* was played only at the University School where, after a rainy period, mushrooms often sprouted in the grass on the playground. At the Tannery School, however, this game could not be played because the ground cover and soil were not conducive to mushroom growth.

Who was it? was also a game unique to the University School. This game, which originated accidentally, involved a group of Class Four girls who tried to "sneak peeks" at my notebook while I was sitting on one of the large round rocks near the school. This simple game was played as follows: Each time one of the girls would look over my shoulder I would reach back and attempt to capture anyone within my reach. Eventually, this game became a ritual part of my presence on the playground and soon, girls in Classes Two and Three were also participating. In general, the children at this school were very comfortable interacting with me and they particularly seemed to enjoy when I participated in their games.

Children at the Tannery School were somewhat more reluctant to interact with me in a playful way. This reluctance may be due to several factors. First, in this community, adults do not commonly interact with children through play. A second factor is that the children and I shared only some commonalities in language (i.e., I had some knowledge of Kiswahili and they had some knowledge of English) and they likely felt uneasy knowing that communication problems were possible. Finally, these children had had very little previous exposure to a "*mzungu*" [white person] and many of them had never travelled any distance from their village greater than what could be covered on foot. Although these children were not as comfortable playing with me as the children at the other school, they

did interact with me touching by my hair and skin or by taking my hand to lead me to some event on the playground. Some of the children also enjoyed walking the mile and a half back to the University compound with me so that they could carry my "*mfuko*" [bag] or teach me Kiswahili vocabulary words.

Although *Play-fighting* games of chase were commonly observed on both playgrounds, play styles varied between schools. On the University playground, for instance, *Play-fighting* play often consisted of short, spontaneous chases followed by brief tumbling sessions on the ground. In contrast, on the Tannery playground, *Play-fighting* usually involved the use of weapons such as whips and progressed from chasing to jumping and kicking at one another, to chasing again, then dueling with whips and finally, tumbling on the ground. The extended chases and the use of kicking and weapons would seem to suggest that the boys at the Tannery School were more aggressive and persistent in their struggle to overpower their opponent. This may be indicative of stronger ties to the traditional practice whereby men hunt for food for their families and protect them from potential dangers.

Imitative Play

The activities described here are distinct, and are therefore categorized separately from other imitative-type activities previously outlined (e.g., *Mother and Child* or *Kalongo*), because they do not occur within the context of make-believe play. These imitations of the adult culture most frequently occurred among girls at the University School and among boys at the Tannery School. Young girls, for example, took pleasure in practicing domestic tasks such as plaiting grass (i.e., as preparation for child care) and preparing food. It is significant that imitative play of this kind was not observed among girls at the Tannery School. As previously outlined, however, this absence of imitative behaviors is most likely a result of such activities no longer being a novelty to girls who are expected to care for younger siblings and prepare meals on a daily basis.

Boys at both schools were observed participating in imitative activities such as constructing houses and driving; however, constructing was more common at the Tannery School while driving was more common at the University School. Moreover, the types of houses built varied between both schools. For instance, at the University School, boys in Class Three built a small mud house that was used to "save grasshoppers from the ants". It should be noted that although this house resembled the traditional mud houses in the rural villages, it is unlikely that these boys ever anticipated actually building or living in such a house. In fact, it would seem that because many parents were critical of the living conditions in mud houses, most of these boys would aspire to more modern houses with plumbing and electricity similar to the ones they presently lived in. In contrast, boys at the Tannery School built houses that were large enough for a person to sit in. Because boys in this community are expected to build their own house once they reach puberty, it would seem reasonable to assume that for these boys, the ability to build a house is an essential skill in adult life.

The technical skills of driving a car are also considered to be necessary in adult life and the rehearsal of these skills was observed among boys at both schools. On the Tannery School playground, however, driving was observed less frequently than on the University School playground -- a finding that is likely attributable to the higher parental aspirations for boys at the University School (i.e., they may expect their son to be successful enough to own a car in adulthood). Conversely, boys at the Tannery School would have very few role models who drive and it is therefore less likely that these boys would anticipate that driving would be an essential skill in adulthood.

Although athletic skills, particularly racing, were practiced on both playgrounds, these skills were most typically rehearsed by boys at the Tannery School. At this school, boys appeared to be very serious and they spent more time perfecting their athletic skills than boys at the University School. This is likely due to different parental and teacher expectations at each of the schools. Specifically, at the Tannery School, boys were encouraged to excel in athletics, whereas at the University School, boys were encouraged to excel in academics. It is equally significant that girls at the University School were observed practicing athletic skills more frequently than girls at the Tannery School. Ostensibly, for girls at the University School, parents' and teachers' expectations were less traditional in the area of athletics, whereas at the Tannery School, parents' and teachers' expectations seemed to be more traditional.

Large Play Equipment and Play Materials

Although the University School playground was equipped with both a manufactured slide and seesaw, I only observed children playing on it on one occasion. In contrast, the Tannery School playground had no manufactured equipment but the children used wood scraps to improvise a seesaw and a stationary "*baskal*" [bicycle] which they used on a daily basis. It is possible that for these children, when playground equipment is readily available they are less inclined to use it than when they have participated in creating it.

Manufactured toys were not present on either playground and instead, children made their own toys. For example, older girls (i.e., Class Four) at the University School would make their own *Handmade Dolls* using materials such as plastic bottles, socks, scraps of cloth, and crayons. Similarly, older boys (i.e., Classes Four and Five) at this school made *Wire Cars* from pieces of wire and rubber. Toys commonly seen on the Tannery playground included *Stilts* and *Bottle Cap Yo-Yos* for boys, and *Grass Woven Objects* for girls. All of these toys are made using locally available materials and it would appear that children at the University School generally have access to more expensive materials than children at the Tannery School.

Interaction Between Different Ethnic Groups

As mentioned previously, the student population at the University School was comprised of different tribal groups as well as foreign students from India and Sweden. In observing the play behavior of these children, it was interesting

to note that no students seemed to be ostracized or discriminated against by the larger group. This was particularly interesting because such prejudice was noted in the adult population, particularly between Africans and Indians. No overt prejudice was observed at the Tannery School either. It is noteworthy, however, that these children were aware of the existing tribalism that existed between Kikuyus and Kalenjins in this area of Kenya and this was evident in the song for the game Kovta, which is about someone (the children who sing this song are Kalenjin) who meets a girl in Nairobi but is unaware that she is a Kikuyu.

Developmental Stages

Games and activities in this section are categorized into groups according to common characteristics (e.g., games that involve singing, games that require teams, etc.) and developmental criteria (i.e., the class level and approximate age[18] of the participants in the activity) (see Table A-4 for summary). Because the primary purpose of this study has been to determine how children's play reflects the social and cultural context in which it occurs, this section provides only a synopsis of how these games and non-game activities might be organized in developmental terms. Moreover, to assess developmental differences in children's play behavior it would have been necessary to observe a broader range of ages than what was observed in the present study. For the most part, the categories presented here are structured according to those outlined by Sutton-Smith (1959) and Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg (1972).

Imitative Activities

In the first three school classes, I commonly observed imitative activities such as the rehearsal of *athletic*, *technical*, and *domestic* tasks. Differences in the content of these activities, however, varied with each class level. For example, Class One girls and boys most often engaged in racing matches that involved children challenging one another to run to a designated area and back. The victors of these races often took great pride in their accomplishments. Class One boys would also practice construction skills and I often saw them using stone hammers to pound old nails out of wood scraps to prepare the wood for construction.

