Surprise! Last year you received your June issue in June, but it was still snowing when it was written in Brandon, Manitoba. This year because of my move to Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, you are getting your June issue in July. Needless to say, the weather here in the Niagara Peninsula has been marvelous (wish I could say the same for the way I have been playing golf). To be critical you could condemn the editor for spending too much time of late recreating, but as you will find the major contributions to this edition focus on recreation, and aside from the fact that I now coordinate a program in recreation and leisure studies, my behaviour has not been too bizarre.

I am very enthused about the coming year for TAASP and fully intend to share some of my enthusiasm with you in this edition. Early in March, Brock University’s recreation students hosted Recreation ’84 – One Third of Our Time. Brian Sutton-Smith (University of Pennsylvania and former TAASP editor) delivered the Keynote address entitled "Recreation as Folly’s Parody". The article so enlightened and encouraged me that this major contribution appears later in this volume. Also, John Yardley (Brock University) prepared for this Newsletter a very stimulating and highly informative paper, updating in a North American context Velben's concept of conspicuous consumption. In addition to the recreational focus similarity of these articles, both are written by New Zealanders -- so expect their contents to be a posteriori or down-under.

In April, I attended TAASP in Clemson, South Carolina. Join me in welcoming, congratulating, and supporting your new TAASP executive. The results of the election are: President-Elect -- Gary A. Fine (University
of Minnesota); Members-at-Large -- Anna Nardo (Louisiana State University); Linda Hughes (University of Pennsylvania) and Frank Manning (University of Western Ontario). Regrettably TAASP accepted the resignation of Secretary-Treasurer Jan Beran (Iowa State University). Fortunately, Gary Chick (University of Illinois) has agreed to replace this vacancy. Future inquiries regarding memberships, dues to be paid or owed, or mailings, should be directed to:

Dr. Gary Chick, Leisure Behavior Research Laboratory, 51 East Gerty Drive, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Champaign, Illinois, 61820, U.S.A.

If the contributions to this Newsletter appear insular, I request again that you send any contributions to Dr. Ann Marie Guilmette, Recreation and Leisure Studies, Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, CANADA L2S 3A1. Don't be reluctant to submit an article for consideration. In the meantime, I heard many worthwhile papers at Clemson and have encouraged a number of presenters to submit their articles to the Newsletter. For the most part, this year's conference presenters, mindful of Meier's Baton Rouge warnings and condemnation, conscientiously attempted an original contribution distinguishing "protoplay" from play but Ed Norbeck directed me to Dietland Müller-Schwarze (Ed.), Evolution of Play Behavior, Benchwork papers in Animal Behavior, V. 10, Stroudsburg, PA.: Dowden, Hutchinson & Ross, 1978, pp. 380-381, in which I found my "protoplay" was not so original. Sutton-Smith, while not delivering a paper but serving as reactant/discussant in several session, called for living the play experiences which we attempt to describe, or, at least going to the source. He espoused the de-idealization of play and similarly, in his "Parody" paper, the de-idealization of recreation.

Also, at Clemson, the first TAASP student paper award was presented. There were only 2 submissions for this competition and it is hoped that all of you will encourage your students to submit papers in time for next year's conference. The winning paper entitled "A Comparative Study of Two Queen Pageants in Minnesota" was written by Margaret Patridge (St. Cloud State University). The second paper, entitled "Doll's Play: Should We Be Listening" was written by Sandi Wilson (Brock University). Student papers for next year's competition should be sent in triplicate to Dr. Robert Lavenda, Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work, St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, Minnesota, U.S.A. 56301. Don't delay, send a winning paper today.

Next year's conference, TAASP '85 will be held in Washington, D. C. Barney Mergen (local arrangements Chair) is trying for us to meet with the Society for Applied Anthropology, March 13 to 17, 1985. Gary A. Fine (President-Elect) will be responsible for the "call for papers". Further details will be carried in a future Newsletter.

A change of venue is planned for TAASP in 1986. Gary Fine is negotiating with the American Folklore Society which will meet in October in Albuquerque, New Mexico. More details will be provided as they become available.

Meanwhile back at Clemson, the 8th Volume of TAASP proceedings, The Masks of Play by Sutton-Smith and Kelly-Byrne was available through Leisure Press. As for those of you who were contributors to the 6th Volume by John Loy, you should have received the plea (letter) from Loy once again to revise the troubled Paradoxes of Play. Contributions from Paradoxes should be proofread and corrections sent before July 21st to Dr. James Peterson, President Leisure Press, 10837 San Pablo, El Cerrito, California, 94530. Without these corrections the sorely needed revised edition may not become a reality. Barney Mergen will be editing the 10th Volume based on this year's Clemson papers and a new change in policy from your TAASP executive. Rather than strictly a conference proceedings, TAASP will be publishing an Annual Review, so that those of you who have written an article on play this year, but could not for fiscal reasons attend the conference, or waited to present your paper at Eugene,
Oregon, will also be afforded the opportunity for submitting your work/play for publication. Barney Mergen is drafting the guidelines for this review and those guidelines will also be forthcoming in a future Newsletter.

The TAASP papers at Clemson were quite remarkable. I made a concerted effort to attend as many of the sessions as possible and was quite inspired by the depth and width (width) of all presenters. I was especially encouraged by Bernie DeKoven's Keynote address. His guided tour through the virtual world and his concept of "virtual play" were quite intriguing. However, extending beyond DeKoven's dimensions, I was further astounded when a computer worker (Brian Fahey, Toronto, Ontario) told me that talk about multiple virtual worlds, sixteen million byte computers, virtual storage constraint and virtual storage constraint relief (I think something analogous to giving "Ex-Lax" to a computer) is all part of their daily dialogue.

Finally, from Clemson, I heard Kendall Blanchard's disgruntled presidential doggereled derogated many long-time TAASP members and semi-playfully attacked the Empire/Kingdom in general. I wonder, however, if within this lambasting, there wasn't some latent contempt for his role as President. Hopefully, the experience as President for Barney Mergen won't be quite so negative, although Barney confided to me that the title for his address in Washington, D.C., is to be "Forbidden Play".

Following TAASP, I found myself at the Midwestern Psychological Association meetings in Chicago, Illinois. I was further inspired by renewing my humour connections, and am trying to plan a research project in humour to be completed in time for the 5th International Congress on Humour scheduled for Cork University, Ireland in Summer of 1985. Later in May, I attended the 4th Canadian Congress on Leisure Research in Trois-Rivières, Quebec where I established a new collegium and spent most of my time explaining why Ann Marie Guilmette ne parle pas Français.

In July I shall attend the Pre-Olympic Scientific Congress at Eugene, Oregon and am looking forward to interacting with new colleagues and old friends. So while this Newsletter is the last -- Number 4 for Volume 10, I am greatly encouraged by what has occurred this year and eagerly look forward to next year's promises. On a final note, I have been asked to continue as newsletter editor for another year, so you can expect your Volume 11's to be late yet laced. Prompted by my continuation for another year as editor, I include the following lament (author and source unknown) for my often neglected husband!

**LAMENT OF THE HUSBAND OF A PSYCHOLOGIST**

I never get mad; I get hostile.
I never feel sad; I'm depressed.
If I assemble a kit and enjoy it a bit,
I'm not handy - I'm merely obsessed.

I never regret; I feel guilty.
And if I should vacuum the hall,
Wash the woodwork and such, and not mind it too much,
Am I tidy? Compulsive is all.

If I can't choose a suit, I have conflicts,
With ambivalent feelings toward plaid.
I never am worried or nervous or hurried -
Anxiety, that's what I have.

If I'm happy, I must be euphoric.
If I go to the Stork Club or Ritz,
And have a good time making puns or rhyme,
I'm a manic, or maybe a schizo.

