GAMES AND TOYS:
ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON THEIR PRACTICAL
CONTRIBUTION TO CHILD DEVELOPMENT

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GAMES AND TOYS: ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON THEIR PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTION TO CHILD DEVELOPMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

The following study draws primarily on my own field-work on the socialization of the Ghrib children, and their games and toys.1/ During this investigation I analyzed some 180 games (and toys used for them) as they are played among the Ghrib, a nomadic population sedenterizing in the oasis of El Faouar in the Northwestern Tunisian Sahara. Secondly, I have analyzed the collection of Saharan and North African toys of the "Département d'Afrique Blanche et du Proche Orient" of the "Musée de l'Homme" in Paris. Finally, I scanned through the ethnographic and linguistic bibliography. For the theoretical background, I am indebted, among others, to the Unesco publication "The Child and Play..." The incentive to write this study, however, came from Dr. Ananda W. P. Guruge of the Unit for Co-operation with UNICEF and WFP, Unesco, Paris.

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The aim of this survey is first of all to stimulate UNICEF and Unesco officials from the social and psycho-pedagogical sectors, teachers, researchers, and welfare and development workers to take into account the research on children's games and toys.

The study of them is an important and very useful approach to children, their parents and other "socializers", in a spontaneous and easy way to understanding their situation, recognizing the socializing methods and gaining insight into the social organization and culture of a given society. Moreover, it seems very useful to me to adapt the programmes for children and their educators to the socio-cultural reality of the populations for which they are meant, instead of copying them from Western European or North American examples.

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1/ My field-work among the Ghrib lasted from March to May and from October to December 1975 and from March to May 1977. During his further field-work among the Ghrib and up to the present, Dr. Gilbert J.M. Claus has contributed by verifying some information. An introduction to the Ghrib by Gilbert J.M. Claus can be found in the texts for the ethnographic films E 2320 and E 2385-2388 of the Institut für den Wissenschaftlichen Film, Göttingen, West Germany, 1975-1976, and in the article mentioned in the bibliography. My research on the collection of the Musée de l'Homme started in 1980 and is almost completed. These researches have been made possible through the generous grants I received from the Belgian National Foundation for Scientific Research (1975) and the Belgian-Tunisian Cultural Relations Scholarships (1975-1976). I also wish to thank the Bernard van Leer Foundation, the Belgian UNICEF Committee, and the Unesco experts who gave me their advice and many interesting publications.
I particularly have in mind projects in the fields of pre-school, primary, professional and special education, use of leisure and playground activities, youth movements, day nurseries and child welfare. Local games and toys can also be of real interest for small-scale development projects.

In short, I hope that through collaboration with pedagogues, psychologists and teachers, the school system of developing countries will take into account the immense value of the cultural heritage of games and toys and that in the Saharan and North African states common games, and the toys used with them, will receive pedagogical application in order to replace many of the typical European educational games that have been adopted through teacher training programmes based on French or Anglo-Saxon models and so have been imposed as alien cultural items on the children from those countries.

The study proceeds as follows:

- First, I give a very short description of the research methods and of some theories in relation to children's play.

- Then follows a survey of the Saharan and North African games and toys and a discussion on some typical aspects of them, illustrated with photographs.

- Afterwards I view games and toys as a source of knowledge and insight into the child and his society.

- Finally, I shall pay attention to the role local toys and games can play in the above-mentioned projects and pedagogical institutions.

II. THEORIES AND RESEARCH METHODS

The usefulness of play in the psycho-motor, affective, cognitive and social development of children has been so convincingly proved that further comments are superfluous.

Play, a basic human activity, is not only based on toys and games, but also includes activities as riddle and story-telling, singing and music making, dancing and playing theatre, shaping artistry, etc. Moreover, one has to view play as a dynamic activity in which the most important factor is the activity of the child itself. Toys and games, therefore, have latent possibilities. They adapt to changing situations and directly reflect the evolution of families and societies as it is perceived by children and their "socializers".
It is an idle task to distinguish between the universality and the local specificity of games and toys. Many of them go back to prehistoric times and are found, in varying forms, all over the world. However, each community has moulded them according to its spiritual, socio-cultural and environmental-economical specificity. 2/

Play gives children the possibility of creating their own world, but also prepares them for integration into the adult world. Play thus has an immense developmental and pedagogical value, not only as an instrument of informal socialization but also as a method of formal socialization or education.

It is not necessary to recall the different theories on play, since others have given an excellent survey. One should read the Unesco Study No. 34, "The Child and Play", in which the psychological, sociological, ethnological and pedagogical approaches are being discussed. Yet I would like to focus attention on the ethological approach to play. In the wake of the research methods of ethologists (such as Konrad Lorenz) who study animal behaviour, other ethologists proceed to study human behaviour. An attempt to give a human-ethological analysis of the games of the !Ko Bushmen, hunters and gatherers, living in Botswana in Southern Africa, has been made by Heide Sbrzesny. 3/

In an article of Irenäus Eibl-Eibesfeldt, the promoter of human-ethological research, one can read about the work of his student, H. Sbrzesny and gain some insight into this peculiar approach to play and games. 4/

Concerning the research methods, also described in the above-mentioned Unesco publication, one should not forget that the first thing needed is a systematic and very detailed description of the games and toys before speculating on a theoretical level.


III. SURVEY OF SOME SAHARAN AND NORTH AFRICAN GAMES 5/

In this section I shall introduce to the reader some Saharan and North African games and toys, especially those that are widespread in these regions.

1. IMITATIVE GAMES
   A. Imitative girl games
      1. Spinning and weaving 6/

      In an article, I discuss the imitation of a woman's life in the play activity of the Ghrib girls. 7/ Through their games they initiate themselves in the spinning of wool or camel hair with a miniature spindle, from the age of four years onwards, in setting up the hand-loom and in weaving from eight years onwards (photos 1-4).

5/ In addition to the photographs of games and toys of the Ghrib (Tunisian Sahara), I shall mention some pictures and drawings of analogous games and toys from other regions, published in UNICEF and Unesco publications, in Klepzig's book on Bantu games and in Béart's study on West African games. This way, I hope to broaden the references in a more cross-cultural manner. THE FOLLOWING SEVEN PUBLICATIONS ARE INDICATED BY A CAPITAL LETTER (see bibliography) FOLLOWED BY THE NUMBER OF THE PAGE OR THE PICTURE:

   D. "Making toys is child's play"; 1979, The Unesco Courrier, January 1979, p. 23-26, ill.
   F. Klepzig Fritz, "Kinderspiele der Bantu"; 1972, Verlag Anton Hain, Meisenheim am Glan, 608 p., bibl., ill.
   G. BEART Ch., "Jeux et Jouets de l'Ouest Africain"; 1955, Mémoires de l'Institut Français d'Afrique Noire, no. 42, Dakar, 888 p., bibl., ill.

   An interesting general overview of the child in the Maghreb, with some references to games, can be found in "International Federation for Parent Education", 1980, p. 35-43.