Similarly, students in Class Two spent much of their free play time practicing a variety of imitative activities. Girls, for instance, particularly enjoyed pretending to prepare food and would use a medley of plants to create "meals" that they would serve on remnants of plastic containers. Many girls would also practice plaiting long blades of grass and at times would pretend that the grass was

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[18]Average ages for each class are as follows: Class One - six to eight years of age, Class Two - seven to nine years of age, Class Three - eight to ten years of age, Class Four - nine to twelve years of age. It was often difficult to establish age ranges for each class because children in the rural areas do not all begin school at the same age. Also, actual dates of birth may not always be known. Moreover, the ages at which a child begins and finishes school are very much dependent upon the family's economic situation. That is, school attendance is greatly affected by the family's ability to pay school fees and whether or not children (especially girls) are required to remain at home to assist with chores.

attached to the head of a baby, as in the following interlude: "Four Class Two girls are plaiting grass and pretending that it is the head of a baby. Alissa proclaims, 'If the baby cries, I'll cut the hair!'" Clearly, feminine concerns such as food preparation and child care were the central theme in the imitative activities of girls in Class Two.

In contrast, boys in Class Two preferred to engage in activities that involved central masculine concerns such as construction and athletics. These boys did not spend as much time pounding nails out of wood as Class One boys, however, and instead, concentrated on building commodities such as houses, seesaws, and bridges. Girls and Boys in Class Two also participated in imitating athletes, particularly racers. It should be emphasized, however, that the imitation of athletes is more common among boys than girls in this age category.

Although I sometimes observed Class Three girls practicing food preparation, I did not observe them plaiting grass as the Class Two girls had done. Class Three boys, however, engaged in very similar imitative activities to Class Two boys and they also rehearsed driving skills. Students in Class Three, like students in Classes One and Two, also enjoyed practicing athletic events such as racing and jumping. It is equally significant that Class Four students were not observed participating in imitative activities. As mentioned earlier, this is most likely a result of parental expectations that children of this age assist with chores such as child care, food preparation, and construction at home. In other words, because Class Four students have concrete opportunities to practice gender-roles at home, they may choose not to engage in such skills in their free time. Also of importance is the fact that Class Three girls, unlike Class Two girls, begin to develop play interests other than adult imitation. Alternatively, for imitative activities, Class Two and Class Three boys continue to have very similar play interests.

Make-Believe Activities

Make-believe activities were almost exclusive to the play of girls in Class Two. The dramatization of fantasy roles representing relationships experienced in family life (e.g., the mother-child relationship in *Kalongo* and *Mother and Child*) were particularly popular. Another significant finding is that the content of these activities continued to involve central feminine concerns such as domestic tasks and child care. In contrast, in the game of *Rich Man*, non-traditional female roles such as police officer, thief, and rich men were portrayed.

Boys in Class Three also engaged in fantasy roles, although their games were defined more by explicit rules and were not strictly a dramatization of real events and relationships. Consequently, the fantasy roles of boys are discussed within the context of other activities. Overall, however, the imitative play of girls in Class Two constituted the most inventive and original play activities observed.

Singing Games

Singing games that involve performing actions to a choral accompaniment were also popular among girls in the first three school classes. The ritualized content in games such as *Rafiki Yako Nani?* and *In and Out the Bamboo Forest* function to provide young children with a sense of security in large group settings. Similarly, small group singing games such as *Kovta* and *Hand-clapping* games also involve the repetition of actions and this provides children with a sense of mastery and accomplishment. It should also be emphasized that singing games organized by adults comprised much of the content of physical education in the first three school classes and that children tended to play these games according to how they had been taught them. For example, the girl who was most often selected by the teacher to lead the song was also consistently chosen to lead when the game was organized by children.

Central Person Games

Central person games are games in which one person plays in opposition to the rest of the group (Sutton-Smith & Rosenberg, 1972). These games constitute the majority of games played by children in the first four school classes. This is probably because such games require only simple organization and are easily learned by children under ten or eleven years of age. Sutton-Smith (1959) and Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg (1972) suggest that central person games can be further categorized according to five roles that the central person may occupy: limelight role, leader in competitive games, fearsome "it" character, central person of low power, and scapegoat.

"Limelight" Roles

When the central person occupies a "limelight" role, she or he becomes the centre of attraction in the game. Two such activities were observed: *Trust*, which was played by girls in Classes Two and Three, involved passing the central person around a circle of players; and *King and Horses*, which was played by boys in Class Four, included a central king character who had ultimate jurisdiction over the other players' actions. Also of importance is the fact that the roles of king and horses were portrayed within the context of make-believe play and that this was the only make-believe activity observed beyond Class Two.

Leader in Games Involving Competition

The central person may also occupy the role of leader in games of a competitive nature such as *Hide the Stone* and *Strategic Positioning*. In both of these games, the leader used strategies to control the outcome of the game (these have been delimited under Games of Strategy in Chapter 4). *Hide the Stone* was played exclusively by girls in Class Two and *Strategic Positioning* was unique to girls in Classes Three and Four. It is interesting to note that no competitive leader games were observed among boys in the first four school classes, suggesting that competitive leader games are typically girls' games.

Fearsome "It" Character

The fearsome "it" character is enacted predominantly in games involving competitive and dramatic chases (Sutton-Smith, 1959). Girls' games involving the role of an "it" character were observed in all four class levels and include *1, 2, 3 All the Girls Run Away* (observed in Class Two), *Pillar to Pillar* (observed in Classes One to Three), *Who Was It?* (observed in Classes Two to Four) *Hide and Seek*, and *I Went to London and I Saw* (observed in Classes Three and Four). Comparatively, boys' games of this kind were common in the first three school classes and included *Play-fighting* (observed in Classes One to Three), *Pillar to Pillar* (observed in Classes One to Three), and *Mushroom Tag* (observed in Class Three). The objective in all of these games was for the players to avoid being caught by the fearsome "it" character. Overall, the content of games of chase such as those mentioned above evolves from simple, spontaneous spurts across a field (e.g., *1, 2, 3, All the Girls Run Away*) to more sophisticated chases involving explicit rules and role-playing (e.g., *Simba na Mbwa*).

Games of Low Power

In contrast to other central person games, games of low power require the central person to maintain her or his position in the face of competition from others (Sutton-Smith, 1959). In other words, unlike the other central person roles, a central person with "low power" is not permitted the freedom to choose whom to chase or when to run. *King on the Mountain* and *Simba na Mbwa* were the only games of this kind observed. *King on the Mountain* was played almost exclusively by boys in Classes Two and Three; however, on one occasion Class Two girls were observed playing this game for a short period of time. Interestingly, although their involvement in what is typically a boys' game was, for the most part, accidental, these girls seemed well informed of the game's rules and made a strong attempt to defend their fleeting position of power. *Simba na Mbwa* was only observed among Class Three boys and it should also be noted that this game involved make-believe play (i.e., the boys dramatize a lion defending its position against wild dogs).

Scapegoat Roles

In games involving a "scapegoat" role, the central person becomes an object of ridicule to the rest of the group (Sutton-Smith, 1959). The games included in this category are: *Puss*, which was played by girls in Classes Two and Three and consisted of blindfolding and taunting the person who was "it" in order to encourage a chase; and *Playground Police*, which involved a group of Class Three boys who sought out classmates who were not following the teacher's instructions (i.e., those who were speaking Kiswahili instead of English). When this group of boys caught their "criminal", they would bring him to the teacher to be reprimanded. The "criminals", however, were not always willing participants in the game. Thus, as Stone (1989) indicates, play and games can also represent rejection, cruelty, risk, doubt, and threat for many children. This is particularly poignant when a child becomes the "brunt" of the joke in the game, or when she or he is excluded from the game situation entirely. The boy in red, described in

the game *Are You Ready?*, is one such example of rejection and cruelty in a game situation.