If I tell you you're right, I'm submissive,
Repressing aggressiveness, too.
And when I disagree, I'm defensive, you see,
And projecting my symptoms on you.

I love you, but that's just transference,
With Oedipus rearing his head.
My breathing asthmatic is psychosomatic,
A fear of exclaiming "drop dead!"

I'm not lonely, I'm simply dependent.
My dog has no fleas, just a tic.
So, if I seem a cad, never mind - just be glad
That I'm not a stinker - I'm sick.
Recreation as Folly's Parody

In preparation for RecreAction '84 I spent some quiet time contemplating Breugel's 1560 painting of youthful recreation with its 70 or so recreative acts and its 250 or so souls crammed vigorously into the town square doing everything from swimming to running the gauntlet. It is the outstanding description of recreation in the 16th century and was the first great painting of recreative activities and games. In our eyes it covers the activities of adolescents and young adults as well as children. Everybody looks very determined in the scene, in fact rather grim. About the only ones I could find laughing were some lads playing running the gauntlet who were in the process of kicking those who were running. There is a tremendous amount of ambiguity in the literature as to how we should interpret the painting and many books have been written on the subject. The most general view in that century was that play of the young epitomizes the follies of mankind; that the activities of the contemporary adults were little more than children's games. There are however important differences in how the children themselves were perceived as being portrayed. Some argued that Breugel painted them this way to show how immodest and uninhibited they were, in the same way that Rabelais wrote about Gargantua 30 years earlier. Others believed that what Breugel showed was how innocent children are and how susceptible to corruption, a view that might have been acceptable to the Protestants of the time. The Humanists, it is said, would have used the same illustration of crude play to demonstrate the children's need for supervision and schooling. For their part the Roman Catholics who had often suffered the criticism that their own ceremonies were like the rituals of children's play, might have responded by observing that in these rituals the pious children were closer to heaven than most adults and therefore well worthy of imitation. Art critics on the other hand have often suggested that all of these may be beside the point. The painting is not a visual encyclopedia of youthful recreations, it is rather a typical Renaissance realization of the importance of the body in human activities of any sort.

It is my belief that if we could have before us tonight a Breugel's painting on modern recreative activities including games we would be equally hard put to interpret it in any generally agreeable fashion. By way of example, and to establish my agenda for this evening, let me paint you a canvas of modern recreative activities using the descriptions of the informants as to what they were about. Let us say, as in Breugel's painting we have gathered together in a central downtown rehabilitated area over 200 people of indeterminant ages ranging in general from seven years to twenty years. What would they be about? We will suppose that off on the sidestreets there are some signs of younger girls at Hopscotch, Jump Rope, and Jacks and some younger boys at Marbles, Punt back, Stoopball and obscene stories. What occupies our immediate attention, however, are some of the older members of much the same age as yourselves. We notice immediately that there are some young men climbing the face of church still left standing in this downtown area. As one of them comes to the ground we question him. He replies:

"My favorite play is climbing buildings, water towers and rock faces after a night at the bar. The risk involved is obvious and not lessened by the effect of alcohol. This is an occupation in which a few of us compete to be first to get to the highest point, such as a church steeple. For example, the one at 42nd Street is particularly difficult and takes complete concentration particularly after a night at the tavern. Drinking as a precursor to this kind of play is extremely important, not only to decrease inhibitions about being shot down by the police but also to increase concentration. While this would seem to be a paradox, knowing that you have been drinking creates a counter
response that makes one even more care-
ful than usual. Before any step which
seems precarious there is a mechanism
which hesitates and causes you to
evaluate whether the step is really
practical or seems practical only
because you are drunk. A re-evaluation
takes place and only when you are satis-
fied that it really is a prudent
maneuver do you take the step."

At that moment an automobile careens
by and we stop the driver asking him
what he is doing. He says:

"As an active brother in my frater-
nity there is one weekend each year
in which I am required to forego my
activities at school and go away with
all of my brothers to an isolated camp-
site miles from college. Traditionally
we have made it a point to make this
travel and the rest of the evening
an unforgettable experience of drinking
and pleasure (until we pass out). In
order to continually stop for beer
we took with us a keg in the backseat.
After all we were seniors and decided
to do it in the right way. By the time
we arrived we had a soaking wet car
full of six drunken, stoned, thoroughly
wasted guys ready to hit some bars.
Never mind that it is illegal to have
a single open beer can in a moving
vehicle, let alone a tapped keg and
a multitude of empty cups and mugs.
Never mind that it is illegal to smoke
pot alone in a private home, let alone
in a moving car filled with incredibly
intoxicated fraternity brothers shriek-
ing obscenities out the window in a
"Can you top this" fashion. Never mind
speeding and passing on the wrong side,
ever solid lines on single lane roadways,
all illegal. And never mind that road
signs depicting curves and intersec-
tions are meant to remain on their
metal posts and not in the trunks of
passing cars. These are all a part
of our play."

We wave him on his way, and stop a
young lady just coming out of a bar.
What are you doing we inquire?

"I am just back from Las Vegas,
she says. I went with a middle-aged stranger
I met in this bar. He could have killed
me, raped me, or left me stranded there
with no money. I didn't know anything
about his character. However, none of
this happened and it was tremendously
exciting. Who knows when I'd get another
chance to go to Las Vegas. It was dangerous
and degrading and I'd never do it again.
But I don't regret having done it once.
Being a "gold digger" is one option for
a life style and it was interesting to
try it on for myself for a day. We went
without luggage and only stayed about
ten hours. By going with someone I didn't
care about I was able to gamble with his
money and truly not care when I lost at
the tables."

Going right on into the bar because,
unlike Breugel's painting, there are not
many people on the streets, we find a
lively game of Whales Tales in progress.
We speak to one of the spectators. He
says he doesn't like the game.

"The reason why I hate to play it is
because I'm so bad in it, and often it
leads me to become drunken blind. The
object is to get the other players to
drink as much as possible till they are
no longer coherent, usually leading to
more than one player throwing up. It is
a beer chugging game that I play as a
result of peer pressure, (i.e. come on
you pussy, or Christ what a pussy.) After
I jump in the game the other seven players
gang up on me till I'm a babbling fool,
usually not too long a time. I hate to
chug beer but I always end up playing
the foolish game.

The noise from this game is rivalled
by the racket from the juke box and a
group dancing over in the corner. We catch
hold of one of the more active of the
ladies and put our question. She replies:

"When the music is loud and the lights
are dim and I'm on the dance floor with
a crowd of people, a different me evolves.
I become loud and outspoken in my gestures.
I am not held back by fear of what others
will say. On the dance floor I can be
somewhat gaudy while in day to day life
I must be refined. You can be a fool in
the dark. Your reputation is not at stake.
You can release your inner self and be free and daring. I can be a seducer on the dance floor without fear of reprimand.

Coming out of the bar, we find people spilling out into the street from the local convention centre where a Basketball game has been in progress. We grab one of the spectators who seems particularly agitated. He explains:

"When I watch a basketball game my entire nature changes. I anticipate the contest long before it actually starts. It occupies my thoughts and may affect my concentration in other areas. This is especially true if that particular game has some special importance or significance in the championship. As the start of the game approaches my pulse quickens and shivers go down my spine. Details are important. Do I have my hat which I have worn to every game this year? Each facet of my pregame ritual heightens the suspense."

"During the course of the game my emotions run wild. I become totally involved and my mind shuts out everything else. In a particularly poor call by the referee I am likely to jump up screaming obscenities. I am not violent or boisterous in normal life but a close game can turn me into a raving madman with little thought of the consequences of my sometimes vulgar and impudent actions. Sometimes when I stop to think it really scares me. It is incredible how caught up I can become in the viewing of a simple game and how depressed I can become after a loss.