6/ Weaving: C13, E93, 173, 363

7/ ROSSIE, Jean-Pierre and CLAUS, Gilbert, "Imitation de la vie féminine dans les jeux des filles Ghrib", 1983 (see bibliography).
The Ghibri girls make themselves the necessary toys, from eight years old in the case of the spindle or ten years old in the case of the loom. Before the girl in the picture could start weaving, her mother came to verify the position of the warp threads and she had to adjust some of them. This proves that at this age the game of weaving can be viewed as a real training course in one of the fundamental tasks of a Ghibri woman. Both games can be played alone or with some onlookers discussing the progress of the work.

2. Playing household: Another play activity of these Ghibri girls from six years onwards is the making of tents and dolls. However little girls of three years already play with a female doll.

On photo 3 one remarks that the loom has been built near a miniature tent, giving thus more authenticity to the imitation of the life of a nomadic woman. Normally the construction of a toy tent is part of collective playing. Around such a tent different play activities are organized, such as the weaving or the celebration of the marriage ceremonies with a bride doll and only occasionally a bridgroom doll (photos 5-7).

The female as well as the male dolls are dressed for the marriage ceremony. The bride wears all her jewelry, but traditionally there are no indications of the face parts (photo 7). Nevertheless, I have seen that some boys, influenced by their schooling, designed the eyes, nose and mouth on the bride doll of their sister. At the wedding ceremonies or other social events of their dolls, the girls sing and dance as their mothers would do in reality.

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8/ Dolls : B235; C11, 19, 28; D24, 25; E271-273, 283, 285, 287; G84-120; P12-14, 198-202, 453-454. For some information on the role of dolls in the process of identification, and for a picture of an Afghan doll, a Congolese doll and dolls from the Ivory Coast, see "The Child and Play", p.9,17-18

9/ In 1961 a primary school was established in the oasis of El Faouar. The majority of the pupils are Sabria, a sedentarized population. Ghibri boys are attending more or less regularly this primary school, but almost no Ghibri girls are doing it; see Claus Gilbert, J.M., 1983, p. 137-138.
Ghrib boys do not make dolls. In North Africa and the Sahara the making of dolls by boys has been attested for the nomadic Touareg. These Touareg boys make male as well as female dolls. 10/ The male dolls represent a Touareg warrior or man in full ornament (photo 8). Children of the Moors in Mauritania also make earthen camels and horses mounted by a man and the collection of the Musée de l'Homme contains a man mounted on a camel made by a child from the Saoura Valley (North West Sahara) in plastified electric wire. Chaamba girls (North West Sahara) also make a male doll called the bridegroom, just as Ghrib girls do. As far as I know and for the North African and Saharan region, the existence of male dolls has not been attested in traditional societies outside the Sahara.

Child dolls are extremely rare in the Sahara and in North Africa. A doll in these regions is almost always an adult, not a baby doll like the one European children play with. In the collection of the Musée de l'Homme, I have found some dolls representing a mother with a child on her back made by Chaouia girls from the Berber communities of the Aures in Algeria (photo 9). There are a few dolls representing Touareg boys or girls and girls of the Moors.

In some regions of North Africa and the Sahara, the making of and the playing with dolls is related to raining, however this is not the case among the Ghrib. 11/

As stated Ghrib girls make miniature tents. In other parts of North Africa and the Sahara, children do not live in tents but in houses and thus they build miniature houses. A very elaborate example is made by female servants of the Moors from Oualata in Mauritania. The Oualata girls also play with miniature furniture and "ustensiles," made by the same servants, that can be put into the little houses (photos 10-11). The Ghrib girls have their own household "ustensiles" to play with, but they are made by themselves (photos 12-13). 12/


12/ Huts and houses: F205-206, 455; G97? 143. "Ustensiles", C5-6, 11, 23, 28, 46-51; E280-282, 350-351; G123-129.
B. **Imitative boy games**

Young Ghorib boys do play together with their sisters or other female relatives at making houses and/or tents (photo 14). However, they prefer to play – as other Saharan boys do – at pastoral activities.

1. **Playing at pastoral activities:** All over the world children make or play with toy animals and have a lot of fun with living animals. However, it is not surprising that the children of pastoral, hunting and agricultural communities pay special attention to the animals on which their subsistence sometimes rests.

   So the nomad children of the Sahara, and especially the boys, represent camels in many different materials such as dried excrements, stones, mandibles of sheep and goats, wrinkled leaves, plaited palm leaves, twigs, wood, mushrooms, pottery, plastified electric wire and white iron (photos 15-18).

   In the Sahara and in North Africa also other animals are represented such as horses, goats, cows, zebus, gazelles, donkeys, dogs, birds etc. The important thing here is that children through their games referring to the animal world, learn a lot on the characteristics of their zoological and socio-economic environment.

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13/ Toy animals: C1, 6, 15-16, 18, 36, 46-47, 49, 52; D24-26; E30, 139 144, 274, 302, 346, 353, 406-428, 436; F207, 320, 421, 450; G136-142, 596-604.

14/ Two pedagogical experiments show the importance of toy animals. As part of a vast project for educational development in Jamaica, a fish was made of small clam-shells stuck to a piece of bark, a tortoise from a coconut shell and papier maché, and snakes from pieces of driftwood or a string of seeds. In another experiment children made horses out of condensed milk tins (see "The Child and Play", Educational Studies & Documents No. 34, Unesco, Paris 1960, p.20, 39).
In the game of cattle stealing, the Ghrib boys give us a pertinent example of socialization. After the "policemen" did set free the "cattle stealers", these thieves run to the herdsman and mock him by saying: "The herdsman, oh, what an unpleasant life he lives! His bed is only a date tree offshoot bearing a cluster of dates, and his pillow is his knapsack". The herdsman however replies: "The herdsman, he is an apple between the little apple-blossoms; staying at home never brings out something good".

2. Playing at agricultural activities: The same remarks made on children playing at pastoral activities can be said of children in agricultural communities who prepare themselves to become peasants. So in the collection of toys of the Musée de l'Homme one finds imitations of ploughs of different types made by Chaouia boys from the Aures region in Algeria (photos 19-21). Other children, as for example among the Tedda of Tibesti in Tchad, have made imitations of local wells.

3. Playing at hunting and warfare: Another group of favourite boy games are those imitating hunting and warfare. Toy weapons are abundant in the Sahara and North Africa. Among them there are imitations of the traditional ones, such as catapults, bows, cross-bows, throw-sticks, swords, daggers, and imitations of more modern weapons such as fire-arms (photo 22a, b, c, d and e). With some of these toy fire-arms boys like to imitate the gun-cracks typical for weddings and circumcisions.

C. Imitative games referring to recent socio-economic changes

1. Games referring to sedentarization: In the spring of 1977 a Ghrib boy playing together with his friends in the humid sand at the natural source of El-Faouar (Tunisian Sahara), made a nice miniature oasis garden. He enclosed and divided his garden into equal parts with dams, used wild roses as crops and then started to irrigate his garden.


