

The Association for the Anthropological Study of Play

NEWSLETTER
USA

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OF DREAMS AND REALITY

by
Michael A. Salter
University of Windsor

A sage once expressed the view that "no man is an island." If we substitute the term "discipline" for "man," we change only the wording of this old adage -- the moral contained therein remains unaltered. In this day and age of the Global Village, the conscientious scholar cannot afford to hide behind the skirts of his mother discipline and ignore the possibility that others may share, and indeed be actively researching, areas of similar interest.

It was this viewpoint that attracted some twenty-five persons to the beautiful University of Western Ontario campus on the 10th of May, 1974. Bringing with them different backgrounds, accents and ideas, they came with a specific purpose in mind; that being to explore the possibility of structuring an organization devoted to promoting the study of homo sapiens at play from an anthropological perspective. Operating on the premise that such an organization should act as a catalyst in fostering research and would provide the necessary forum for regular scholarly interaction, this multi-disciplinary group gave birth to The Association for the Anthropological Study of Play.

A Steering Committee, composed of the following individuals, was elected to provide direction during the formative stages of TAASP.

- Dr. Michael Salter, Chairman, University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada N9B 3P4
- Dr. Alyce Cheska, Secretary/Treasurer, University of Illinois, Urbana 61801
- Dr. Kendall Blanchard, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro 37130
- Dr. Frank Clune, SUNY at Brockport, New York 14420
- Dr. Gerald Glassford, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6G 2H9
- Dr. Joseph Royce, University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley 94720
- Dr. Frank Salamone, St. John's University, Brooklyn, New York 11229
- Dr. Peggy Stanaland, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond 40475

- Dr. Allan Tindall, SUNY at Buffalo, New York 14226
- Dr. Phillips Stevens, SUNY at Buffalo, New York 14226
- Prof. D. Margaret Toohey, California State University at Long Beach 90804
- Dr. David Voight, Albright College, Reading, Pennsylvania 19604

The Steering Committee was charged with the responsibility of structuring and promoting the growth of this new organization and establishing a site for its first annual symposium. To accomplish these objectives, the following working committees were struck:

1. Constitution Committee
Allan Tindall, Coordinator
Peggy Stanaland
Joseph Royce
2. Membership Committee
Frank Clune, Coordinator
Michael Salter
D. Margaret Toohey
3. Program Committee
Phillips Stevens, Coordinator
David Voight
Gerald Glassford
4. Nominating Committee
Kendall Blanchard, Coordinator
Frank Salamone
5. Time and Site Committee
Michael Salter
6. Budget Committee
Alyce Cheska
Persons to be named

The uniqueness of TAASP lies in the fact that it is one of the few organizations that is truly inter-disciplinary and international in nature. Any organization capable of ignoring national boundaries and politics and able to regularly draw together psychologists, educators, anthropologists, sociologists and physical educators, solely on the basis of a common interest, possesses the potential to deliver a potent academic wallop.

The seedling has been planted. The health of the tree lies in your hands!

ACTIVE INTEREST IN TAASP

Congratulations!!! One-hundred persons have expressed an interest in TAASP. Multi-disciplines represented are anthropology, child development, cultural studies, education, history, physical education, psychology, sociology, and social services.

Prior to our London, Ontario meeting, 58 persons took time to fill out the information sheet concerning areas of particular interest: teaching, research, service in the association, submit a paper, make suggestions for our proposed organization. Letters of inquiry have been received from 42 other persons.

With this nucleus of scholars, we can have a viable impact in the study of play!

COMING EVENTS

The Third Canadian Symposium on History of Sport and Physical Education is being held at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia Canada, August 19-21, 1974. If interested, contact Dr. Alexander (Sandy) Young, School of Physical Education, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Dance and Anthropology, Psychology, and Ethnomusicology Conference is being sponsored by CORD (Committee on Research in Dance) October 24-27, 1974, in San Francisco, California. CORD will meet jointly with the Society for Ethnomusicology. For information, write to: Dr. Sharon Leigh Clark, Dance Building J, George Washington University, Washington, D. C. 20006.

A World Symposium on Play will be held at Wingate Institute, Netanya, Israel, in late March, 1975. For further information, contact Dr. Urie Simri at Wingate Institute for Physical Education & Sport, Kilometer 24, Nathanya Road, Netanya, Israel.

The Society for Applied Anthropology will hold its annual meeting in the Hague, Holland in early April, 1975. For information, write to the Society, 1703 New Hampshire Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

DO YOU KNOW SOME ONE who would be INTERESTED IN knowing about TAASP? Please write their name and address and enclose with your membership envelope. Thank you for sharing!

Newsletter Editor: Alyce Cheska, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois 61801

MINUTES OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF PLAY --- A SUMMARY

The first business meeting of the Association for the Anthropological Study of Play was held on May 10, 1974, at the University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario. Michael Salter of University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada, presided.