Individual Skill Games

In individual skill games, the players are considered equals and must compete against each other in a variety of skills (Sutton-Smith & Rosenberg, 1972). Although such games were popular in all four school classes, they were particularly popular among Class Three and Class Four girls. What follows is a summary of games of skill played by girls and boys in Classes One to Four.

For girls in Class One, games of skill included *Kora* and *Skipping*. During the early stages of learning to play the popular game of *Kati*, these young girls usually played the bottle cap or stick variation of the game (described in Chapter Five). Moreover, their game tended to be slow and methodical as they attempted to master the skills of throwing and catching. Similarly, when girls of this age practiced *Skipping* they tended to be less agile and somewhat awkward in their jumping style. These girls, however, did not spend a significant amount of time playing *Kati* or *Skipping*.

By Class Two girls had become much more practiced at throwing and dodging the ball in *Kati* and at jumping the rope in *Skipping*. They were also learning the manipulative skills required for catching and tossing berries in *Kora*. In Class Three, girls also participated in *Kati*, *Skipping*, and *Kora* as well as in the games of *Msukamoo* and *Break Break*. *Msukamoo* and *Break Break* are both relatively difficult games of skill that require a great deal of practice in order to master the hopping movements across the patterned grids. By Class Four, many of the girls had perfected these patterned movements and had also become masters at playing *Kati*, *Skipping*, and *Kora*. In fact, Class Four girls were so proficient at playing *Kati* and *Skipping* that they often attracted an audience of girls and boys from all four school classes. It is also interesting to note that by Class Four, girls rarely played the bottle cap or stick pick-up variation of *Kati* and instead, seemed to focus on speed and agility. Kati also reached its height in popularity by Class Four.

Games of skill were not as common among boys in the first four school classes and only two were observed: *Are You Ready?*, which was played in Classes One to Three and *Wrestling*, which was only observed in Class Four. For the game *Are Your Ready?*, the skills of batting and catching were typically learned in Class One, practiced in Class Two, and perfected in Class Three. Similarly, although Class Four boys were quite adept at imitating formal *Wrestling* styles, the actual skills of *Wrestling* were learned and practiced during informal *Play-fighting* matches in the first three school classes. It is also likely that as boys grow older and gain more exposure to outside influences such as television, they develop new ideas that begin to affect their play style.

Skilled Pastimes

Skilled pastimes are usually performed by individuals alone or among others and are hobbies that cannot in themselves be considered formally organized games, although they may give rise to competitive, game-like activities (Sutton-Smith & Rosenberg, 1972). Under the broad label of skills a distinction is made between two types of skills: first, skills required in the creation of a toy for subsequent play and second, skills required in performing a particular play act. In the first skill domain, toys created by girls include *Grass-woven objects* and *Handmade dolls*, and toys created by boys include *Wire cars*. The second skill domain includes two activities performed by boys: *Bottle Cap Yo-Yos* and *Stilts*. Although both *Bottle Cap Yo-Yos* and *Stilts* are also considered toys, it should be emphasized that the creation of these toys is secondary in importance to the performance of the play act. In other words, the enjoyment of such toys is derived from using them rather than creating them. For example, I frequently observed as many as ten boys waiting for their turn to use the sole yo-yo or one set of stilts available.

In general, the skilled pastimes of *Weaving* and *Bottle Cap Yo-Yos* were more typically performed by Class Three students, whereas the pastimes of making *Wire Cars*, *Dolls*, and *Stilts* were only observed among Class Four students. Most of the skilled pastimes performed by Class Four students require expertise in fine motor skills and creative ability, and were therefore far too difficult for children in the first two classes (as well as for many children in Class Three). Also of importance is the finding that children generally learned these skilled pastimes by observing those who had already mastered the skill.

Undifferentiated Team Games

In undifferentiated team games of skill, two teams or "packs", which are only slightly differentiated by different role behaviors, engage in a dramatic role-playing game of competition (Sutton-Smith & Rosenberg, 1972). In these early team games, dramatic details such as capture and playing with weapons were emphasized to a greater extent than competitive aspects of the game. One such game was *Cops and Robbers*, which was popular among boys in Classes Three and Four. Equally significant is the fact that boys in Class Five and higher classes preferred organized-sport team games (e.g., football) to these "pack versus pack" games. It is equally significant that team games for girls were not observed.

Interaction Between Different Age Groups

Younger children spent a great deal of their time watching and learning from older children. Moreover, it was noted that a hierarchical order existed on the playground whereby younger children always deferred to older children. For example:

> Some of the older Class Six girls from the upper primary school building have come to collect wood from the *shamba* [garden] area. They stop

where a group of Class Two girls are *Skipping*. One of the older girls takes the end of the rope and turns it so that her classmate can jump. Many of the other girls in the area come to watch the Class Six girls skip. . . . Four Class One girls move their skipping game over beside the Class Six girls. Soon several girls in Class Six take over the skipping game entirely and the Class Two girls stand back and watch. There is no dispute over the rope.

Discussion

Play Group Composition

Gender

In the present study, one of the most striking characteristics of children's play group composition was gender segregation. Similarly, Farver and Howes (1988) found that both American and Indonesian children tended to interact with same-sex companions. They also noted that older children interacted with same-sex companions more often than younger children did, which was also evident in the present study. Another important finding was that in the multi-ethnic, middle- to upper-middle socioeconomic class environment of the University School, same-sex interactions were more common than in the ethnically homogeneous, lower- to lower-middle socioeconomic class setting of the Tannery School. As suggested earlier, the almost exclusive sex segregation of play at the University School may be a reflection of stricter academic and behavioral standards. As well, it is possible that parents of children at the University School are more concerned that their daughters may not complete primary school if they become involved with boys at too early an age. It is particularly interesting to note that many Kenyan children choose to play separately even though this is *not* a requirement at either school. Interaction between genders was most often the result of boys interfering with girls' games. Possibly due to the patriarchal nature of this society, girls displayed passivity and rarely challenged boys when they intervened in their game playing. Kenyan children's choices for playmates may well be a specific function of parental expectations.

At both schools, same-sex interaction was often of a cooperative nature. Miracle (1976) has suggested that for Aymara children in South America, cooperative play constitutes the basis for future relationships and prepares children for adult roles. This would also seem to be true for Kenyan children who, through cooperative play, prepare to adopt a variety of roles in adulthood. In particular, young boys at the Tannery School learn to cooperate in small groups in anticipation of the adult roles they may be required to participate in (e.g., building houses, hunting, farming, or running small businesses). Similarly, young girls at this school learn to cooperate in larger groups because as adult females they may be expected to assist in the pastoral and agricultural activities of the tribe. Liddell (1988) has also identified cooperation in games as part of the socialization of Kwengo women, who are required to contribute on a "cooperative and gregarious basis" to the pastoral and agricultural activities of the tribe.