16/ Toy weapons: C22; F55-57; G171-176, 336, 341-342.
This play activity shows the impact on this nomad population of recent sedentarisation, which started only some twenty years ago. The importance of this event is stressed when one knows that the pastoral Ghrib strongly dislike manual agricultural labour and that they did not care much for their oasis gardens up to now (photo 23).

A comparable game of oasis garden irrigation has been described for the negro children of the Aghaggar-Tidikelt region in the Algerian Sahara, although in this case the water remained an imaginary one. 17/

Playing with a miniature cart with a mule as the draught-animal (photo 24) or at being a village merchant is another example of acculturation among nomad children. The Ghrib boys do it in a very realistic way by using imitation money and a balance of their own making.

2. Games referring to modern transport and technology: As all children, North African and Saharan children, especially boys, are fascinated by bicycles, cars, trucks and aeroplanes—The car can be a boy, driven by his shoulders all over the plain by another boy, or a miniature car made of earth, wood, wire, tin cans etc. (photos 25,26). The Ghrib boys even pass the examination for a driving licence by running an empty barrel over a winding path (photo 27). The same boys play telephone and one of them imitated on a matchbox my tape recorder (photos 28-30). 19/

All those toys referring to modern transport and technology, and the games in which they are used, prove that children's play activities are an important vehicle of socio-cultural and economic transformations. Is it not through computer games that children of technologically developed societies are nowadays prepared for a computerized society? However, such modern games can as well prepare children to meet the challenge of modernization as impress on them an aversion for the way of living of the family in which they are raised.

17/ Bellin, P., idem note 10, p. 77.
18/ Modern transport: A16, 26; C2, 5, 33, 50-51; D23-26; E289-289, 303, 307, 315; F228-230; G137-138, 178-188.
19/ Modern technology: C21, 32, 40; E185; G124-127.
2. GAMES OF SKILL

A. Games of manual dexterity

Different little games are used by parents or older siblings to develop the dexterity of small children. Sometimes nothing is needed except one's own hands.

So the Ghrib girl or boy amuses the toddlers put under their care with a finger game. In this finger exercise one has to put the fingers of each hand one above the other starting with the ring-finger on the little finger, followed by the middle finger on the ring-finger and the fore-finger on the middle finger. During this finger exercise a little finger rhyme is recited and on the last word both hands open suddenly making the little ones laugh exuberantly. Then they also want to try this out.

This game develops at the same time the manual dexterity and the verbal skills of the toddlers as well as creates an affectionate relationship.

In this context it is a pity that I have to notice among North African and Turkish migrants living in industrialized cities like Ghent (Belgium), that the parents, siblings and other adults rarely play such little games with the children. They neither seem to transmit to the so-called second generation of migrant children (especially the boys), and this for a lot of reasons, their songs, riddles, proverbs, stories etc. This way not only an invaluable socio-cultural and pedagogical treasure is lost - not replaced by anything equivalent from the new environment - but also the way is left open for exaggerated television watching.

Through the following Ghrib game a very fundamental differential attitude towards boys and girls is being impressed upon children. It is an example of firm social learning in a game used to amuse toddlers.

The game consists in stretching out the fingers and thus making them crack. When the finger does not crack, one says "bint" a girl or "hashl" a male camel, but when a finger cracks, one says "uled" a boy or "bagara" a female camel. If one knows that there are festivities for the birth of a son but none for the birth of a daughter and that a female camel is much more valued than a male one, the profound meaning of this little game becomes immediately apparent.

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Illustrations: A5, 35; B158, 162, 171, 175, 247, 250, 262; C10, 17 41; P61, 86, 254, 348, 353, 464; G345-364, 382-389, 404-412. See also van Oudenhoven Nico, 1983, p. 4.
In the region other widespread games of manual dexterity are spinning a top, holding in equilibrium on the open hand a long stick, different games of throwing and aiming, playing at knuckle-bones, string figures (photo 31) and marbles (replaced among Ghrib children by little stones).

Those skill-games, when played with rules and verbal expressions, are of great importance for the overall development of a child's personality. One only has to remember the important study of Jean Piaget on the development of morality among Swiss children in which he analysed their attitude towards the rules prevalent in playing at marbles.

The next two photos (photo 32-33) show an interesting but difficult finger game necessitating a difficult synchronization of both hands.

B. Games of suppleness and equilibrium

An original game of the Ghrib combining equilibrium with suppleness could be called dune-skiing. To play it the children use something like a surf-board, the date tree offshoot bearing a cluster of dates, some twenty centimeters large. The boy squats on his board pressing with one foot the date twigs pointing forward. Dune-skiing is a lot of fun after a rain shower, because sliding on moist sand goes faster (photo 34).

Just as other children all over the world do, Saharan and North African children run on a barrel, roll down from dunes, walk on stilts, turn under their own arms while holding with both hands the top of a stick (photos 35-36).

Two more acrobatic exercises for Ghrib children are standing up on one leg after having put the other leg on the back of the neck or picking up with the mouth a little object from the floor while remaining in a squatting position (photos 37-39).

C. Games of strength

Some games typically develop children's strength. An example of a spontaneous game of this sort, which almost equals working, is one where (photo 40) a three-year old Ghrib boy brings to his mother's kitchen a bundle of dead wood.

22/ Illustrations: A7, 2; B173, 177, 179, 184, 197, 233, 243; C34; E290-291, 293, 331; F273, 376, 393; G244-245, 257-262, 265, 277.
23/ Illustrations: A15; B206, 208; E309; F373-374; G280-285.
**Among the same population different kinds of games strengthen the muscles of legs and arms, such as lifting up little children and heavy objects, or balancing on branches of a tree (photos 41-42).**

3. ACTION GAMES

A. Motion games

Some of these games are based on rotative movements of the body (photo 43). In other games of this kind, children have to jump or hop (photos 44-45). Still other games necessitate hiding, seeking, escaping and pursuing.

Most of these games are combined with story telling or singing, and sometimes refer to specific social situations, attitudes and roles. This is especially the case in games of hide-and-seek, during which Ghrib children make reference to the particular role of the maternal uncles (where one is going to hide), the punishment of misdeeds by Allah (if the one who has to close the eyes cheats), the protection by a circle of goods left behind (the camp one needs to attain and where he cannot be touched).

B. Ball games

The famous ball game of Northern Africa is the one played by striking a wooden, leather, hair or rag ball with a crooked stick. The ball is thrown from one camp to another camp, not necessarily into a goal, by two opposing play groups of adolescents or adults, male or female but not mixed. This game is the national sport of the Moors from Mauritania.

Among some populations, like the Chaouia Berbers from the Aures in Algeria, this game is a ceremony related to spring and the demand for rain. Among the Ghrib however it is only a rarely played game without any ritual or magical reference. In the whole Northern African region, football is replacing the traditional ball game.