A young couple going by in each other's embrace and tussling with each other attracts our attention. She says:

"When I am wrestling my boyfriend - I don't have to be lady-like, quiet or restrained - I can hit, yell or whatever without fear of embarrassment or injury. We let out frustrations by beating on each other without really hurting one another. Excitement and pleasure are involved. We can act like kids and play like this for an hour or so and then, exhausted, return to our restrained behavior and return to our responsibilities."

We pass by several couples necking in their cars and find that for them sex is their most exciting kinds of leisure, full of risks of being witnessed or of becoming pregnant. It turns out that even in this day of contraception, for many youngsters the risk of conception is still their most dangerous form of play.

It is clear that unlike Breugel's picture we do not have a market place full of people on our canvas; most of the occupants are hidden away in cars, or bars or sports arenas. Most of them, if they are men, say they prefer to be involved in or watch activities of physical danger; and most of them, if they are women, show similar interests but also more often mention activities such as flirting, blind dating, provoking jealous boyfriends and rough sexual activity. We especially noted the girl who also liked to climb churches in the last stages of her pregnancy and the girl evangelist who liked the excitement of seeking to save souls amongst motor cycle gangs.

Although you may well argue that there is no comparison between our modern group and that of Breugel, that is open to question. In his day the large unmarried group that he represents played simpler games than we do today. And in our own days many sociological surveys of leisure show that the mass of leisure time is spent in drinking, smoking, sex, TV watching, spectatoring and talking (Kelly, 1981). It is not the refined kind of games and recreations in which you and I might well be specialists.

Still I am sure you will quarrel with my "representative scene" just as everyone quarreled about the meaning of Breugel's painting in his day and have been quarreling ever since. My moral is that it is not easy to know what recreation means in the modern world, and it may not always be what we think it is. Nevertheless, I will put before you two propositions for your consideration which show how modern recreation like Breugel's painting, have also become a comment on mankind's folly. The first argues that in the past hundred years...
we have watched a steady progression towards the idealization of recreation and the second argues that in the coming century we will see similar progress towards the idealization of work (using idealized recreation as one of the means to accomplish this).

**The Idealization of Leisure**

As long as the industrial system was tied to the prospect of starvation on the one hand, or to the work ethic and the prospect of religious salvation on the other, then leisure was at best a time for rest and at worst given over the frivolity or the devil. But with the rise of secular civilization and the substitution of personal achievement for divine grace, and with unemployment compensation for everyday misery, some of the obsessiveness has gone out of the virtue of work as originally conceived. It has become quite possible to fantasize that leisure is really the preferable form of living as escape, as pleasure or as freedom. The rise and idealization of leisure and recreation clearly has some original cultural root of this kind, however, it be expressed.

In addition, many of the early acceptable forms of recreation were also associated with the habits of the privileged giving them a sanctification which older folk pastimes did not have. The Olympics were initiated with such notions of privilege and many sports which were adopted throughout the world that had been practised formerly by upper status persons. It was "classy" to play sports and recreate in upper status ways even if you did not have the time nor money to waste as they had. There is a representation of this value system in the contemporary film Chariots of Fire, where the aristocrat is the one who balances the glasses of champagne on his hurdles as he goes about his most leisurely pursuit of glory in his own sumptuous estates. He is the one who can afford to drop out of one of the Olympic contests to allow his compatriot to compete in his place. His behavior and value system contrast strongly with those of the other two main characters in the film, the one overwrought by religion and the other by ambition, although as we now know the future was to belong to the latter. This aristocratic use of leisure as a demonstration of conspicuous consumption and superiority contrasted markedly with the work-oriented developments of the industrial age.

Additionally the industrial age gave to some team games, a repute they certainly had not acquired in their more barbarous pursuit by medieval folk. For example with children roaming the urban streets in the 19th century as their fathers went into the factories and with the children disenfranchised from their former apprenticeships in village and family economies, reformers turned first to schools to bring these children under social control. Alternatively those involved in playground movements of the first twenty years of this century, turned to the use of team sports to bring these urchins, vagabonds, these depraved immigrants, under control. As Goodman puts it through team games they could be colonized into the dominant way of life (1979). It was an ideology of the rich for the poor, and it turned out to be the most successful recreative ideology that the modern world has had.

Buttressed by some evolutionary chatter provided by Stanley Hall, particularly about working through primitive atavisms on swings and roundabouts, such an ideology led to the spending of millions of dollars on playgrounds and on industrial recreation programs. It was believed that delinquency would decrease amongst minors as they acquired the upper status virtues of character and teamsmanship and that factory norms would improve in the work place. Both of these outcomes were claimed subsequently to have taken place. The arrest rate certainly dropped when children were not playing their heathen folkgames on the streets, but were playing sports on playgrounds. And although for many years skeptics in sociology have been trying to demonstrate that if you make it on the team you do not necessarily gain a better character or success in life, the majority
of parents are still with Stanley Hall, John Dewey, Thorndike and Baldwin, all of whom believed that team games were the answer to child development, although they did not much agree on anything else.

Most of us are so familiar with the recreative ideology which we have just mentioned that we do not think of it as a serious theory. It has become a folk practice rather than a theory. It could be argued, however, that it has been the very ideological success of team sports as a genre of play, that has made it possible for academic play theories of an idealizing kind to also succeed. And there are not any academic play theories that do not idealize child play.

In general, academic play theories have been created by professionals who work with children in nursery schools, in therapy clinics or in laboratories. One might tentatively call them play theories for the rich. Not surprisingly all these theories preach that the child who plays in his or her solitary way is better prepared for life. Whether this play is regarded as kind of evolutionary preparation, a better adjustment to conflict and anxiety, the development of cognitive operations, the increase of one's exploratory activity or as a facilitation of communication and social innovation, all modern social scientific theorists of play have seen it as contributing to child development in one way or another. In fact, there are now programs for training children through imaginative play so that they will be better able to inhibit aggression, delay response and learn to read. What sports has done for the depraved, we are told, imaginative play will do for the deprived.

There are many other forces at work in the idealization of recreation such as the women's movement with its emphasis on teaching children collaboration. The New Games Movement with its emphasis also on the family and upon collaborative play. Even the works of some women scholars who treat play as something basically overlooked by men scholars and criticize men's tendency to view play only through the spectacles of games and sports is of an idealizing character. The toy industry also has a vested interest in having us believe that children need to be given seven billion dollars worth of the appropriate toys to play with if they are to achieve their most in this life.

In case you should feel that recreation and play are not being idealized in our century let me call your attention to an array of historical, anthropological and local evidence which suggests just how unideal sports, play and games can actually be.

(1) First of all though most modern recreative and play experts assume that recreation is a voluntary activity, I would argue that the notion of voluntarism is itself a quite modern and historically relative notion. By and large what a modern would see as optional because not work, a pre-modern person might see as sacred and obligatory because part of the work of the Gods. When sacred games were played all members of the appropriate age and sex cohort would be expected to participate in order to placate the gods, the dead, the weather, the sick or the infertile or whatever the case might be. Historical anthropology is rife with bloody and brutal but playful customs. There were the Eskimoes who competed at twisting each other's ears off; or who attached a piece of leather to each other's testicles to see who could outpull the other in a tug of war, all the time smiling and if possible laughing to indicate their playful intent. There were the Mayans who played ball games in which the captain of the losing team had his head chopped off; there were Indian tribes in which masses playing at Lacrosse injured, brained and brutalized each other as the game proceeded; and then there were those medieval English football players at similar games. Some have had the acumen to call some of these "terminal games". Even Huizinga who has written so idyllically about the play spirit in civilization cites many examples of contestive plays (the primary form in which civilizing occurs
he believes) which involve enduring pain, fighting, mutual bragging and execration, derision and scurrility, slanging, squandering goods, bloody and fatal conflict and duels fought through to the death (1955). Our modern notions of optional behavior hardly seem appropriate to these kinds of play.