Noppe and Ray (1990) have observed that children tend to initiate social interactions more often with same-sex peers. Salamone (1983) argues that in Nigeria, when girls engage in a "call and response" pattern in traditional games, it establishes social control and reinforces acceptable behavior in a group setting. This also holds for Kenyan girls, as many of their traditional games involved a call and response pattern. Salamone emphasizes that traditional games played by girls serve as a means of establishing friendships and learning to rely on a wide circle of friends. Within friendship circles among Kenyan girls, however, leadership roles were also evident. Typically, girls who were physically attractive or who possessed academic skills (i.e., they received more attention than most girls did from their teachers) or creative abilities (e.g., singing, designing play materials) were given special privileges in game situations. For example, girls who were appointed (often self-appointed) leaders may be given an extra long turn, first choice in game roles, or the "calling position" (as opposed to the "response position"). It was interesting that some girls took advantage of this leadership position and became "bossy" with their playmates. This was also commonly observed among women in the adult culture, who, when in leadership positions, often tended to be "bossy" (i.e., controlling). This role-inconsistent behavior suggests a form of females' attempts to establish their position within the male-dominated hierarchy.

Maintaining a wide circle of friends was not observed to be as important for boys as for girls. Same-sex play groups were a means by which boys determined their position within the male social order -- an activity that is also characteristic of a male-dominated culture. Establishing social rank commonly involved demonstrating qualities such as physical strength, athletic ability, or "emotional toughness". Boys in mixed-age groups were particularly concerned with establishing their position in the group, as evidenced in the following: "Class Five boys are chasing Class Two boys and putting them in jail. . . . The Class Two boys are attempting to act very tough and don't seem to mind being physically 'beaten' by the Class Five boys." A similar observation was made by Salamone (1983), who observed boys in Nigeria attempting to establish position or "allot prestige" during traditional game playing.

Ethnicity

Knopp Polgar (1976), in her examination of black and white American children, found that children tend to group themselves according to color. Noppe and Ray (1990) have also noted that during free-play, children usually initiate social contact with the same-ethnic group. These findings would appear to contradict the present study's finding that mixed-ethnic play groups were more common than same-ethnic play groups at the multi-ethnic school (i.e., the University School). This finding is particularly interesting because tribal warfare has been very characteristic of this area of Kenya; it would therefore seem reasonable to expect children to seek security by initiating play with peers of the same tribal group. As well, because many adults openly expressed prejudice towards other tribal groups (e.g., many Kalenjins commented that they "hated" Kikuyus), Indians, and Europeans, one might expect children in this area to

model such attitudes. Although some children expressed an awareness of tribal conflict, it was not reflected in their play.

Age

Liddell (1988) observed same-age play group composition among the Kwengo in Namibia. Similarly, Salamone (1983), in his study of Nigerian children's play, suggests that same-age play groups provide solidarity for children and allow them to gain the confidence necessary for interacting in a "face-to-face" society. Although communication in Kenya is most often "face-to-face", it was observed that Kenyan children did not always play in same-age groups. For example, students in Class Two often interacted with students in Class One and Class Three. It is possible, however, that because each class of students was comprised of a wide range of ages (e.g., Class One may include students from six to nine years of age), Class Two students may have sought out similar aged playmates in Class One or Class Three. Class Four students, however, most often played in same-age groups, although this may be due to the fact that they had different break times than students in Classes One to Three. That is, for Class Four students, same-age play may have been a necessity rather than a preference.

Formal Games

It is significant that in this culture, children are rarely taught to play games and instead, learn them by watching older children who have already mastered the rules. In fact, children were observed watching games as often as they were observed playing them. *Kati*, for example, which was the most popular game played by girls in the first four classes, was learned through observation. A progression of skills from Class One to Class Four was evident, with Class One students appearing somewhat awkward while playing the game and Class Four students seeming very adept. Lancy (1975) has also found that Kpelle children in Namibia are infrequently taught to play games. Instead, they learn to play by observing older children and when they have learned the rules of the game, they begin participating. Lancy suggests that there is a developmental progression in game play and that children play games appropriate to their age set but also observe and copy the more complex games of the next older set. For Kenyan students, it also seemed that watching other children's games was a form of entertainment.

Sutton-Smith (1972a) proposes that the organization of games parallels other social organizations in which children have a great deal of experience (i.e., the family and school). In the present study, family and school influences were evident in Kenyan children's play, particularly in central person games, which comprised the majority of games played by children in the first four school classes. Sutton-Smith suggests that in central person games, participants act in relation to a central person who has an initiating or controlling role similar to the role of a parent of teacher. The central person role in a game may involve being dominating, admiring, or fearsome, or it may be someone to rebel against, obey, or flee from.

Of necessity, the child's relationship to significant adults in her or his life (e.g., parents and teachers) gradually changes from one of dependence to one of independence and this pattern was evident in the games of Kenyan children. Sutton-Smith (1959) suggests that children express their independence by venturing away from a baseline, which represents a secure place, and by challenging the "it" figure in the game. Displays of independence were evident in a number of games such as *Pillar to Pillar, Hide and Seek, I Went to London and I Saw,* and *Who Was It?*

It is interesting to note that in *Pillar to Pillar,* gender differences were evident in the expression of independence. Boys, for example, engaged in lengthy chases that often extended beyond the designated pillar area. As well, boys used taunting to encourage a chase and to challenge the "it" person, and disputes over who was it or over boundaries were common. In contrast, girls used only teasing to challenge the "it" figure and their disputes were typically resolved quickly. It is particularly significant that girls, in expressing their independence by venturing forth from the security of a pillar, commonly formed a chain of players that physically connected back to a pillar. These differences would seem to suggest that boys are more confident in expressing their independence and that they are noticeably less fearful than girls to leave the security of the base or "home". This observation seems illustrative of Kenyan boys' socialization toward greater independence than Kenyan girls' socialization.

Gender differences were also evident in other games of chase. Specifically, girls demonstrated a passive, teasing style of chase that was often confined to particular areas of the playground and that rarely involved vigorous physical activity. Alternatively, boys engaged in aggressive and vigorous physical chases that frequently covered large areas of the playground. Equally significant is the fact that on the few occasions when boys were observed participating in girls' games of skill, the dynamics of the game were altered significantly. For example, when boys played *Kati,* the game became more aggressive and faster paced than when girls played it alone. Similarly, when boys engaged in skipping, they did not jump to rhymes but rather, pretended to imitate animals jumping (e.g., a frog).

Finnan (1982) also describes gender differences in styles of chase in her examination of American children and Vietnamese refugee children. It was found that in both cultures, boys displayed an aggressive, physical style of chase, whereas girls were more passive and teasing. Additionally, when girls and boys played chase games together, the games lacked the order and conformity characteristic of girls' play and instead, became a mixture of both girls' and boys' types of chase.

Many play theorists maintain that games provide an instrument whereby children are prepared for adult life (e.g., Bruner, 1983; Comou-Krou, 1986; Hughes, 1991). Thus, Goldstein (1971) cautions that if the play activities of children are to be viewed as a reflection of the adult culture (i.e., its values, beliefs, practices, and philosophies), then incorrect classification of games, as

played in a particular society, may result in an inaccurate picture of that culture. In the present study, the games of *Strategic Positioning*, *Hide the Stone*, and *"Trust"* were originally thought to be games of chance. After further field observations, however, it became evident that participants used *strategies* in order to control the outcome of the game.

For instance, in *Strategic Positioning*, which was a line formation used by girls to select game roles or to determine the order of play, strategies were used by the lead person in the line to ensure that her best friend was next in line behind her. More specifically, the lead person in the line would continue to run until the desired person was in the second position in the line. By strategically planning when to stop, the lead person was able to control the order of play rather than leaving it to chance.