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24/ Illustrations: A56; B164, 180, 184, 217, 244-245; C14; E292, 319; F60-119, 126, 134, 139, 379-381, 391, 494-495; G177, 249, 269.

25/ Illustrations: B200, 204, 215; E311-312; G376.

C. Fighting games

Among the games, that human ethologists also call aggressive games, fighting games, such as wrestling, are very widespread. Along with this category of games, toy weapons are often used. With these toy weapons boys imitate fighting and warfare, but they can also be used in mock hunting or even real hunting.

A typical fighting game of Ghrib boys is called "the buried one." A boy has his legs up to his knees fixed into the dune sand. Some other boys are running around him and try to hit him while he is defending himself by waving his arms about (photo 46).

4. GAMES OF WIT

A. Games of learning about one's body

In her most interesting book "Enfants d'hier. L'éducation de l'enfant en milieu traditionnel algérien," Nefissa Zerdoumi gives some examples of learning games through which small children learn in a very amusing way to know the different parts of their body. Such enumerations of parts of the body are played by touching or pinching the part named.

Another little game, known all over the world, teaches toddlers the names and peculiarities of their fingers. Through such play some very important cognitive, social or religious information and indoctrination is passed over, as the typical Ghrib finger game shows:

"- the smallest one;
- the one wearing the ring;
- the biggest one;
- taking Allah as witness (it is the forefinger which one moves when saying during prayer "la illah ila Allah" (there is no God but Allah);
- crushes the lice (the thumb must be used to crush lice)."

B. Games of self-control

A widespread game of self-control is keeping a straight face. Some other games which I prefer to call teasing games are also common.

In my collection of Ghrib games, some ten games are within this category. They vary from a game to provoke someone to a fight, over a small pit into which one's foot should get in, to

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27/ Illustrations: E309; F31, 396-400, 508-511, 515; G284, 290, 298-304.
29/ Zerdoumi Nefissa gives an example p. 114-115. For another example, see International Federation for Parent Education, p. 39-40.
30/ Illustrations: A10; F263; G558-560, 638.
games of ridicule. Some of these games are based on the well-known counting-rhymes (photos 47-49). Another example is the mocking dialogue between two Ghrib youngsters surrounded by an enthusiastic audience.

Such play teaches children to improve self-control and not be quickly irritated and angry. They also create a possibility to ritualize the expression of aggressive feelings between children through socially acceptable means.

C. Games of concentration and insight

Children play different games in which one has to react in a stereotyped way to verbal or visual information.

A Ghrib variant of such a game is played sitting in a circle. The game leader gives one after the other a statement that can be right or wrong (e.g. the man walks, the door eats). If the statement is right, the children have to raise their hands. The game leader tries to mislead the players by lifting up his hand in an incorrect way. If a child reacts wrongly he must lie down on his belly in the middle of the circle. Then the players put their hands one above the other on his back. The game leader asks whose hand is above. If the stretched out child guesses right he may stand up, but if he guesses wrong the children hit him, and sometimes a bit too strongly.

Another series of important intellectual games among the Ghrib is based on drawings in the sand. Some of them are well-known elsewhere, as for example the drawing done during story telling about someone working at home and going to the toilet (1), cleaning the house (2), then leaving after closing the door, and taking the road (3) to the oasis (4) (photo 50).

The children sit on their knees in a circle and put their two hands on the ground in front of them. The game leader says a counting rhyme while passing over each hand. The hand he touches when finishing the counting rhyme must be put under the arm-pit of the relevant child. The game leader proceeds in this way until all hands have been put under the arm-pit. He then asks for each hand in turn and controls one after the other if they feel warm or cold by putting the hand to his cheek. If a child's hand feels warm he is blessed by the game leader with the appropriate formula : baraka Allah fi k - Allah's blessings on you". However if the hand feels cold, the game leader spits on it.

Illustrations: C38; F81, 234; G308; 311, 413-418, 743-744.
When the work in the oasis is finished, the person goes back home, but what a surprise: the key is lost. The story teller asks: "where is the key?". And the little onlookers have to find out the key which is depicted in the sand. The same game is played along other themes, such as a man travelling to a far-away country, indicated by the drawing of an aeroplane.

Two other examples, which I think are of a very important pedagogical value, are based on a story in which a child has to escape from danger. The first one is based on an ecological situation and the second one on a social situation (photos 51-52).

Photo 51: Here a child has to find its way out from a very dangerous situation by escaping through one of the four obstructed roads. The two wild animals will kill him or he will meet death by burning or drowning. The solution of the problem lies however in taking some of the water to kill the fire and then running away along this path.

Photo 52: Now the child must escape, after having done something real bad, by passing along one of four adults armed with a stick. The four adults are the father, the grandfather, the maternal uncle and the paternal uncle. The only way out is by running to the maternal uncle. The Ghrib children who transmitted to me this game said that the word "khali", meaning maternal uncle, also means "nothing". So in contrast to what the drawing shows, one has to react to the second meaning of the word "khali" and thus he can escape that way. Another explanation I think to be relevant here is that the maternal uncle or family is, within the patrilineal Ghrib society, the natural ally where adolescents and adults can find refuge when in conflict with their own kin. Allusion to this situation is clearly stated in the already described Ghrib action game of hiding and seeking.

Another Ghrib game necessitates a clever spatial insight. As shown on the photographs 53, 54 and 55, one player has to free himself, through a series of movements, without detaching the turbans from his own wrists or the wrists of the opponent player.

As a last example of games of concentration and insight, I have to pay attention to the treasure of riddles conveying a tremendous amount of knowledge, attitudes, values, emotions etc.
D. Games of logic, strategy and mathematical games

Some games have a direct influence on the development of logical, strategical and arithmetical reasoning.

In this sphere I saw among the Ghrib two little games played with three-year old children in order to teach them counting. In Northern Africa a well-known game of draughts is the "kharbga", played by adolescents and adults and equivalent to chess in difficulty.

What is less known about the games of draughts in this region is the fact that, as it is clearly the case among the Ghrib, there exists a whole series of games of draughts of increasing difficulty, so smoothly preparing the children for the very complex strategical insights necessary for playing kharbga. These Ghrib games of draughts have a great pedagogical value.

Illustrations: A60-62, B263-275. See also van Oudenhoven, Nico. 1983, p.3.

They are games played for a little child by an older one, a mother or some other adult. For the first game one makes with two fingers of the same hand, four rows of two little holes in the sand, while saying:

- I have a young camel who feels very hot;
- she did eat the getanya plant;
- count oh counter;
- and you'll find eight.

For the second game one makes with two fingers of the same hand a row of two little holes, and then with three fingers six rows of three little holes, while saying:

- the she-wolf and the wolf;
- who is saying "the wolf"?
- I say "the wolf";
- the wolf has two paws;
- he has a nose and two eyes;
- count oh counter;
- and you will find twenty.