Perhaps the modern notions derive to some extent from the situation in a Nursery School in which the adults provide a setting with toys, etc. where under their supervision, children are supposedly "free" to make choices within the limited array available. When we see children on the playground, however, that freedom is primarily freedom from the classroom. There is limited freedom of choice in the actual play of the playground itself because of the obligations to friends and to powerful other children, etc. (Slukin, 1981). What is more remarkable about playground play is the necessary conformity of the players to seasonal pastimes or to the activities of the dominant children. Even more intimate play at home with one's best friends is often strongly influenced by commercially instigated activities involving the imitation of television dramas or the use of advertised toys. The typical scene in many modern homes is of the child playing in front of the television set with a television-advertised toy. The history of the twentieth century can be written as an illustration of the gradual socialization of children's leisure to bring it from the more unruly folkways of the nineteenth century into the more domesticated forms of those organized and adult influenced recreation, sport and play with which we are now familiar.

In sum, idealistic notions of freedom or voluntariness, etc. are not sufficient to account for play. One can still play even if one has been required to play in the first place. There are a host of ways in which degrees of personal autonomy are or are not expressed in the phenomenon called play, and it is an empirical matter to decide what these have to do with it. What has been assumed as the most fundamental characterization of play by modern specialists therefore must be brought into question.

(2) Play is often not only voluntary, it is unpleasant; it is characterized by negative effect.

In A History of Children's Play (1982), I have detailed a host of ways in which what went on in the playground and what was commonly called children's play was often brutal and unpleasant for some of the members of the 'play group.' For example:

Fights were arranged for the amusement of older children. They were arranged by school bullies in a paddock where one even had to fight one's friends. Everybody had to fight. Those who lost were crowned, i.e., the victor patted him three times on the back and spat over his head, usually aiming too low! Though the fights were amongst boys, girls usually scratched the eyes of their brothers' opponents if they lost. Girls usually fought in their own way by hair pulling. In other fights, the prisoners of a gang were held by force. They had their shirts torn and fingers bent back. An observer of the time writes: "The individual and gang fights of the day were often very harsh and the younger, less virile members of the playground were often terrorized by those stronger ones."

The harshness did not stop there! In many places there were initiation ceremonies as well. Ducking under the tap was the most widespread form but there were others. In "King of the Golden Sword," the initiate was made to face the fence with his hands behind his back. There was a long ceremony about his crowing and entry into the school and finally the golden sword which had been dipped into the latrine was pulled through his fingers. In the rite of "Pee Wee Some More Yet," the initiate was blindfolded and ordered to pee into another boy's cap. The cap turned out to be his own, or the initiates would have their pants taken down and the initiators would spit on their private parts. Another ceremony included taking the initiate to the
stables, waiting until a horse was urinating and spinning the boy under the stream. In "Tug O' War," a cap was held in the teeth of the new boy and a bigger boy. The former had his hands tied behind his back. While the war was in progress, the big boy peed on his young opponent who could not see what was going on but gradually felt the wet warmth on his clothing.

If these examples are indicted as rare, antiquated and unfair we can turn for examples to the modern and comprehensive folklorist work by the Opies (1968) and the Knapps (1976), the story of English playgrounds by Slukin (1981) and to recent examples of play in nursery schools and other play spaces for children in the U.S. Two-thirds of the contents of play in these examples is occupied by struggles for power, by the play of attack and defense or chase and escape. Once again there is in these relatively rare sources multiple instances of brutality, callousness and all around unpleasant behavior.

But there is also much obscene and erotic behavior, which although it might not cause much immediate negative affect in the child players, usually does when they are caught at it by their parents, or by the teachers.

(3) Yet another idealization is the notion that play is particularly flexible. Although the notion that play is egalitarian, especially collaborative is not widespread amongst social scientists it is found in some quarters. The view that it is the domain par excellence for flexibility training is also found amongst some theorists. Yet these views must contend against two other positions. On the one hand there is the older view that children's play is highly routine and rule bound; and on the other there is the newer socialization perspective which says that a major function of children's play is the establishment of dominance-subordination hierarchies. Indeed if one looks at Slukin, Opie, or Knapp there is abundant anecdotal evidence of playground bosses, of harassment specialists, of the fact that some games are "owned" by some children and others are simply excluded. There are leaders and followers with the former acting very often like dictators of what is allowed to transpire. Playground bosses and harassment specialists are well known figures amongst children. Children who wish to enter other's games often barge in, threaten to bash another's face in and often will knee kids in the stomach. Children also use play to terrorize each other. That is to say, they often move between pretending and actually being aggressive. This turns out to be an extraordinarily powerful way of controlling others, for the recipients of such conflicting information have difficulty in predicting what will happen next and become uneasy. All this suggests that there are dominant and dominated children in play. Andy Sluckin's work is rife with ferocious descriptions of fights on the English playground (e.g. page 86-90). One is reminded more of the Lord of the Flies that of collaboration and flexibility.

(4) In rehabilitating play from its former neglect, the scholarship of this century has followed the direction of both anthropological and psychological functionalism in seeking for usages to which play might contribute. Basically, the bulk of the evidence has consisted in drawing formal parallels between a play or game activity and some analogous form of adult functioning. The search for isomorphisms between play structures (for example, games of strategy) and cultural structures (for example societal complexity) has been held to support the contention that play and games are indeed a functional contribution to socialization in one way or another.

The problem with this simple assumption, however, is that the issue of play's dysfunctionality is never fully reckoned with. Fagen who in his book Animal Play Behavior is a promoter of play's contribution to evolution and development is one of the few to also point out that in the course of prolonged separations from the caretaker while playing, animals become entrapped in rocks and mud, have dangerous falls, break their limbs, as well as sustain
serious injuries in their play fighting. According to Fagen the amount of risk that a species can tolerate varies with their conditions of survival probability. When these are low play is too risky. When predation is high, food short, and conditions crowded, there is less play. More play is associated with more territory and more food (1980).

On the human level Alford has been demonstrating cross-culturally how many festival and playful events are associated with dangerous consequences (1984). She describes the beer drinking festivals of the South American Tarahumara in which it is not uncustumary for the besotted participants to injure each other in fights, fall off steep cliffs, tread on sleeping babies, die from pneumonia due to exposure on mountain sides and be involved in sexual license with severe implications for their normal relationships (Alford, 1984). Similarly, Clifford Geertz is famous for his reintroduction to modern discourse of J. S. Mill's notion of deep play which is the kind in which the stakes are so high that it is irrational to participate (1973) like climbing church steeples in my earlier examples.

Conclusion

My intent in laying out the various ways in which recreation can be not voluntary, but unpleasant, rigid and dysfunctional is not meant to deny that recreation is often positive only to suggest that our constant emphasis on the positive shows that we are idealizing play and recreation. Instead of treating them as an archaic and neutral language of expression and communication as Bateson might have, we are treating them as vehicles of good tiding, something which we as missionaries have a right to disseminate (1972). Seeing animals also play and can be leisurely, and seeing they often die at play, there is no need for us to particularly dignify this basic means of communication.

Let me move now to my second major position.

THE IDEALIZING OF WORK (With the use of leisure)

I think the work of idealizing leisure is well advanced. What is more subtle is the newer uses of leisure to idealize work.