The purposes of the meeting were: 1) consider the need for the organization; 2) determine purpose, focus and scope of the association in the anthropological study of play; 3) organize an official structure, including a steering committee of chairman; secretary/treasurer; and committees for budget, constitution, membership, nomination, program, and time and site; 4) investigate need for a symposium; 5) examine possible publications, including Newsletter, Conference Proceedings, and Journal.

Points of action taken were:

- 1) The organization shall function as an independent entity.
- 2) The name of the organization is: The Association for the Anthropological Study of Play.
- 3) The Steering Committee was elected to serve for one year.
- 4) A Symposium for 1975 is to be planned.
- 5) A Newsletter to membership is to be distributed three times the first year.
- 6) The Proceedings of the Association's papers presented in conjunction with the North American Society for Sport History convention held May 10-12, 1974, at U. of Western Ontario, London, will be distributed to TAASP members.
- 7) Membership dues annually will be:
Individual membership is \$10.00
Student membership is \$5.00
Institution membership is \$20.00
Life membership is \$200.00
- 8) The Association's fiscal year will be from July 1st to June 30th.
- 9) The Constitution Committee will submit the Constitution for membership approval.

CHARTER MEMBERSHIP AVAILABLE

Charter membership is available to qualified individuals having a professional concern in the anthropological study of play. Persons joining now will receive extended membership to June 30, 1975. Please fill out the ENCLOSED MEMBERSHIP FORM and mail along with a check or money order to Alyce Cheska.

ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS

Presented at the TAASP Sessions
in conjunction with the
North American Society for Sports History
Held at the University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada
May 10-12, 1974

"Children's Games as Mechanisms for Easing Ethnic Interaction
in Ethnically Heterogeneous Communities - A Nigerian Case"

Yauri Emirate (Division), North-Western State, Nigeria with a population of 100,000 is an ethnically heterogeneous community. Traditionally, the Hausa have formed a ruling elite, while the Gungawa, Dukawa, Shangawa, and Kamberi have been subordinate to them.

While each community is ethnically separate from each of the others and culturally distinct from them, there is intensive ethnic interaction among them. These interactions range from alliances to their opposite. Ethnic change follows a traditional path. These relationships are reflected in a number of activities. Recent changes in the government have increased the ethnic mix in Yauri and the chances for ethnic problems. A number of commonly shared values and activities is necessary to alleviate the friction that may arise in situations of contact of ethnically heterogeneous peoples. This paper explores the role that games common to all ethnic groups in Yauri perform in easing ethnic interaction. At the same time examples are given of games that serve to distinguish one group from another. Thus, the contrast between boundary maintaining and boundary permeating activities is demonstrated.

An attempt is made to place children's games into a broader context, that of play. Play is seen as a device for conveying a cultural message while aiding in the articulation of social relationships.

Dr. Frank Salamone
Department of Anthropology
State University of New York at Brockport
Brockport, New York

"The 'Rules' of Social Joking Behavior: A West African Illustration
and its Implications for the Anthropological Study of Play"

Among the Bachama of Northeastern Nigeria groups standing in particular relationships vis-a-vis others enjoy with these others freedom of behavior of the sort Robert Lowie first termed "privileged familiarity". Such groups are permitted varying degrees of license to "abuse", "joke with", or "snatch from" their counterparts, and they thus exhibit the type of behavior associated with what anthropologists since Lowie have called "joking relationships".

Every individual participates in a range of "levels" or "degrees" of joking with some others; behavior tolerable within each category may be intolerable, rude, or impudent out of its specified social context. Thus networks of institutionalized relationships of privileged familiarity, conforming to specific culturally-defined "rules", operate throughout the society. In every case the joking behavior is a manifestation of a pre-existing relationship; the content and context of joking exchanges are indicative

of the nature of the relationship.

This paper discusses the several categories within the joking institution, their "rules" and behavioral content. It is suggested that the Bachama case is not at all unique, and that examination of the "rules" governing behavioral manifestations of social relationships should be regarded as significant to the anthropological study of play.

Dr. Phillips Stevens
Department of Anthropology
State University of New York at Buffalo
Buffalo, New York

"The Cognitively Shared Dimensions of Basketball:
An Example from Ute Culture"

Members of the same cultural groups are commonly seen to engage in the same behavioral patterns, in the same situations. However, a pertinent question for cultural studies is: How do those members know when to enact appropriate patterns of behavior? This question is also pertinent for the professional field of physical education, because its answer provides some insights into the dynamics of the educational process involved in the use of organized sports and games for enculturation and acculturation.

The data presented are derived from a field study among the Ute Indian Tribe of Utah. Projective techniques, participant observations, and interviews were used as research methods, principally among Ute high school students.

These data suggest that the reason for enacting appropriate behavioral patterns in appropriate situations is not extensive sharing of cognitive mappings. The data reported suggest that members of this cultural group share neither cognitive mappings of the descriptors of the same basketball situation, nor do they share cognitive mappings of value configurations associated with basketball; and neither sharing is of any great substance.