Hide the Stone also appeared to be a game of chance during initial observations; however, after further examination, it became obvious that strategies such as facial expressions, process of elimination, and friendship ties were used to ascertain where the stone had been hidden. Thus, correctly guessing the stone's location was by no means a matter of chance. Storey (1975) has categorized a similar game, in which participants attempt to determine the location of a hidden stone by analyzing the facial expressions of the other players, as one of strategy.

Similarly, the game of *"Trust"* initially appeared to be one of chance. After more in-depth observations, it became apparent that the central position in the game (which involved being passed around from player to player) was so desirable to the players in the outside circle that they would employ strategies (e.g., retracting their arms when the person was pushed in their direction or pretending that their arms could not hold the weight of the central person) to cause the central person to fall. Wherever the central person fell determined who would be next to take the middle position. Although this was a game of "trust" and friendship, the desire to be in the central position seemed to take precedence over communicating trustworthiness to friends. This practice was accepted and was never observed to be questioned by any of the participants. Overall, it should be emphasized that had these three games not been reexamined, it would have been concluded that children in this area of Kenya engage in only one game of strategy (i.e., *Hide and Seek*). Thus, as Goldstein (1971) cautions, a "false picture" of this society would have been presented.

Although the purpose of this study was to investigate how culture is reflected in children's self-organized play activities, I became interested in how a new game might be received in this community. During a physical education class, I introduced the game of Red Rover. Similarly, Lancy (1975) attempted to introduce a frisbee throwing game to Kpelle children in Liberia. Lancy stated that although his demonstration of the game attracted a great deal of attention, after four days of sporadic frisbee throwing he found no sign of the game. In contrast,

In the present study, Red Rover[19] was still being played two months after its introduction to children in the first four school classes and Class Six children were also observed playing the game. Interestingly, the children modified the verse used in the game into a form that was more culturally relevant. This involved changing the line "Red Rover, Red Rover, we call Kiprotich over" to "Landrover[20], Landrover , we call Kiprotich over". Although this game was not a subject of study, it is an illustration of how children adapt a game so that it becomes meaningful to their world. Mead (1975) has observed that children's games spread very rapidly and that often a new play form can result from only one experience between a group of children and someone who knows a new game.

Make-Believe Play

In the cross-cultural literature on children's play in East Africa, it has often been concluded that fantasy and make-believe play are essentially absent (e.g., Ebbeck, 1973; Castle, 1966; LeVine & LeVine, 1963). These findings, however, are not consistent with those of the present study. In examining the make-believe play of Kenyan children, a number of play episodes were found to be both lively and interesting, and to involve complex systems of rules. Ariel and Sever (1980) used the terms *color* and *dynamity* to describe the richness of make-believe play episodes. The most "colorful" and "dynamic" play activities, which were *Kalonga, Mother and Child*, and *Rich Man*, were observed among Class Two girls at the University School. Make-believe activities were also observed for boys at both schools; however, these activities did not include rich dialogue or sustained interaction to the same extent that the make-believe activities of Class Two girls did.

It is significant finding that make-believe play was not observed for girls at the Tannery School. Udwin and Shmukler (1981) argue that in make-believe play, the child is required to use potential abilities and knowledge in combination with experiences. Additionally, they suggest that for make-believe play to occur, the following conditions must be present: stimulation from the environment (i.e., parental encouragement and contact), a close but non-intrusive parent-child relationship, and either peer contact or the opportunity and space to practice in private. As emphasized earlier, however, girls at the Tannery School may engage in make-believe play at home, within the context of work, or they may have played make-believe activities on the playground that I did not have an opportunity to observe.

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[19]This game, which is played with a large number of players (usually twenty or more), begins with two opposing lines with an equal number of players. Each team takes turns calling one player, who will attempt to run and break through the joined hands of the two players on the opposite team. If the person called succeeds in breaking through, then she or he returns to her or his original team with a new member from the opposing team. If the person called does not succeed, she or he joins the opposing team. The team with the most number of players at the end of the game wins.

[20]This is a British-made all-terrain vehicle that is commonly seen in Kenya.

The lack of make-believe play among girls at the Tannery School may therefore be a function of the absence of any one of these conditions. For example, because these girls are frequently responsible for assuming domestic and child care tasks at an early age, it is unlikely that their parents would encourage them to engage in make-believe play over necessary work. Additionally, given that a premium is placed upon free-time and space in rural families, it is equally unlikely that these girls would have sufficient opportunities (e.g., peer contact or free-time) or space to practice such activities. For many girls, being involved in make-believe play would also involve too much "risk" because, unlike the more popular formal games, make-believe play lacks well-defined rules for procedure. The fact that boys from the Tannery School were observed in make-believe play is likely due to their being less tentative about engaging in "risky" activities and their being assigned fewer chores at home. Additionally, although children at the Tannery School have a similar socioeconomic background, boys may have acquired different school experiences than girls, and may therefore be more confident about engaging in make-believe play, because they are generally encouraged and are valued more by teachers and parents. Udwin and Shmukler (1981) argue that socioeconomic class is the most significant variable in determining levels of imaginative play but I would maintain that gender is an equally significant variable.

Sutton-Smith (1972a) suggests that the majority of dramatic games involve representations of relationships that children commonly experience in their family life. In the dramatic games of *Kalongo* and *Mother and Child*, for example, the child's focus on *central adults* (i.e., parents or caregivers) in their life becomes a focus on *central persons* in a game situation. Sutton-Smith emphasizes that because the adult-child relationship is the most significant social relationship that a child has experienced, it becomes a common theme in play. In fact, the portrayal of adult-child relationships is, in many respects, a universal theme in children's games, regardless of the game's cultural context. Sutton-Smith (1972a) suggests that as a result, such games are comprehendable by all players.

Sutton-Smith (1959) proposes that participation in make-believe play often involves applying "role-clothings" to players, which are directly influenced by events in the surrounding culture. This is consistent with the observation that children in Kenya apply "role-clothings" such as brutal cops, desperate thieves, courageous lions, wild dogs, working mothers, strict teachers, and sick children, among others. It is particularly revealing that young girls at the University School included "working mothers" (e.g., teachers, writers, doctors, nurses) in their repertoire of role-clothings. This would seem to indicate that modern attitudes toward women exist in the surrounding culture. It is possible that these young girls aspire to such modern female roles because, as van Manen (1991) points out, a child's growth and learning (through play) are an emergence of self inherent to the unique world of the child.

Imitative Play

As mentioned previously, family beliefs and practices influence the play behavior of Kenyan children and this is also evident in imitative play . First, parental encouragement for girls to engage in activities that will prepare them to be wives and mothers was evident in the lack of cross-sex role play in girls' activities. Also, girls in Kenya did not participate in vigorous physical exercise (e.g., chasing games or athletics), which would seem to be due to parents discouraging such "male activities" for girls. This also applied to boys, who were not observed engaging in "female activities" either. Interestingly, Bloch (1984) found that Senegalese boys in North West Africa were encouraged by parents to engage in imitative role-play activities involving cooking and food preparation.

That family and school environments influence children's play has also been discussed by Harkness and Super (1983) in their study of children's play in a Kipsigis community in Kenya. They viewed a child's play behavior as being influenced by the child's physical and social environment, the culturally regulated systems of child care and rearing, and the beliefs and values of caretakers (i.e., parents and teachers). They also stressed that parents in different cultures choose different domains for developing desired characteristics in their children. In the present study, it is apparent that for most parents, the emphasis in their children's socialization is on the work domain.