Games of draughts: A13, 17, 60; B20-33, 38-99, 150; F183, 187-191, 308-310, 406, 519; G429, 455-516.

draughts range from the "three in a row"-type (+ 6 years),
over the "eight and thirteen cases"-types (+10 years),
the "little khittawa" (3 x 3 cases, + 6 years), the
"Khittawa" (5 x 5 cases, + 10 years), and the "khittawa
of intelligence" (8 x 5 cases, + 12 years), up to the
"Khargha" (7 x 7 cases, + 16 years).

Anyone will recognize the very interesting
pedagogical value of such a series of games constantly
expanding the possibilities of strategical and logical
reasoning among children growing up outside a formal
school system.

5. GAMES OF ARTISTRY

Under this category I have grouped different games in which children
show their creativity in the fields of visual, musical and dramatic
expression.

A. Games of plastic expression

Sometimes the making of dolls, miniature animals, houses,
"utensils", cars or other toys show real artistry among children.

The making of sand-castles is a much loved creative play on
beaches. The Ghrib children however make them after one of the
rare Saharan rains or at the natural source of El-Faouar.
The photographs show us a nice sand-mosque with its minaret made
at this source by a 12-year old Ghrib boy (photos 56-57).

B. Games of word-painting

Everywhere girls and boys like story-telling games
based on riddles, rhymes, and proverbs. One guesses the
socializing importance of this kind of playing for
societies based on oral transmission and proud of their
original oral literature.

37/  0  0
  0  0
  0  0
  0  0

38/ Illustrations : D23-26; E139, 142, 147-148, 171.
C. Games of musical expression

Children of a certain age like to play musical instruments in imitation of adult musicians.

Ghrib boys do have their own bamboo flute quite difficult to play, composed of a whistle and a tube (photos 58-60). The same type of flute has been played by Chaouia boys of the Aurès Berbers in Algeria.

Ghrib boys also play on self-made or real drums.

Children like singing and thus accompany many of their games with songs.

D. Games of dramatrical expression

Games of dancing, acting games and ritual games are, as they are in every region, widely distributed in North Africa and the Sahara.

The Ghrib children exercise themselves in dancing, as shown on photographs 61-62. Two boys are dancing the typical herdsmen dance and they are accompanied by a flute player and hand-clapping children.

As acting games the Ghrib children play the already mentioned mocking dialogue and a kind of theatrical performance for which they may use special attributes such as goat hair for a moustache or silver-paper for golden teeth (photos 63-64).

As an example of ritual games I already mentioned a ball-game, but also the game of swinging had a ritual significance in certain parts of North Africa.

Ghrib children play at divination and perform as a game a ritual in which a little child is carried from one homestead to another one, imitating the real ritual performed in an analogous way for a child waiting to walk.

39/ Illustrations : D24; E169, 170, 174-176; F54, 277 388; G232, 666, 681.

40/ Illustrations : E172, 278, 284-286, 320-322; F323, 325, 329, 331, 341, 384-385, 440-441; G568
IV. THE ROLE OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON PLAY

In this section I try to answer two questions:
- why research on play activities, games and toys? and
- how can the results of such a research be of use?

A. PLAY AS A SOURCE OF INSIGHT INTO THE CHILD AND THE SOCIETY

During the first years of life, playing almost equals living and only nutrition, protection and affection are more important. Moreover, much of the affection is experienced through ludic situations. Thus playing is a vital necessity. A child who does not play is a sick or an unhappy child. Therefore, gaining insight into the play activities of children is really necessary.

"When a child plays, it is his initiation into adult behaviour, into the role he will be called upon to play in subsequent life, he develops his physical, verbal and intellectual capacities and his ability to communicate...Play is a micro-society in which children receive their initial training in social behaviour." 41/

As children are more interested in the symbolic function of objects and toys than in the objects or toys themselves, games make it possible to discover the world of ideas constructed and explored by children. 42/

The different aspects of personality development that are influenced by playing games and manipulating toys clearly demonstrate the amount of information a systematical and interdisciplinary research on children's play activities can provide (see Appendix).


42/ "Réunion d'experts sur Recherche philosophique et interdisciplinaire sur les moyens d'expression ludique comme solution aux conflits dans l'univers de l'enfant"; Caracas, Venezuela, 1979, p. 3, No. 18.
Playing with objects and playing with other persons fulfills a critical role in a child's active elaboration of his identity, and children quite freely express in games their wishes, expectations, disappointments and dislikes. So, if the "active participation of the child in its own development should be taken into account" in order to promote its well-being, an understanding of children's play behaviour would be a real help.

Games and toys are part of a people's culture. Play was even acknowledged as the very fundament of human culture because, in its original form, culture bears the character of play behaviour.

"The two most obvious dimensions which greatly affect the development of toys and games stem from both the biological and cultural roots. The former relates more to age and sex of the child and often particularly determines the choice of games and toys he uses in his own environment... The cultural factor is just as important as the biological, with many games preparing the way for the development of social life... two significant influences which should be mentioned are the material and the spiritual. By the former is meant the physical conditions of the environment and the resources which it offers. The latter involves the way and beliefs which have developed in a particular society through the ages."

As games and toys bear cultural values, anthropo-coesthetic ideas and magico-religious beliefs of a given population, they should never be neglected as a source of knowledge. It certainly is useful to find out how games contribute to preserve a people's cultural identity and patrimony, and in which way they foster and mould the cultural identity of each individual. Such a research becomes more urgent if one bears in mind that many populations all over the world claim their cultural identity against the strong acculturation they are submitted to.

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43/ "International Symposium on Studies on Development and on the Reduction of Inequalities in Different Socio-Cultural Contexts, especially with regard to Children and Family Life-Styles", Doha, Qatar, 1981, p.8 No. 5.

44/ This point has been particularly stressed in "Réunion d'experts sur Recherche philosophique et interdisciplinaire sur les moyens d'expression ludique comme solution aux conflits dans l'univers de l'enfant". 1979, p.1, nos. 2-3, p. 3, no. 20, p. 4, nos. 26-27 et p. 8, no. 11.


47/ This right to a cultural identity was firmly stressed in the "Sub-regional Seminar on the Use of the Cultural Heritage in Education," Freetown, 29 September - 3 October 1980.
In addition to cultural factors, social and economic factors are of great importance. Differences in the socio-economic background of communities - urban compared with rural communities or societies based on industry versus those based on handicraft - strongly influence the games and toys of children. One should only compare children's games and toys among the Grik sedentarizing nomads with those of children living in a highly industrialized urban area. Such differences are not only at stake between Western and Third World societies but must also be taken into account within developing nations.

"People in different cultures develop skills related to their survival behaviours. This is perhaps the reason why Western technological cultures prefer structured play (with toys etc) to unstructured play (with sticks, stones, fruit and clay etc.) which most African children are used to. Urban children develop certain perceptual and cognitive skills more readily than rural children due to their experiences with shape of building in the urban environments. Alternatively, rural children tend to develop a higher sense of responsibility and co-operativeness than children in urban environment." 48/

Social stratification also influences play behaviour. In societies strongly differentiated along factors such as wealth, housing facilities, educational opportunities and social status, there is an immense contrast between the play context of a child growing up in a rich upper-class family living in a sphere of luxury and etiquette, overwhelmed by expensive technologically complicated toys, and the play context of a child of illiterate parents dwelling in slums of overcrowded cities making its own toys.