I would like to focus briefly on the very innovative work of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1977) which has had such impact on all our thinking. Mihaly suggests that the usual distinctions between work and play are decreasingly valid. That there is a quality of life which he chooses to call Flow which can be found in any context whether work or play. This state of being is characterized by a merging of action and awareness, by a centering of attention, by a loss of self-consciousness, by being under one's own control, by being self chosen and by giving one immediate and unambiguous feedback on the success of one's own actions. It is the kind of phenomenon which occurs when one is completely involved in a game, and Mihaly's major illustrations are from chess, rock climbing, and dancing. But he also seeks to show that the same involved and blissful state of affairs can happen in work and uses surgery as his example. He has the anecdote of the surgeon whose wife took him to Acapulco for a vacation and after a couple of days he was so bored he reported into the local hospital, volunteering for surgery, which was for him the truly exciting life form.

In addition to flow there is also micro flow which is a small scale example of the same kind of thing. His study shows that the dominantly reported kind of micro flow is of a social kind and is the involved satisfaction that people get from browsing, shopping, galleries, talking or joking with others, social events such as eating, parties and sexual activity. Next in order is the kinesthetic kind which includes walking, running, small muscle movements, touching, rubbing and fiddling with objects, playing games or sports. Thirdly, we have imagining; daydreaming, music in the head, talking to one's self, caring for plants and pets, humming, whistling and singing. Fourthly, there is attending to these things, like watching people or things, or television or listening to radio or records, or reading books or magazines or the paper. Fifthly, there are the
oral pleasures of snacking, smoking, chewing or drinking. Finally, there is creative work, musical instruments, sewing, crafts, writing letters or just doodling.

What is happening here is that in Mihaly's research we are being wrenched from the older dichotomies of work and recreation. We are being asked implicitly to concentrate on our own consumer pleasure values regardless of their historical source or their physical context. And although the data show that in general it is at the executive level that one can more easily achieve "flow" than at the laboring level, there is also incidental information about some workers who, while doing extremely routine tasks, nevertheless indulge in flights of fancy which they find amongst the most pleasurable parts of their days' activities, particularly if they are wearing earphones and sounding out their favorite music.

In this theory then we are asked to evaluate either work or recreation in terms of a quality of experience which either may contain. What in the past we might have called recreation or play has in this theory infiltrated the world of work, and rendered those former distinctions less relevant.

But in other ways there is much more obvious evidence of the way the boundaries are breaking down and of the way in which work has become a kind of recreation and recreation has become a kind of work. The Olympics presumably an array of recreational activities, have become a major technique for national and international self-assessment. The Soviets at least would have us rate our respective political systems on the basis of our success in those arenas. In which case the East Germans take it all. Again Professional Sports have become a measure of a large city's economic success; and College Sports are similarly a large part of a College's financial success with its Alumni. All of these forms of work are reminiscent of some older forms of recreation.

If we move from these classic forms of middle class ideology to the once outlawed forms of lower class and out class, ideology, namely Gambling, once again we see how legalized gambling and lotteries have become a stable part of government financing. Although there is still argument about the virtue of making gambling work for the body politic, because it is often felt to be working for someone else, no one argues much longer that gambling necessarily corrupts the body politic as well as the gambler him or herself. Current data shows that the average gambler is an above average family person at least in terms of measures of family integration. Looking at the masses of people who are invested in the races, in Bingo, in the numbers and in the football pools in Europe, one cannot but presume that gambling in these various forms is an agency of political stability; an agency of the state in its control of masses of people. As this is precisely the argument made about modern sports many older fashioned distinctions between physical sports, and change games are apparently disappearing. They have both entered the world of the work economy in formidable ways; the chance games actually involving a bigger financial stake in the work economy than sports itself.

On another level with our professional market opinion surveys and our gallop polls with their election predictions, we have all become accustomed to life as a game of probabilistic prediction. Probability statistics derived originally from games of chance, show that that kind of attempt to govern the chances of the future in weather, business or politics is a fundamental part of the modern mind.

Even more formidable than the entrance of games of physical skill and chance into the substance of modern life is the role of games of strategy. At one end we are talking of Tick Tack Toe and Chess, but at the other we are talking about the red and the blue, war games, and the great game of the world which we are currently playing with Russia. As in the film
War Games, our armies are constantly in a game like rehearsal for the ultimate occasion. Here the Game of Life has become a more serious metaphor than the metaphor of one's life work.

Conclusion

Finally and more recently we have brought on the scene the entirely new kind of game, the video game; a game of informational uncertainty (with a mix of physical skill, chance and strategy); a game that changes its rules in mid-play, that has escalating series of available challenges, that is adaptive to the computer just as prior games in history have been adaptive to physical survival, good or bad fortune, and diplomatic and military success.

After three hundred years of adapting to machines, and adapting to the solitary life that is required by all modern achieving persons; and three hundred years of enculturating children by having them play with solitary toys and live in solitary bedrooms, we have at last invented a device where such solitariness is maximized, where solitary brilliance is exalted, and which at the same time puts them in touch with the information network of the modern era. We are currently being threatened by those who say that he who does not conquer this new device, and who does not learn to play with it as a flexible young organism, using video games or not, will end up illiterate. So great are the permutations and combinations and variations that are possible with this new device, that we are told again that it is only playful variations that can guarantee true competence. The player has become not the escapee from information, he or she have become the masters.

But you might argue if so much of leisure has become idealized in the 20th century, and so much of it is now being used to idealize the worklife of the modern world, what relevance does that have to Breugel's paintings, or my picture of downtown Leisure City. Well, they didn't know how to interpret downtown Breugel in his time nor in this time. And I suggest that I leave with you the question of the way in which Leisure City, is related to the idealization of recreation and its usage in the idealization of the modern world of work. However, I would remind you that the common 16th century view of Children's Games was that it exposed the folly of the adults of that era. And perhaps as we view those mad youths wrestling in cars, climbing church steeples or taking their chances in Las Vegas, the intensity of their leisure does indeed make some commentary on the foolish play of their parents, who have decided to take play out of the closet, and subject us all to what the Homeric Greeks might have called the irrational play of the world. The youth's leisure in its intensity, its competitiveness and its excess, parodies the intensity and excess with which sports, gambling, and war games are used within the modern states to control, ignore and imperil the needs of mankind. Both Breugel and my leisure city may be seen as parodies on mankind's folly. I leave you therefore with the thought, that whatever else recreation may be it is also Folly's parody.

References found on page 22.

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This paper was originally presented in 1981 in Recreation 510, Concepts and Theories of Leisure and Recreation, a graduate recreation course taught by Dr. T.L. Burton at the University of Alberta. His critical comments have improved the paper although this writer assumes responsibility for any errors or omission found herein. The paper has also benefitted from the writer's consequent "discovery" of Showing Off in America by John Brooks whose thesis is in the same vein.

Leisure Display: The Great Show-Off in North America

This paper attempts a cursory examination of Thorstein Veblen's The Theory of the Leisure Class and its consequent updating and extension by John Brooks in Showing Off in America. An attempt is also made to apply present consumption patterns, particularly recreation and leisure
consumption of North Americans, to substantiate the notion that North Americans are, indeed, show-offs. The editor of this Newsletter has alluded to the "distant origins" of the writer and it is partly the "culture shock" of entering the conspicuously consumptive show-offish culture of North America that has prompted this epistle (though I suspect is is no different, statistically at least, in the Anti-podes!!). The brevity of this paper prevents an in-depth discussion but its aim is to provoke discussion and, possibly, to stimulate more formal research of the correlations that are made. The attitude of the discussion is sociologic, with reference to some economic statistics for support, and this bias properly reflects Veblen's contribution to society, for as Galbraith (1977) points out, "his enduring achievement was not in economics but in sociology - in his aforementioned examination of the social behavior of the rich" (p.61).