Imitative play was conspicuously absent from girls' activities at the Tannery School. As mentioned earlier, Kenyan girls from lower- to lower-middle socioeconomic classes are, from a young age, frequently responsible for domestic tasks. Thus, if most of a girl's time is spent preparing food and caring for younger siblings, it seems unlikely that she will choose to participate in such activities during free-time at school. As Storey (1975) points out, only children who are not able to participate in "adult activities" will imitate such activities. Consequently, because girls at the Tannery School are expected to participate in adult work activities, it is likely that they would find the imitation of such activities uninteresting. Gender universality, however, should not be inferred from this finding.

In general, the imitative play behavior of children in Kenya is reflective of adult roles and practices within the culture -- a pattern that is commonly observed in children's play throughout the world. This supports the claim of a number of authors (e.g., Bloch, 1984; Feitelson, 1979; Schwartzman, 1978) that children's imitative play is relatively universal provided that there is sufficient time, space, materials, and encouragement from adults.

Large Play Equipment and Play Materials

Another finding of note is that although children at the University School had access to large play equipment (i.e., a manufactured slide and a seesaw), they were only observed playing on this equipment on one occasion. In contrast, the children at the Tannery School, who had no similar manufactured equipment, used wood scraps to improvise a seesaw and a stationary bicycle. This

equipment was used on a daily basis. For the children at the University School, manufactured slides and seesaws are perhaps not an enjoyable way to spend free time. As Douglas (1931, cited in Sutton-Smith, 1972a, p. 215) states: "one [should] marvel at the stupidity of the social reformer who desires to close to the children the world of adventure . . . and coop them up in . . . uninspiring playgrounds where . . . their imaginations will decline, their originality wither."

Although many children in Kenya lack access to commercially produced toys, they are ingenious at using local raw materials and discarded scraps of wood, cloth, wire, and plastic to fashion toys. For example, girls commonly made dolls, cooking utensils, skipping ropes,, and small grass-woven objects., and boys made wire cars, bottle cap yo-yos, whips, stilts, and large play equipment such as seesaws and stationary bicycles. These toys were often important in make-believe and imitative play, an observation that is similar to Lancy's (1975) finding that handmade toys were a significant part of the make-believe and hunting play of Kpelle children in Liberia.

Leacock (1976), in her examination of the play materials of African children, also observed girls making dolls and utensils, and boys making wire cars. She emphasizes that both girls and boys used items retrieved from garbage for constructing toys. Similarly, Bloch (1984) observed that although African children often have a scarcity of toys, this by no means hinders their play. It should also be noted that like children in Bali (Storey, 1975) and Bolivia (Jackson, 1984), children in Kenya use insects and birds as live action toys. Overall, it would appear that when children do not have manufactured toys, they can be highly creative and imaginative in using local materials to design a wide variety of toys. This would seem to provide clear evidence that children from what, in the play literature, have typically been referred to as "disadvantaged" backgrounds, do in fact have the potential to be creative and imaginative in their play. Schwartzman (1984) also indicates that the creation of self-designed toys by non-Western children demonstrates highly imaginative and creative ability.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

New Research Findings

Although many of the findings in the current study have been discussed to varying degrees in the cross-cultural literature, new research findings are also evident. These findings have only been implied or examined superficially in the existing literature. To begin with, it should be emphasized that although children's play in Kenya has been examined previously (e.g., Castle, 1966; Harkness & Super, 1983; LeVine & LeVine, 1963), the specific area of Kenya included in the present study has not been researched. Equally significant is the fact that non-game activities have only been alluded to in studies of Kenya. The present study is also unique in that it includes children from a variety of tribal, ethnic, and socioeconomic class backgrounds, and who live in a community poised between two cultures -- one more modern (i.e., university) and the other more traditional (i.e., farming). As mentioned earlier, this is also a community experiencing considerable cultural change and conflict.

In terms of new research findings, a number of these can be identified. First, although gender differences in play group composition have been examined in the literature, these differences have not been examined in relation to socioeconomic background. In the present study, it was found that middle- and upper-middle class children interacted in same-sex play groups more often than lower- and lower-middle class children. As mentioned earlier, because middle- and upper-middle class parents strongly encourage their children to complete primary school rather than become involved with members of the opposite sex, these children comply by interacting mainly with same-sex playmates.

Second, in studies of play group composition, leadership qualities have not be examined. In the present study, it was found that although children often played in cooperative groups, leaders in these groups could be identified clearly. For example, leaders in girls' groups were often attractive and possessed academic or creative abilities. Leaders in boys' groups tended to be strong, athletic, and "emotionally tough". These admired characteristics would seem to be important considerations in gaining insights into a society's values.

Third, as mentioned previously, this study is unique in that it involved exploring the play activities of children living in an area characterized by cultural conflict. Because children's play reflects values and ideas that exist in the adult society (Bruner, 1963), it would seem reasonable to expect conflict to be portrayed in the play activities of children in this area. Instead, it was observed that children played in mixed-ethnic groups and did not express overt prejudice towards one another. Although Lancy (1975) has examined children's play behavior during rapid cultural change, to my knowledge, research on children's play activities during ethnic conflict has not previously been undertaken. This would seem to be an important area for future study if we are to increase our

understanding of children's perceptions of war and how childhood experiences in an environment of conflict can affect individuals in later adulthood.

Fourth, although the idea of independence has been discussed in relation to children's games (Sutton-Smith, 1959), gender differences in expressions of independence have not specifically been discussed. In the current study, girls were generally found to be more dependent than boys and were less confident about leaving the security of what was familiar to them. The identification of gender differences in children's independence can provide important insights into a society's socialization practices.

Fifth, Sutton-Smith (1972b) has concluded that competitive games, and games of physical skill, chance, and strategy, are not universal. Furthermore, they argue that only in the most complex cultures are all of these game types present. In less complex cultures, they found that many of these game types did not exist. In particular, they conclude that cultures with games of strategy are more complex than other cultures, that is, cultures that have both advanced technology and class stratification. In the present study, games of strategy were observed both for class-stratified groups *with* advanced technology (i.e., the university community) and for class-stratified groups *without* advanced technology (i.e., the farming community). It is possible that in previous studies of children's games, researchers concluded that certain types of games were non-existent because these games had been incorrectly categorized[21] (Goldstein 1971).

Sixth, in the cross-cultural literature on children's play (e.g., Castle, 1966; Ebbeck, 1973; LeVine & LeVine, 1963) it has commonly been concluded that children in East Africa do not engage in fantasy and make-believe play. This conclusion is inconsistent with findings of the present study, which indicate that make-believe was evident among girls and boys at the University School, and among boys at the Tannery School. Make-believe play, however, was not observed among girls at the Tannery School. Udwin and Shmukler (1981) propose that for make-believe play to occur, the following conditions must be present: environmental stimulation in the form of parental encouragement and contact, a close but non-intrusive parent-child relationship, and either peer contact or the opportunity and space to practice in private. Given that girls, as young as seven years of age are often responsible for assisting with household duties (e.g., child care, fetching wood and water, preparing meals, etc.), it is unlikely that parents would encourage them to engage in make-believe play when such work is more essential to the families' survival. It is equally unlikely that these girls would have opportunities (e.g., peer contact, free-time, etc.) or space to practice such activities. In contrast, boys at the Tannery School had fewer home chores and they were often encouraged in their endeavors by parents and teachers to the exclusion of girls. Although Udwin and Shmukler

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[21]It is interesting to note that Comes-Krou (1988) describes a situation in 1906 in which a member of the Paris Anthropological Society was openly derided for recounting an African game of strategy that required rapid and accurate numerical subtraction abilities but that was played by people who were unable to count.

argue that socioeconomic class is the most significant variable determining level of make-believe play, I would argue based on the present study's findings, that gender is an equally significant variable. The importance of gender as a factor influencing level of make-believe play has not previously been discussed in the literature.