However, one should not hastily conclude that all aspects of the play context of the rich child have a positive effect on his development nor that those of the play context of the poor child all have a negative effect. For example, an upper-class child, living in a marvelous apartment suited to its parents' needs, may have very little opportunities for experimentation through play, whereas a poor child may have the possibility to explore vast areas. Nevertheless, one should not idealize this situation, as Mary Duncan reminds us of the fact that the deprived children of the slums of Tijuana near the Mexican border, do not know that they possess, what educational experts call, an "adventure playground" because they do not visit this playground; on the contrary they must grow up in it. 49/


The play activities of children reflect the fusion or the separation of the adults' and the children's worlds. In a tentative synthesis of socialization in tropical Africa, India and the Maghreb, the International Federation for Parent Education writes:

"... the social space is not split up into a number of zones reserved either for adults or for children... the child of pre-school age is already a member of his society, and entitled to explore all of its levels. He is from the beginning at the centre of it, even when he has not been socially recognized as of age. In these societies, participation in social life is not dependent on the child's actual age and on the ritual which marks the coming-of-age: in this aspect, these societies differ quite distinctly from the classical Western world where individual social majority as laid down by legislation reflects, inter alia, the point from which society recognizes the individual as an autonomous, responsible being."^50^

Because of this intimate relationship between play and the cultural, social, economical and ecological reality, the study of play behaviour, games and toys can be seen as an indispensable complementor of information and as a deepener of insights. This is especially true for the topics mentioned hereafter.

"Knowing which games children play is one of the most direct ways of appreciating the natural environment in which they live and express themselves."^51^ Some games mentioned in the survey of Saharan and North African games and toys, specifically confirm this statement. When children from those areas make miniature tents or houses and when they are playing household, hunting and pastoral or agricultural activities they reveal not only precise information on the ecological and economical situation in which they grow up, but also on the way they are grasping, manipulating and adapting to this environment.


^51^ Charles Béart elaborated a tentative sociological analysis of the African populations based on his research on West African games and toys (see bibliography).

and the other family members use a special vocabulary, a childish language, or do they speak to the children in a normal way? Such differences make it clear that childhood is viewed as a short introduction to full participation in real life or as a long period of immaturity during which youngsters have to live in their own world well-separated from the world of the adults. 53/

Some games provide us with a penetrating view into the social network, the human relationships that connect children to other children, to their family and to the outsiders. Symbolic games (playing with dolls, playing household, games of cattle stealing and of hide-and-seek), games with rules, stakes, rewards and penalties (playing at knuckle-bones or marbles, ball-games, fighting games), teasing games and games of insight (such as the one described on p. 15), all are examples of how one can learn about social relationships through play activities. The information obtained concerns not only abstract ideas but also concrete items such as kinship terminology and rules regulating kinship and alliance (e.g. marriage rules).

Particular games - especially the imitative games, but also a finger game to amuse toddlers(p.10) or a game of insight (p.15) - reveal a lot about the methods of indoctrinating social or family models and roles (male-female, elder-youngster). So through games of make-believe young girls and boys experiment with and exercise themselves in the female or male role they will have to endorse later on. 54/

One can also learn, by analyzing games, about the importance of different socializing agents such as mothers, fathers, grand-parents, aunts and uncles, siblings, children groups and peer groups; and on socializing techniques such as imitation, exploration, experimentation, encouragement, praise, reward, disapproval, rejection, and punishment.

Although it is true that games convey the traditions of a social group, they also can be a factor of change. Indeed, "it may often happen that children's games are technologically and ideologically ahead of their social context and are a vital source of invention and progress." 55/


54/ For some additional information concerning Indian and Maghrebian boys see "International Federation for Parent Education,"1980, p. 29-32 & 40-41.

55/ "The Child and Play", p. 14; see also p. 49-51. In the Réunion d'experts sur "Recherche philosophique et interdisciplinaire sur les moyens d'expression ludique comme solution aux conflits dans l'univers de l'enfant", 1979, p. 4 nos. 23-24 and 26, the relationship between play and cultural change is stressed.
The quantitative relation between local and imported games and toys, together with a survey of games like those described under the heading "games referring to recent socio-economic changes," allow us to discern how far acculturation has seized a community, and in what areas - technological, economical, social, ideological - this evolution is most prominent.

Among the Ghrib, our survey of games and toys points to a growing awareness of Western technology and economic changes. Acculturation in the sphere of social and family roles or magico-religious beliefs and ideology is much less traceable. However the very recent introduction of paid labour in the new oil-fields of this region and the introduction, on a large scale, of television among the Ghrib of El Faouar will favour in the forthcoming years a drastic adaptation to new ways of life. And when the fathers will start to buy their children commercial toys, many toys made by the children themselves will go out of fashion. Already a new play activity started in the Ramadan of July-August 1980 when Ghrib boys watched a television "feuilleton" on the Crusades. They then began to fight each other with bows, wooden swords and bamboo lances. At that moment some five Ghrib families had television sets in El Faouar. Also until now there are no commercial toys in the El Faouar shops. 56/

B. PLAY, EDUCATION AND CHILD WELFARE 57/

Among the ten critical future issues mentioned in "The future agenda of crisis issues in education" one reads:

"7. Collisions between education, culture, and politics, including the language problem, the neglect of indigenous history, arts, and humanities, the corrosive impact of "modern" education on traditional cultural values, and growing political intrusions on intellectual freedom." 58/

This statement, together with the question of "... how to achieve greater local adaptability, participation, and support..." 58/ stresses among other aspects, the necessity to adapt the out-of-school and school education to local realities, to narrow the gap between the home and the educational system, and to preserve - not in a static but in a dynamic way - the cultural and social elements of each population.

56/ Information transmitted to me by Dr. Gilbert J. M. Claus.

57/ In "The Child and Play" one will find pedagogical applications of some games from developing countries p. 30-33, 38-39, 55-57, 60-66. In "Une vraie école pour la vie. Approche d'une nouvelle forme d'éducation d'après une étude dans une communauté africaine au Cameroun", Comité Belge pour l'Unicef, Service d'éducation au Développement, Bruxelles, s.d., 34 p., ill., translation of "Education for Self-Reliance" by the Nordic Alternative Group, the use of linguistic material (riddles, proverbs, songs, etc.) and of games of dramatic expression as teaching aids is discussed on p. 22-25. This book also proposes, on p. 26-27, an example of how to learn mathematics by means of a Cameroonian game.