According to Kraus (1978) Veblen's major work, The Theory of the Leisure Class, points out that "in Europe - during the Feudal and Renaissance periods and finally during the industrial age - the possession and visible use of leisure became the hallmark of the upper class" (p.39). In this work Veblen takes the notion of the acquisition and accumulation of goods as being motivated by the need to display one's wealth after the basic physical needs are met. He says "The motive that lies at the root of ownership is emulation, and the same motive of emulation continues active in the same institution to which it has given rise..., the possession of wealth confers honour, it is an invidious distinction (Veblen, 1961, p.21).

By tracing the development of U.S. society to his time (turn of this century) Veblen (1961) argues that wealth, i.e. property, gains in relative importance and effectiveness as a customary basis of repute and esteem, to the point that, property now becomes the most easily recognized evidence of a reputable degree of success as distinguished from heroic or signal achievement..., wealth is now itself intrinsically honorable and confers honor upon its possessor (p.23).

This postulate is indicative of pecuniary emulation whereby members of a community not only seek to appear wealthy but also seek to emulate other wealthy people, through the process of acquiring and accumulating property.

Veblen (1961) develops this evolutionary description further by expanding the notion of pecuniary emulation into that of "conspicuous leisure from that of pecuniary emulation by reference to certain secondary features of the emulative process...,[which] come to very materially circumscribe and modify emulation in these directions among the pecuniarily inferior classes as well as among the superior class (Veblen, 1961, p.29).

One of these features is the requirement of abstention from productive work, or more correctly, the apparent perception of abstention from labour. This abstention is more particularly relevant as society developed. Therefore, in more developed societies, in order to gain and hold the esteem of others, it becomes necessary not only to possess wealth and power, but also to display the ability to abstain from productive work. In Veblen's (1961) words,

a life of leisure is the readiest and most conclusive evidence of pecuniary strength..., conspicuous abstention from labor therefore becomes the conventional mark of superior pecuniary achievement and the conventional index of reputability (p.30).

A second development of pecuniary emulation is postulated by Veblen (1961), that of "conspicuous consumption", which has been developed in a similar manner to conspicuous leisure. By tracing the evolution of society and its consumptive patterns Veblen (1961) states "the utility of consumption as an evidence of wealth
is to be classed as a derivative growth" (p.53). In the earlier stages of economic development, the consumption of goods, in excess of the subsistence minimum, is a hallmark of the leisure class. According to Veblen, this development occurs amongst all levels of society as the private ownership of goods, and an industrial system based on wage labour, become apparent. In this manner, the consumption of the more excellent, and the more expensive goods becomes evidence of wealth and honour and, "the failure to consume in due quantity and quality becomes a mark of inferiority and demerit" (Veblen, 1961, p.56). Further refinement of this notion leads one to the concept of displayed discrimination, i.e. the perception of others that one has knowledge of and indulges in the consumption of the excellent and the expensive. Modern examples of this are the notorious displays of wine buffs and patrons of the arts as they pontificate about clarity, colour and bouquet or form, composition and contrast.

Conspicuous consumption, in Veblen's era, was typified by the leisure class and "its manner of life and its standards of worth therefore afford the norm of reputability for the community" (Veblen, 1961, p.63). Veblen continues this argument by stating that the observance of these standards, in some degree of approximation, becomes incumbent upon all others in that society. Though Veblen was writing about "the leisure class" he did include the rest of society in his theory, as statements such as "all observing these standards, in some degree of approximation", "conventional mark", "conventional index", "among the pecuniarily inferior classes as well as among the superior class" and "afford the norm of reputability for the community" all imply.

Many recreation and leisure writers have ignored that Veblen directed his comments at more than the leisure class. According to Kraus (1978) and Murphy (1981), Veblen's theory is no longer relevant to our society. This view is summarized by Murphy (1981) who states that,

Veblen's interpretation of the rigid dichotomy of social class is no longer relevant. The diffusion of culture, the spread of wealth, and increases in free time for the working class have resulted in increased access for the masses of material possession and forms of relaxation and entertainment (p.135).

In the view of this writer, these two authors have seized on one aspect of Veblen's theory only. The rigid dichotomy may not be relevant but the interpretation and application of his theory to all aspects of North American society is indeed relevant. The extension of Veblen's work to today's society has been carried out by John Brooks in Showing Off In America. This extension of Veblen is embraced by John Kenneth Galbraith on the dust jacket thus, "John Brooks has here applied Veblen's thought and method to the current American social scene. It is a truly superior achievement" (Brooks, 1981). It is apparent that the "diffusion of culture", "spread of wealth" and "increases in free time" that Murphy (1981) alludes to above have now afforded a large number of North Americans the opportunity to indulge in similar, though less grandiose, behaviour of "leisure classics" such as the Vanderbilts, the Rockefellers and the J. Pierpont Morgans of the turn of this century.

Brooks (1981) argues that societal changes necessitate some revision of Veblen's original theory. The first major change is summarized by Brooks (1981) as "that is, others [other classes] took the leisure class at its own assessment, and both admired and envied its proofs of its status, however bizarre. This is emphatically no longer the case" (p.14). Brooks (1981) makes the point that though the impact of competitive display does not cross class lines as easily or often as in the past, this display is now aimed at members of one's own class and displayed in an ironical way i.e. one shows off and one does so knowingly - the term Brooks (1981) uses to encapsulate this idea is "parody display". The second great change as Brooks (1981) describes it is that the few leisured
people of Veblen's time have grown to include many of today's society. Those exempt from blue collar work are the majority and the proportion is growing daily. Also the types of display have enlarged to include categories other than property. The following quotation describes both these points:

Russel Lynes in *Snobs*, an astute little book published in 1950, distinguished eight new kinds of snob that he believed had superseded the old social snob: intellectual; regional (Virginia in the South, Boston in the Northeast, San Francisco in the West); moral (either religious or antireligious); sensual ("being able to wrest more pleasure from the flesh than anyone else"); occupational; political; and finally, "reverse," (one who tries too hard to not be a snob). Each of Lyne's categories of snob was, of course, engaged in the characteristic act of snobbery, competitive display; but in each case it was a form of display that, unlike the kind Veblen described, did not require the possession or expenditure of huge sums of money. Display had become a game anyone could play. The leisure class, defined as Veblen defined it, had become nobody and everybody (Brooks, 1981, pp.16-17).

What has happened is that display is still with us, it has changed, expanded, increased in complexity and became the pursuit of all members of society. As society in North America changes so too will the forms of display. Naisbitt's *Megatrends* spells out some societal trends that give an indication of what may happen in North America. Perhaps some research effort looking at display forms in the "forecasting" states e.g. Colorado, California, Florida will allow an opportunity to map out the courses of display that the rest of North America will have to learn and adopt.

Economic statistics abound in the literature confirming the North Americans' pursuit and consumption of leisure goods and services. Unfortunately there is no clear indication as to how comparable the statistics are. Often comparisons are not made in constant dollars i.e. do not account for inflation. Leisure consumption figures also often do not clearly indicate what constitutes leisure activities. In spite of these difficulties the statistics promulgated in the last decade or so support the argument that the characteristics ascribed to the leisure class by Veblen are now more universal in North American society.

The enormous expenditure related to recreation and leisure goods and services attest to its significance and highlights society's preoccupation with leisure. For instance, "almost everyone in Ontario invests heavily in recreation; in 1981 municipalities spent $538 million on recreation; the average family in Ontario spends about $2,300 a year on recreation;" (Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, 1983, Vol. 5, p.24). So if spending money was not enough, people also actively donate their time, estimated by the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation (1983) as "volunteers spend about 20.4 million hours a year supporting leisure activities" (Vol. 1, p.6). They appear to do this even when recession and unemployment are rife. "The reluctance of the unemployed to give up recreational activities when a cost is involved provides stark evidence of the importance of these activities to the individual" (Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, 1983, Vol. 1, p.10).