Implications for Future Research

Based on the findings of the present study, several areas for further research can be identified. It should be added that these suggestions are not exhaustive and are intended only to stimulate further thought and to indicate potential avenues for future research.

1. According to Murphy (1956, cited in Ebbeck, 1973), children in developing countries have fewer toys and play materials than do Western children. Also, they seem to need fewer play materials because, in most cases, they are more absorbed in family and community life than Western children. It would be interesting to explore how children included in the present research would interact with manufactured toys such as dolls, tops, balls, and guns, for example. Conversely, it would also be valuable to study Western children's creative abilities in situations where they would only have access to raw and salvaged materials.

2. The location in which observations were made is an area of rapid cultural change, and although only the play behavior of school children was examined in the present study, an exploration of the play behavior of these children in their homes and villages would provide a complimentary perspective, and would generate additional insights into cultural change in this area. A study comparing school- and non-school children (i.e., children who do not attend school) might also be informative in revealing how cultural change influences different segments of the larger culture.

3. Comoe-Krou (1988) states that play is an expression of an individual's "psychosomatic equilibrium" (i.e., his or her physical and mental health). He also indicates that someone suffering from physical or mental pain is unlikely to play. Given this hypothesis, it would seem that a study of children's play behavior in areas of extreme conflict (e.g., Bosnia, South Africa, or Israel) would provide valuable insights into how cultural conflict influences children's play. To undertake such a study might also provide information about children's use of play as a coping mechanism during situations of extreme conflict.

4. As mentioned previously, in previous studies of African children's play it has been concluded that make-believe play is non-existent. These findings contradict the findings of the present research. Thus, research that focuses exclusively on make-believe play -- particularly among children in rural areas -- would make a significant contribution to the existing literature on play in African societies. It would also be a valuable to undertake a comperative study of various tribal groups in Kenya in order to gain greater insight into the diversity of cultural values and practices in this country. Examining differences in level of make-

believe play in individualistic and communal cultures might also provide information regarding conditions necessary for fostering make-believe play.

5. Exclusively documenting the traditional games of tribal peoples in Kenya (including adult organized games, which were not the subject of study in the present research) would make a valuable historical contribution to collections of African folklore. This would also preserve, in written form, traditional aspects of a rapidly changing culture.

Implications for Education in Developing Countries

Attempts to create play conditions in the classroom have been criticized by many theorists (e.g., Sutton-Smith, 1972a) because they question whether adult interference in children's play dramatically alters the distinguishing characteristics of play (e.g., those delineated by Stone (1969) in Chapter 2). Play in the classroom has also been criticized by school personnel, as summarized by Riley (1973, p. 183):

> "Play" . . . has become almost a dirty word. The assumption seems to be that, though play is a necessary activity of childhood that can't be eliminated entirely, it lures children off the path that leads most directly toward the kind of intellectual growth and success our society wants of its young people.

Amonashvili (1986) argues that the most important psychological characteristic of play involves its being founded on freedom of choice. That is, play is an expression of the child's status as an individual and without freedom of choice, play is no longer play. It is also argued that if play is to be integrated into the classroom, there must be an association in the child's mind between the teaching process, which is mandatory and essentially coercive, and the feeling of freedom of choice that is integral to play. Amonashvili suggests that the following factors are involved in preserving freedom of choice in the classroom:

1. When a child plays, his or her whole personality is seen to be involved. The instructional process should therefore encompass the child's life, needs, and aspirations in the same manner that play does. Additionally, if learning is delivered from the child's perspective, it will become the child's *raison d'être*.

2. Skills such as assimilating learning, memorizing, repeating, mastering, procuring, and discriminating are involved in play and thus, cognitive development can potentially be enhanced by integrating play activities into the curricula.

3. In order to engender a feeling of freedom of choice in the instructional process, the following conditions are crucial: (a) an overall climate of goodwill, mutual trust, and respect, (b) an instructional framework of cooperation that involves children in a joint creative effort, (c) freedom of choice in teaching materials, (d) fulfillment of the child's need for expansive learning activities and for the development of cognitive capacities, and (e) encouragement of independent, creative, and constructive learning activities.

Leacock (1976), in her study of Zambian children's play, indicates that through experience, many teachers have come to realize that the potential for more enjoyable learning (and more learning in general) exists in the interests and values children express through play. In outlining the African conception of play, Comoe-Krou (1986) suggests that teachers should possess a thorough knowledge of children's games because such knowledge can enhance communication and rapport -- hence, learning -- between teachers and students. Farrer (1975) emphasizes that knowledge of children's games is of particular value to non-indigenous teachers because these games reveal important interaction patterns in the adult culture.

Comoe-Krou (1986) outlines several additional ways that play can be integrated into African school curricula. First, games can be used to develop a large number of skills and abilities such as muscle strength, motor and psychomotor functions, manual dexterity, agility, observation, attentiveness, self-control, imagination, and reasoning.

Second, teaching games provides children with the necessary skills for developing their own games. Specifically, it is suggested that classrooms can be decorated with pictures of games and that once children's attention is drawn to these pictures, they will play these games of their own initiative.

A third way to integrate play into school curricula is to decorate classrooms with scenes or episodes of folktales. Teachers can recount the folktale and have children retell it in their own words through make-believe play. This would seem to be particularly beneficial for children in rural areas, who may have limited exposure to storybooks. It should also be emphasized that it is crucial for teachers to be aware that for girls to gain confidence in participating in make-believe play, they may need additional practice and encouragement.

Fourth, teachers can make toys with children by using salvaged materials in the same manner that the children do. This is a highly educational activity that helps to develop the child's creative and technical skills. Such toys and equipment can also be used during physical education activities.

A fifth way of integrating play into curricula is to use children's games that are based on mathematical exercises such as geometry, numeration, and measurement to practice and reinforce mathematical skills. Leacock (1976) also suggests that game elements can be used for presenting number concepts.

Finally, if children, from preschool onward, were encouraged to play African games within a multidisciplinary curriculum, the problem of cultural identity loss might at least partially be solved. Salamone (1978) points out that children's games can be used as a mechanism for easing ethnic tensions in ethnically heterogeneous communities.

Clearly, an authoritarian teacher is not in an optimal position to encourage students to participate voluntarily in learning activities in the same manner that

they would participate in a game. Amonashvili (1986, p. 89) emphasizes that if play is to be successfully integrated into any school curriculum, what is needed is a teacher who can

> . . . see himself [or herself] in his [or her] pupils, who . . . can 'get inside their skins', who can play with children as their equal and guide their play, who can turn education into an art, is optimistic about each child's abilities and can give each one confidence in himself [or herself], who treats children as small 'adults' and takes them seriously and, finally, who loves children and believes in the pedagogy on which he [or she] relies.