In "Recommendations for future UNICEF assistance" in educational planning throughout the 1980s, this agency writes:

"Especially important will be UNICEF support for action research and experimentation with strategies such as nomadic education, community schools, education in co-operatives and pre-school education using indigenous approaches - e.g., "CHILD-to-CHILD" methods. Governments must be assisted to design and establish educational opportunities for the 0-5 age group which are conceived comprehensively and which are the products of their own experimentation, research and adaptation of appropriate practices, traditional and otherwise." 59/

Many experts of education have blamed the indiscriminate adoption of the imported Western school system in developing countries and the need to reform this schooling into an integrated education. 60/ Moreover, when the need for lifelong education was stressed, this lifelong education has been defined as "education for someone as a member of the community and through life in the community." 61/

The only way to achieve all this lies in relating education to the real life of children and to the children's perception of their environment. Here a lot of games mentioned in the survey and corresponding games of other regions could be used to promote the inter-relationship between the school, non-formal education and home-life. Furthermore, these games will effectively be an aid for the educational agents in coping with local traditions and customs.

This respect for traditions and customs however should not create an uncritical attitude. In a study on educational innovation in Amsterdam, the author mentions a thorough criticism of the cultural bias in education, called the "oppression hypothesis". 62/ The practical consequences of handling this

hypothesis in the school means that educational actions should be directed towards the expression and assimilation of children's personal experiences, and towards a discussion of the situations children are questioning about at home and are discussing in their peer group.

Thus one should not idealize the society, but also pay attention to those aspects that inhibit the full development of the personality. An analysis of the games teaches us in how far children accept or reject the way of life proposed to them by their families and in how far they are interested in acculturating influences. The game of cattle-stealing played by Chrib boys, could for example be a good starting point for a realistic discussion of traditional life versus modernity in the upper classes of the primary school of El Faouar. Also the games referring to the precedence of boys over girls could be used as an introduction to the more difficult topic of male-female relationships.

The neglect of indigenous games and toys and the introduction of so-called school games and commercial toys adapted to Western industrial societies can introduce new inequalities, especially in rural areas. 63/

In its recommendations the "Subregional Seminar on the Use of the Cultural Heritage in Education," Freetown, 29 September - 3 October 1980 recommends its African Member States: "6. That ... they undertake the study of ways and means of restoring to the African family its true function as the basic cell of education."

The socialization exerted by families on their offspring is, to a considerable extent based on play activities. Not only mothers, but also fathers, older siblings, grand-parents— , and

63/ In the "Réunion d'experts sur Recherche philosophique et interdisciplinaire sur les moyens d'expression ludique comme solution aux conflits dans l'univers de l'enfant", 1979, p. 4, no. 26, one expert mentioned the negative aspects of the introduction of commercial toys in Mexico. Van Oudenhoven, Nico, 1983, p.1, also refers to the danger of the loss of local games in developing countries: "In these countries children often seem to have stopped playing, as if they are trapped in a vacuum created by the disappearance of the old, traditional, mainly non-formal ways of education and the superceding of those by an alien and inappropriate system of education."

other family members like to play with children. Therefore it is possible to stimulate the relationship between adults and children and between children, and to interest the family agents of socialization to the out-of-school and school education of children through games and toys. Some community based pre-school institutions have realized this idea, for example by proposing to fathers the fabrication and repair of toys. 65/

An inventory of the socializing structures and didactic methods operating in play activities and play groups should be extensively used as part of a genuine methodology in the light of

- the need to take the child’s activity as the reference point for educational action,

- the rapid expansion of pre-school and non-formal education and

- some characteristics of non-formal education such as "Endogenous; community or situation-based; ... (and) the materials and resources developed from the communities themselves". 66/

Much has to be expected, therefore, from developing existing structures of socialization - not in the least of socialization through ludic activities - and the elaboration

65/ Fathers making toys for Senegalese rural day nurseries ("The child and his development from birth to six years old", 1976, p. 45); the workshop with parents to prepare didactic games for the kindergartens of the "Education and Community Project" of the Ofakim town in Israel (Paz, 1982, p.36); the Pitjantjatjarra Pre-School Project of the "Aboriginal Family Education Centres" in South Australia (Teasdale & White, 1981, p. 91, 93, 156-157): "The programme was built around eight areas in which parents could work with their children: indoor play, music, stories, group activities, classification and sorting, excursions, outdoor group activities, and outdoor games." (p.91). The Choco Home Learning and Community Project on the Colombian Pacific coast includes in its seminars for community education of parents the making and use of toys and teaching materials for their children ("National Seminar on Alternatives in Integrated Services for Deprived Children", 1982, p.9). The "Proyecto Padres e Hijos" a parent and child project in a rural community in Central Chile, also sensitized the parents to the making of toys in organizing experiences for their children (Halpern, 1983, p.9).

of pedagogical materials anchored in local culture. These materials can be found in games and toys, and the songs, dances and samples of oral literature that form an indistinguishable part of children's games. 67/

The VENEZUELAN DAY CARE HOMES PROGRAMME, based on a strategy of integrating its actions into the child care system of the local community and of using local paraprofessional personnel, elaborated the daily schedule as follows: "breakfast, educational activities, personal hygiene, lunch, nap, snack and free play. 68/
One hopes that in the context of such a programme the possibilities offered by local games and toys are intensively used.

The intention to do this is clearly stated in the "PROJET D'UN ENSEIGNEMENT MATERNEL AUTHENTIQUEMENT BENINOIS" formulated by the Ministry of Basic Education of the Republic of Benin in collaboration with the International Children's Centre (Paris). In this programme of pre-school education a lot of attention is given to local games and toys to be used in the "Centres d'éveil et de stimulation de l'enfance". So in the "Séminaire sur la mise au point d'un ensemble de programmes pour l'enseignement maternel," Cotonou, 7-11 November 1978 (p. 57-59), under the heading of "Equipe B : Recensement des jeux et jouets adaptables à la tranche d'âge de 3 à 5 ans", the use of some local games and toys, such as singing and mimic rounds or a horse made of sorgho sticks is mentioned.

The "SERVOL LIFE CENTRES" IN TRINIDAD, being an education and community development project, promote the use of local human and material resources, e.g. by emphasizing teacher-prepared materials in their nursery schools. However, the Advisory Mission of the Bernard van Leer Foundation in its suggestions at a practical level, mentions: "among educational methods, too little use is made of indigenous culture (music, song and dance) 69/... to which I would like to add "games and toys".


According to J.L. Martinand, it is very well possible to use local toys and the process of their fabrication for promoting in the primary school-class the technological initiation of boys and girls. If certain conditions are taken into account, the analysis and the making of local toys and of children's imitations of foreign technological items can have a real positive effect on the development of technological know-how and scientific reasoning. However, this author reminds us of some obstacles to the introduction of games and toys into the classroom coming from the teachers, the pupils and their parents (1975, p.66).