However, the true significance of our predilection for showing off is shown by statistics that indicate the relative changes in personal expenditure on consumer goods and services. Table One indicates that in constant 1971 dollars the personal expenditure of Canadians on recreation, entertainment, education and cultural services rose by a staggering 305%! This relative change was greater by far (in some cases two-fold) than the increases in personal expenditure in any of the other 7 categories. This lends support to the notion that the increased discretionary income available to individuals was spent, as Veblen would have said, on the
fulfillment of percunary decadency.

**TABLE ONE**

RELATIVE CHANGES IN CANADIAN PERSONAL EXPENDITURE ON CONSUMER GOODS AND SERVICES PER PERSON IN CONSTANT 1971 DOLLARS, 1961-78.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1961</th>
<th>1978</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food, Beverages &amp; Tobacco</td>
<td>454.5</td>
<td>624.4</td>
<td>137%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing &amp; Footwear</td>
<td>156.5</td>
<td>294.9</td>
<td>188%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross rent, fuel &amp; power</td>
<td>330.1</td>
<td>578.7</td>
<td>175%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture, Furnishings &amp; Household Equip. &amp; Operation</td>
<td>181.8</td>
<td>342.1</td>
<td>188%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Care &amp; Services</td>
<td>76.4</td>
<td>108.7</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport &amp; Communication</td>
<td>229.7</td>
<td>541.5</td>
<td>236%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation, Entertainment, Education &amp; Cultural Services</td>
<td>124.2</td>
<td>378.5</td>
<td>305%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Goods &amp; Services</td>
<td>293.5</td>
<td>497.1</td>
<td>169%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Personal Expenditure on Consumer Goods &amp; Services</strong></td>
<td>1851.1</td>
<td>3399.5</td>
<td>184%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from Statistics Canada, 1980, p.111)

This above increase in expenditure is also reflected in the relative difference in percentage of households owning selected items of recreational equipment. It must be remembered that these differences are "real" i.e. they take into account inflation and the increasing numbers of households. While it is possible that these increases are motivated by other reasons, the notions of conspicuous consumption; conspicuous leisure and competitive display are well supported by this data. The increases occurred at a time when according to Statistics Canada (1980, p.111); savings were increasing, taxes and other transfers were increasing slightly; and personal expenditures on consumer goods and services were decreasing as a proportion of total personal income. When a breakdown of ownership of recreational equipment is made by sociological variables such as age of head of household, education of head of household, geographical area of household and family composition characteristics, it is found that the increases are universal (Statistics Canada, 1983, Vol. 2, No. 4, p.4). This supports the notion that most segments of society are engaging in the same consumptive practices.

This short paper has not been able to detail how Brooks has ingeniously adapted Veblen's original ideas to present society e.g. the dressing up, dressing down, the
use of the telephone, playing games, being a consultant. Suffice it to say that there is room for serious sociologic and psychologic research on the idiosyncrasies of society's recreation and leisure consumption patterns and that Showing Off in America gives a paradoxically funny but serious starting point. As Brooks (1981) states, "...but showiness survived in the old time and survives, in a changed skin, in the new one. Posing has replaced exploit. The satire that killed the old showiness has itself become the new" (p.276).

References


Reviewed by: Frank E. Manning, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, CANADA N6A 3K7

Michael Bell is a folklorist who frequented a black-owned, black-patronized bar in West Philadelphia for a year and a half. The product of that fieldwork, The World from Brown's Lounge is an engaging account of the type of "play space" that is found, with variations, in every corner of Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean society.

Carrying on the tradition of the "Pennsylvania School" of folklore, where he was trained, Bell takes an ethnographic approach to the bar scene. He carefully relates text to context. The text in this case is what the bar regulars term "talking shit:" rapping, styling, profiling, telling lies, woofing, cracking, and similar modes of verbal expression that are familiar to students of black language. The context is the bar--its proxemics, its symbolic order, its social relations, its implicit and explicit rules, and its perceived relationship to the everyday world outside. Although white, Bell was participant as well as observer. He recognizes the problematic nature of his role, but the quality of the material suggests that he earned good rapport.

Bell identifies the habitues of the bar as middle-class blacks. This means that they "...worked for a living, owned their own homes, sent their children to college, and were deeply concerned with 'not losing ground' and 'making it.' Theirs was the 'American dream,' and they pursued it with dignity and vigor... all were at least high school graduates. Occupations varied from city employees, to public school teachers, to salesmen, to independent businessmen, to the director of a community health program, to factory workers, to saleswomen." (p.58). Moreover, the regulars share many middle-class social outlooks. They have an aversion towards the black underclass, whom they tend to hold responsible for their predicament. They also reject the radical position that blacks are, or ought to be, engaged in a political struggle against the American system. The bar itself is located "up the
Bell argues that this middle-class orientation exists alongside an enthusiastic cultural blackness. Brown's regulars subscribe both to the "serious" values of the workaday white world and to the distinctively "non-serious" attractions of the black play world. As he puts it, "The patrons of Brown's were committed to the legitimacy of playing because they saw it as a type of fulfillment and meaningfulness not available in the white world" (p.63). Then, quoting an informant, he continues, "Michael, you sit here every day trying to figure on what it is, being black. No way you gonna get ther. You know that. Let me hip you to one fact you put in that book you' writin': Bein' black is the only way to be, you dig where I comin' from?" (p.63).

Bell uses such data to challenge the conventional notion (loudly championed by many black sociologists) that the black middle class are the prisoners of a social fiction that drives them into blind mimicry of white society. The bar is a fiction, but one that is consciously contrived by blacks as a ludic parody of white society, not an imitation of it. Bell's treatment of this theme—or better, his account of his informants' treatment of it—warrants an extended quote:

"Being in Brown's was known as nigger business. Patrons used that term to signify that what they were doing and saying in Brown's was the opposite of what they did and said in the outside world. The term was a parody of the concerns of real business. Nigger business had no goals; in fact, much of the time the term was used to indicate open hostility to goals. More than one informant echoed the sentiments of the patron who said: "Thank God nigger business ain't good for nothing." So intent were most patrons on maintaining this distance between being in the bar and being outside that there was conscious exaggeration in their pronunciation of the term. One informant, observing a quiet moment in the social life of the bar, exclaimed: "Let's get this nigga bidness on the road"; then, noticing my presence, he said to me: "That's (spelling loudly) N I G G A B I D N E S S, Mike. You be sure to get that "A" and "D" in there when you write that book." Patrons knew that the outside world, black and white, saw nigger business as the classic stereotype of the "lazy black," but they believed that it was an affirmation of their right to take time out from the gravities of the real world. The business of nigger business was time for self—not time stolen from the real world but time created in opposition to that world. By asserting that talking shit was nigger business, the patrons said that self-expression and self-caring were necessary to offset the responsibilities of their everyday lives. Talking shit became a way for the patrons to achieve verbal and social freedom; nigger business allowed individuals to separate themselves from all ties and to value the symbolic exchange of words and ideas for the fascination such activity possessed in and of itself.

But while the play world is deliberate inversion, it is also, as Huizinga contended, a world with its own social and moral order. There are clear rules in the bar, all of them based on the premise that the reason for being there is to have fun. Introverts and manipulators are unwelcome. Sexually explicit language is acceptable in the context of ludic speech performances, but is taboo when it signals violence. Social sanctions, including ostracism, are imposed on offenders.

For me, reading the book was a nostalgic excursion through an American version of the "play world" that I studied some years ago in Bermuda's black workmen's clubs. I am delighted to see this work of research continued, in folklore as well as anthropology. My only disappointment with Bell's book stems from its limitation to a single case. One would like to have seen Brown's Lounge compared to other types of black
bars, including those in the neighboring ghetto.

Still, this book is a worthy effort. It should encourage us to explore further those fascinating "playgrounds" where good friends come to talk and drink.