Conclusion

This research evolved out of my interest in children and their play world, and my fascination with other cultures. The purpose of this study has been to investigate how cultural elements are reflected in the play activities of children in rural Kenya. By using participant observation, my intention has been to convey a deeper and fuller description of play than could be provided by an ordinary participant and a broader and less culture-bound description of play than could be provided by the ordinary insider. It is hoped that the findings of this study provide an increased understanding of both play and culture. It is also hoped that they stimulate further thought on the subject of play and generate additional research that will enhance our understanding of other cultures.

My own understanding of children, of play, and of myself, through being immersed in a new culture, have also grown as a result of undertaking this research. It is my sincere hope that the findings of this study (and other studies) will not only enhance the understanding of play but also engender a greater understanding and tolerance of people in all cultures -- people who, because they play, are more alike than they are different.

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APPENDIX A

TABLE A-1
CATEGORIZATION OF PLAY ACTIVITIES

CATEGORY	TYPE OF GAME/ ACTIVITY	NAME OF GAME/ACTIVITY
Formal Games	Games of Skill	Kati
		Kora
		Are You Ready?
		Skipping
		Meukamoo
		Break Break
		Wrestling
		King on the Mountain
	Singing Games	Kovia
		Rafiki Yako Nani?
		Hand-clapping
		In and Out the Bamboo Forest
	Games of Strategy	Hide the Stone
		Hide and Seek
		Strategic Positioning
		Trust
	Games of Chase	I Went to London and I Saw
		Pupa
		1,2,3, All the Girls Run Away
Informal Games and Non-Game Activities	Make-believe Play	Rich Man
		Kalonao
		Mother and Child
		King and Horses
	Make-believe Games of Chase	Cops and Robbers
		Simba na Mbwa
	Games of Chase	Mushroom Tag
		Chase Challenge
		Playground Police
		Play-fighting
		Who Was It?
		Play to Play
Imitative Play	Domestic Skills	Preparing Food
		Pulling Grass
	Technical Skills	Constructing Houses
		Building With Wood
		Driving
	Athletic Skills	Racing
		Jumping
Large Play Equipment and Play Materials	Play Equipment	Seesaws
		Slides
		[illegible]
		Garbage Pit
	Play Materials	Handmade Dolls
		Grass Woven Objects
		Wire Cars
		Bottle Cap Yo-Yos
		Kites

TABLE A-2
CATEGORIZATION OF PLAY ACTIVITIES ACCORDING TO GENDER

CATEGORY	TYPE OF GAME/ ACTIVITY	GENDER	NAME OF GAME
Formal Games	Games of Skill	Girls	Kati
			Moukamoo
			Kora
			Break Break
			Skipping
		Boys	Are You Ready?
			Wrestling
	Games of Strategy	Girls and Boys	Hide and Seek
		Girls	Hide the Stone
			Trust
			Strategic Positioning
	Singing Games	Girls	In and Out the Bamboo Forest
			Koyla
			Papa Yako Nani?
			Hand-clapping
	Games of Chase	Girls	Pwes
			1,2,3, All the Girls Run Away
			I Went to London and I Saw
Informal Games and Non-Game Activities	Make-Believe Play	Girls	Rich Man
			Kalongo
			Mother and Child
		Boys	King and Horses
	Make-Believe Games of Chase	Boys	Cops and Robbers
			Simba na Mbwa
	Games of Chase	Girls	Who Was It?
		Girls and Boys	Pillar to Pillar
		Boys	Mushroom Tag
			Playground Police
			Play Acting
Imitative Activities	Domestic Skills	Girls	Preparing Food
			Plaiting Grass
	Technical Skills	Boys	Constructing Houses
			Building With Wood
			Driving
	Athletic Skills	Girls and Boys	Racing
			Jumping
Large Play Equipment and Other Play Materials	Equipment	Girls and Boys	Seesaws
			Slides
			Garbage Pit
			[illegible]
	Play Materials	Girls	Handmade Dolls
			Grass Woven Objects
		Boys	Wire Cars
			Bottle Cap Yo-Yos
			[illegible]

TABLE A-3
CATEGORIZATION OF PLAY ACTIVITIES ACCORDING TO SCHOOL

CATEGORY	TYPE OF GAME/ ACTIVITY	SCHOOL	NAME OF GAME
Formal Games	Games of Skill	University	King on the Mountain
			Wrestling
		University / Tannery	Skipping
			Kati
		Tannery	Maukamoo
			Kora
			Break Break
			Are You Ready?
	Games of Strategy	University	Hide the Stone
			Strategic Positioning
		University / Tannery	Hide and Seek
		Tannery	Trust
	Singing Games	University	In and Out the Bamboo Forest
		Tannery	Kovia
			Rafiki Yako Nani?
			Hand-clapping
	Games of Chase	University	1,2,3, All the Girls Run Away
			I Went to London and I Saw
		Tannery	Pyes
Informal Games	Make-Believe	University	Rich Man
			Mother and Child
			Kalongo
			King and Horses
	Make-Believe Games of Chase	University / Tannery	Cops and Robbers
		Tannery	Simba na Mbuzi
	Games of Chase	University	Pillar to Pillar
			Who Was It?
			Mushroom Tag
		University / Tannery	Play-fighting
		Tannery	Playground Police
Imitative Activities	Domestic Skills	University	Pulling Grass
			Preparing Food
	Athletic Skills	University / Tannery	Racing
			Jumping
	Technical Skills	University / Tannery	Constructing Houses
			Driving
		Tannery	Building With Wood
Large Play Equipment and Other Play Materials	Equipment	University / Tannery	Slides
			Swings
		Tannery	Rocket
			Climbing Pit
	Play Materials	University	Handmade Dolls
			Wire Cars
		Tannery	Balls
			Grass Woven Objects
			Bottle Cap Yo-Yos

TABLE A-4
CATEGORIZATION OF PLAY ACTIVITIES ACCORDING TO SCHOOL CLASS (DEVELOPMENTAL LEVEL)

CATEGORY	TYPE OF GAME/ ACTIVITY	SCHOOL CLASS	NAME OF GAME
Play Equipment		1, 2, 3	Seesaws
			Slides
			Baskali
		2, 3	Garbage Pit
Imitative Activities	Athletic Skills	1, 2, 3	Racing
			Jumping
	Technical Skills	1, 2, 3	Building Houses
		2, 3	Building Bridges
			Driving
	Domestic Skills	2, 3	Preparing Food
			Plaiting Grass
Make-believe Activities		2	Rich Men
			Mother and Child
		2, 3	Kalongo
Singing Games		1, 2, 3	Rafiki Yako Nani?
		2	In and Out the Bamboo Forest
		2, 3	Kovia
			Hand-clapping
Cental Person Games	"Limelight" Roles	2, 3	Trust
		4	King and Horses
	Leader in Games Involving Competition	2	Hide the Stone
		4	Strategic Positioning
	Fearsome "It" Character	1, 2, 3	Pillar to Pillar
			Play-fighting
		2	1, 2, 3, All the Girls Run Away
		3	Mushroom Tag
			Simba na Mbwa
		2, 3, 4	Who Was It?
		3, 4	Hide and Seek
			I Went to London and I Saw
	Games of Low Power	2, 3	King on the Mountain
	Scapegoat Roles	2, 3	Puss
		3	Playground Police
Individual Skill Games		1, 2, 3, 4	Skipping
			Kati
			Are You Ready?
		2.	Kora
		3	Break Break
			Madigogo
		4	Wrestling
Skilled Pastimes		3, 4	Weaving Grass Objects
			Balls and Yo-Yos
		4	Wire Cars
			Handmade Dolls
			Kite
Undifferentiated Team Games		3, 4	Cops and Robbers