Nico van Oudenhoven in his "Common "Street" Games and Child Development—Suggestions for Designers of Early Childhood Educational Activities" mentions, concerning low-income countries, some important benefits of using local games and toys. About the "street" games he argues that they are:

- "very cheap";
- "highly loaded by intrinsic motivation";
- improving "all aspects of human development";
- "easy to learn and to teach";
- guaranteeing "a splendid gradation and diversification to suit different age groups"; and
- "the rules of the games are easy to modify and to adapt to different classroom situations" (1983, p.2).

The training of day-care personnel, nursery school teachers, community teachers for pre-school children, primary school teachers and other professionals and para-professionals in charge of children should focus attention to the value of an approach in which the play behaviour and games are integrated. The second recommendation to the Unesco made by the "Réunion des experts sur Recherche philosophique et interdisciplinaire sur les moyens d'expression ludique comme solution aux conflits dans l'univers de l'enfant", 1979, proposes the creation within the institutions in charge of the training of instructors, of a discipline centred on the study of the exploitation of games and toys as a fundamental step towards a pedagogy adapted to every developmental phase (p.9, no. 2).

A step in this direction is made in the "Inservice Course for Nursery School Teachers, Kilifi District" of the Pre-School Education Project of the Kenya Institute of Education (1983, p. 53). In Morocco, the Ministry of Social Affairs organized a training seminar (Casablanca, 22-27 March 1982) for 45 teachers involved in the Experimental Pre-School Training and Development Programme, in which "workshops were also held on the design and making of materials,
language and music. The survey of Saharan and North African games and toys, and the suggestions for their pedagogical use, might be a practical contribution to this programme.

In programmes for parent education the attention of mothers and fathers must also be awakened to the crucial role of play in the development of their children.

The immense resources of Third World children's games might also be used in different projects:

- the renationalization of basic education, as it is stressed for the Arab countries by Dr. Sijelmaass;
- the promoting of cultural identity, as claimed in the "Summary of the Educational Programme for Promoting the Appreciation of and Respect for Cultural Identity", 1981;
- the reduction of inequalities in early childhood;
- the elaboration of adapted testing;
- alphabetization programmes;
- hygiene and health education, for example, through games of playing household;
- special education;
- the improvement of pastoral, and agricultural technology, for example, through games of herding, games with toy animals, and with miniature ploughs, or with a miniature oasis like the one made by a Ghrib boy;
- the introduction of modern technological concepts, e.g. with games based on the imitation of advanced technological objects like cars, planes, telephones, radios.


Also youth movements should try to preserve, use and
develop as much as possible their own national play heritage.

Finally, would it not be possible to stimulate the
participation of women in the development process by
sensitising them to the play activities of their children,
by making them aware of the potentialities of games and toys,
and by integrating them into the research on and the
pedagogical use of local games and toys.

Up to now, the use of Third World games and toys has been restricted to
developing nations. However, games and toys from those regions can be very
effectively used in bi-cultural, multi-cultural and development education
in the Western world. Nico van Oudenhoven also stresses that children can
develop a more positive attitude towards the Third World by playing games of
these regions. Such a strategy surely is more promising than "the more
traditional development education approaches that aim at an increased
solidarity with disadvantaged children (and) usually show an abundance of
misery, poverty, incompetence and other frightening conditions of how
people live..." 74/

The Unesco exhibition "Games and Toys of children of the world:
exhibition catalogue November 1978", and my own experience with an exhibition
of Ghrib games and toys, in connection with an exhibition and activities
concerning the situation of children in Belgium and in the developing countries,
point in that direction. 75/ Here I just would like to quote two reactions
of children visiting this last exhibition:

A thirteen-year old Belgian boy was
really astonished about the fact that Saharan
boys of his age played a game of wit he could
not bring to a solution (the game of draughts
played on thirteen cases mentioned on p.17).

Another migrant boy from Morocco living
in Ghent, spontaneously said, after having
recognized a game he had played as a little
boy, that he would question his parents on the
games and toys of his homeland.

75/ In order to promote an awareness of children and adults towards developing
countries, the "Centre for Toys and Folklore" in Mechelen, Nekkerspoel 21,
Belgium, is elaborating a department of Third World games and toys. Within
this department there is a permanent exhibition of my collection of Ghrib
toys and games completed by a series of slides.
V. CONCLUSIONS

1. Now and then one can hear or read some negative statements on the existence or the value of toys and games in low-income countries. This paper, I hope, has proven that such statements are based on superficial and hasty observations. However, it is true that in those countries local games and toys are threatened by an intrusive modernistic way of life.

2. Such an evolution has to be prevented, as there are many reasons to appreciate, respect, valorize and use this cultural treasure. This certainly is not to say that games and toys must be petrified in their traditional form. On the contrary, their normal evolution according to changing psychological, pedagogical, sociological and technological demands should not be hampered by a folkloristic nostalgia.

3. If the integration of children's play activities based on culture-bound games and toys is a must, it will not be enough to preach the good word, but concrete actions should be taken in the sphere of child welfare and education.

By promoting such action directed research and experimentation, one will safeguard and realize THE RIGHT OF CHILDREN TO PLAY, as stated in the seventh principle of the United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of the Child.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


* These seven works are singled out for special designation by letters A to G as references are made in the footnotes to the pages where additional illustrations can be found for the points made in the paper. See footnote 5 on page 4. Thus the references C3, E93, 173, 363 in footnote 6 on page 4 indicate that further illustrations on weaving can be found on page 3 of the work listed as C above and on pages 93, 173 and 363 of the work listed as E.
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ILLUSTRATIONS

References to the photographs in the ensuing pages are given in the text.

References to additional illustrations are made in the footnotes. To find these illustrations, read footnote (5) on page 4 as well as the footnote on page 33.

Origin of the photographs in this version:
Jean-Pierre Rossie: 1-7, 10, 12-64
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Photos 22a-22e of the pages 52-54 are seen on the photo below

Photo 22a  p. 52 : sword
Photo 22b  p. 52 : crossbow
Photo 22c  p. 53 : catapult
Photo 22d  p. 53 : bow
Photo 22e  p. 54 : throwing stick
APPENDIX I

GAMES AND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

The following list of items of personality development is part of a proposal of a manual and/or computer system for the cross-cultural study of play activities, games and toys. It gives an idea of the different aspects of personality development that are influenced by playing games and manipulating toys.

Perceptual Development
  Visual perception
  Auditory perception
  Tactile perception

Sensorimotor Development
  Static
  Dynamic
  Rhythmic
  Precision

Technological Development

Verbal Development
  Training speech organs
  Linguistic training

Verbo-motor Development
  Carrying out instructions
  Describing actions

Development of Feelings
  Affection
  Chivalry
  Rivalry
  Teasing
  Aggression

Intellectual Development
  Procedural (with structured rules)
  Logic
  Strategic
  Mathematical

Social Development
  Social interaction
  Communication
  Co-operation
  Competition
  Identification
  Internalization
  Representation

Magico-religious Development
  Initiation
  Ritual
  Transgression
  Spirits

Aesthetic Development
  Visual arts
  Drama
  Verbal art
  Music