The conclusion for these data are that one of two principles must be adopted with respect to cognitive sharing as a basis for shared behavioral patterns: either (1) the methods employed were insufficient to obtain accurate mappings of the participants' cognitions or (2) that we must look to other phenomena to provide the answer to the above stated question. In the second regard it may be that proxemic or kinesic communication patterns provide the basis for the manifestation of similar patterns, and not shared cognitive maps.

Dr. B. Allan Tindall
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4242 Ridge Lea Road
Amherst, New York

"Guessing and Gambling Games: Play Patterns of North American Indian Cultures"

Guessing and dice games appear to be universal in the North American Indian cultures. Varying modes of play differ with geographical environment, behavior codes, and available materials for equipment. These games of chance are defined as risking something of value

against an other on an uncertain event. Games of chance meet the requirements of a game as a recreational activity characterized by: organized play, competition, two or more sides, criteria for determining a winner, and agreed upon rules.

Useful functions which guessing and dice games perform include: 1) a safety valve for the spirit of rivalry; 2) a peaceful redistribution of wealth; 3) a fair medium for settling arguments or aggression; 4) provision for social interaction of kinship groups; 5) satisfying ritualistic experiences for participants and observers; 6) an opportunity for imitative learning by the young; and 7) entertainment of the sick.

Games of chance can be categorized by outcome such as the result of random guesses (guessing) or by the unbiased action of some artifact as a die or an erratic natural force over which the players have no control (dice). Kinds of Guessing games of the North American Indians comprise the hidden-ball game, the hand game, the stick game, and the four-stick game. Gambling games embrace a variety of dice which are made from varied materials, have two faces or sides with differentiating markings or colors, and are tossed in a bowl or basket or are thrown by hand. The score in both types of games is kept by counters or counting board. The game terminates when one of the opponents wins all the counters or reaches a pre-set score of wins. These games are participated in by men and by women; however, they seldom play together. Basic equipment used in both guessing and dice games include: 1) small objects (to be hidden from opponents or to be tossed or thrown) made of wood, bone, horn, stone, metal, brass, pottery, teeth, shell, glass, leather, paper, or parts of plants; 2) containing surfaces as in guessing where an object is hidden in a mocasin or shoe, hand, grass, tree bark, dirt, sand, rug, mat, or leather; or in dice throwing by using a blanket, basket rug, stone, or ground; 3) counter for keeping score as sticks, pebbles, beans, seeds, or notches on an abacus, counting board or circuit; 4) prizes, stakes, or winnings from betting as personal, exchange, or real property including game equipment, food, clothing, jewelry, livestock, crops, land, homes, money, and human beings; 5) accompaniment as ritual accessories, body and facial gestures, drumming, beating of sticks, singing, chanting, or vocal distractions.

Diffusion patterns, similarities and differences of guessing and dice games' artifacts from selected North American tribes provide strong evidence that games of chance historically have been played in all the differing Indian culture areas in the North American continent.

Dr. Alyce Cheska
Department of Physical Education
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"James J. Corbett, Theatrical Star"

In 1890, both the American theatre and American boxing were coming increasingly commercialized business ventures. Combination of the two was perhaps inevitable, and occurred in 1890 when John L. Sullivan, then Heavyweight Champion of the World, appeared in a spectacular melodrama, The Paymaster.

Although Sullivan toured in successful theatrical productions for most of the 1890's, it remained his successor as Champion, James J. Corbett, who combined the appeal of boxing champion, melodrama actor, and matinee idol. Guided by the opportunistic and shrewd

theatrical entrepreneur, William A. Brady -- who was also the fighter's boxing manager -- Corbett cashed in on his popularity and appeal with such vehicles as Gentleman Jack (1892) and A Naval Cadet (1895). Both productions toured for three years apiece, gaining immense profits for the champion.

Gentleman Jack most clearly epitomizes the process by which a boxer was transformed into an actor and a personality of near-mythic proportions. Carefully constructed so as to confuse Corbett's own background and public persona with that of the melodramatic hero, the play presented an idealized image of youthful manliness and upright morality widely appealing to the middle-class audiences which dominated the theatre business during the 1890's. Brady also capitalized upon the then avant garde notion of Realism, which American audiences equated with spectacularly realistic stage settings featured in the 1890's melodramas. For Gentleman Jack, Brady carefully reconstructed the Corbett-Sullivan prize-fight on stage, usually employing nearly three hundred supernumeraries to increase the scene's verisimilitude.

With the disappearance of popular melodrama after 1910 and the capture of its audience by the emerging cinema, James J. Corbett and other boxers turned to more efficient forms of mass entertainment: vaudeville, radio, television, and motion pictures. The stage careers of John L. Sullivan and, more completely, of James J. Corbett mark the emergence of the non-theatrical celebrity in entertainment as well as the first modern usage of entertainment forms to exploit for profit the public's interest in professional athletes.

Dr. Alan Woods
Managing Director, Theatre Research Institute
Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF PLAY
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Dr. Alyce Cheska, TAASP Secretary/Treasurer
Freer Gymnasium, 113
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinois 61801 U.S.A.