Victor Turner: An Appreciation

A week before Christmas Day 1983, the world of play lost one of its most creative scholars and proficient performers. Vic Turner, a friend of TAASP and keynote speaker at our 1981 meeting in Fort Worth, died at his home in Charlottesville, Virginia, the victim of a heart attack. He was 63.

Vic's life was an academic and human journey of epic proportions. The journey began in Glasgow, where he was born on May 28, 1920, the son of an electronics engineer and an actress. A schoolboy interest in poetry and classics led him at age 18 to University College, London, where he studied English. His formal education was interrupted by World War II, when he was conscripted into the British army for five years. This period was also what he might later have termed a "liminal" phase in his life. He married Edie, his wife of forty years, had his first two children, and lived in a gypsy caravan near the army base at Rugby, the borough whose famous public school gave birth to the football game. A further transition during his military service -- done as a non-combatant -- was from literature to anthropology. Returning to University College after the war, he studied under some of the leading social anthropologists of the day: the famous "three Fs" -- Firth, Forde, and Fortes -- as well as, for a time, Leach, Radcliffe-Brown, and Nadel.

With his B.A. Honours degree in hand at the age of 29, Vic showed the innovative non-conformity that was to characterize much of his career. He left the prestigious academic precincts of London to enter the new department that Max Gluckman had just founded at the University of Manchester. His Ph.D. research, done in association with the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, took him to Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia), where he lived for three years among the Ndembu. He concentrated first on demography and economics, but gradually shifted his focus to ritual symbolism -- a transition that appears to have coincided with his alienation from Marxism and his growing conviction that the symbolic expression of shared meanings, not the attraction of material interests, lie at the center of human relationships. From this fieldwork he produced two major monographs as well as his Ph.D. thesis, which was published under the title Schism and Continuity in an African Society.

Vic held research and teaching positions at the University of Manchester from 1955 until 1963. During this time he wrote voluminously, exploring the dynamic relationship of ritual to such varied phenomena as healing, divination, kinship, and politics. Recognized for its fresh approach and thorough documentation, his work established him as a leading figure in the burgeoning "Manchester School" of anthropology.

Vic began the American phase of his career in 1963, accepting a post as Professor of Anthropology at Cornell University. In the next several years he made two more trips to Africa and completed three major books on the work he began in the previous decade. These were The Forest of Symbols, a collection of his own essays on Ndembu ritual; and The Drums of Affliction, a comprehensive ethnography centering on ritual; and The Ritual Process, originally delivered as the Lewis Henry Morgan lectures and containing his most extensive statement to date on the theory of liminality and other Van Gennepian concepts which had influenced his earlier thinking and would continue to highlight his later writings.

In 1968 Vic moved to the University of Chicago, as Professor of Anthropology
and Social Thought. The move coincided with a shift of interest from "tribal" to "world" religions, and, more generally, from small-scale to mass societies. He began a long-term study of contemporary Christian pilgrimages, doing active fieldwork in Mexico, Ireland, Britain, and continental Europe. Two books, Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors and Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture (with Edith Turner) explore the social history of these countries in relation both to pilgrimage traditions and to various other genres of literature, folklore, and popular culture. He later extended his study of pilgrimages into Asian religions, an interest that took him to India, Sri Lanka, and Japan.

Vic's last regular academic position was at the University of Virginia, where in 1977 he was appointed William R. Kenan Professor of Anthropology and was given membership in the Department of Religion, the Center for Advanced Studies, and the South Asia Program. He continued his work on pilgrimages and comparative religion, but also focused increasingly on performative play. This latter interest led him to studies of theatre and festivity. He participated in an experimental drama workshop in New York, writing and enacting scripts based on classic ethnographies. His book, From Ritual to Theatre, is partly an outgrowth of this experience. He also did fieldwork on the Rio Carnaval, which he examined historically, comparatively, and from perspectives ranging from Huizinga, Bateson, and Caillois through various literary and philosophical figures. He did not complete his work on festivity, but partial results of it are seen in an edited collection, Celebration, and in a related exhibit that he helped to orchestrate at the Smithsonian Institute. He was also beginning, at the time of his death, to publish articles on the Rio Carnaval.

TAASP members will recall with fondness his 1981 keynote address, "Play and Drama: The Horns of a Dilemma," which dealt with another interest that he developed in his last few years, the relationship of play and other forms of symbolic expression to neurophysiology. His comments on play warrant extended citation, as they summarize an understanding of the ludic impulse that has been -- and will be -- a major influence:

"... Play does not "fit in" anywhere; it is a transient, recalcitrant to localization, to placement, to fixation.... Play is a volatile, sometimes dangerously explosive essence, which cultural institutions seek to bottle, or contain.... It may subvert the left hemispheric social order. Most definitions of play involve notions of disengagement, of freewheeling, of being out of mesh with the serious, "bread and butter", let alone "life and death" processes of production, social control, getting and spending, and raising the next generation.... play is the supreme bricolage of frail, transient constructions.... Like a caddis worm's case or a magpie's nest, its metamessages are composed of a potpourri of apparently incongruous elements: products of both hemispheres are juxtaposed and intermingled.

"Play is, for me, a liminal or liminoid mode, essentially interstitial, betwixt-and-between all taxonomic modes.... As such play cannot be pinned down by formulations of left hemisphere thinking--such as we all must use on occasions like this in keeping with the rhetorical conventions of academic lecturing.... It makes fun of people, things, ideas, ideologies, institutions, structures.... It is partly a mocker as well as a mimic, a tease, arousing hope, desire, or curiosity without giving satisfaction...."

"Play, like other liminal phenomena, is in the subjunctive mood.... It refers to what may or might be. It is concerned with the domain of "as if" rather than "as is.".... There is no sanctity in play; it is irreverent, and protected in the world of power struggles by its apparent irrelevance and clown's garb.... Since play deals with the whole gamut
of experience both contemporary and stored in culture, it can be said perhaps to play a similar role in the social construction of reality as mutation and variation in organic evolution."

Vic's life exemplified his view of play. He enthusiastically embraced and reflexively transcended all that he studied: Africal ritual, to which he had an extraordinary empathy and which eventually influenced him to convert to Roman Catholicism; pilgrimages, which he experienced as an enabling and liberating form of religious communitas; and carnival, which he participated in as the ultimate embodiment of both ludic abandonment and cultural regeneration. He described himself as a liminal figure, took on the clown's role on many a social occasion, and once told me that he would like to run a samba school in Rio.

When I heard that Vic died, I did what I thought he would have wanted me to do: I went to Mass, lit a Mexican candle bearing the image of the Virgin Mary, and had a good drink of Scotch. May he rest in peace.

References
-Recreation as Folly's Parody
B. Sutton-Smith


Announcements


March 29 - April 1, 1985. Fourth International WHIM Humour Conference. Contact: Don Nilson, WHIM Conferences, English Department, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, 85287, U.S.A.

April, 1985. AAHPERD -- AALR, Atlanta, Georgia. Contact: L. Dale Cruse, Ed.D., Chairman, Department of Recreation/Leisure, HPER N-226, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84112, U.S.A.


The Committee on Play, a substructure of the American Association for Leisure and Recreation is studying environmental conditions in which play takes place as one of its goals. In order to do that, an assessment tool is being developed. During 1985, we hope to assess samples of several play areas in varying sized population centers in each state in the Union. We wish to run a national survey. To accomplish that goal, we need at least two volunteers from each state who will be responsible for collecting data. We anticipate training volunteers at a pre-conference workshop of our national association, the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, in Atlanta in March/April of 1985. If you would be willing to be a volunteer data collector for your state, please send your name and address to me by January 15, 1985: Dr. Donna Thompson, School of HPER, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA 50614 U.S.A.