Indigenous Sports & Games

Which Leisure Sports For Tomorrow's Society?

Inheritance;   Transmission;   Diffusion

Guy JAOUEN & Joël GUIBERT Editors

**International Traditional
Sports and Games Association**

ASSOCIATION EUROPEÉNNE DE JEUX ET SPORTS TRADITIONNELS

https://jugaje.com/?lang=en

Indigenous Sports & Games

Which Sports Leisures
For Tomorrow's Society ?

Inheritance, transmission and diffusion

1st English version of May 2022,
First version in French in 2005

Guy Jaouen & Joël Guibert Editors

**Guy Jaouen, Sean Egan, Grant Jarvie,
Pierre Parlebas, Pere Lavega,
Gianfranco Staccioli, Henning Eichberg Authors**

Presentation of the International Meeting of Nantes, Brittany, France

October 2002, the 3rd, 4th & 5th
Under the patronage of AEJeST

Title:

Indigenous Sports & Games

Inheritance, transmission and diffusion,

Objective

This event was one of a continuing series, which have been organised since 1987 and held in a number of different European countries, Denmark, Spain, Portugal, Iceland, Belgium, Italy and Brittany (France).

The symposium proposed to discuss formal and informal methods of learning and to consider their developmental perspectives.

Another object was to create a cultural movement in favour of Indigenous sports and games and to encourage national and international exchanges.

ORIENTATION TEXT

A new awareness of Indigenous Sports and Games, which are usually locally or regionally rooted, has been created. This new interest has been helped by the actions of the Breton Cultural Institute, the Confederation Falsab (regional level), the International Federation of Celtic Wrestling created in 1985, and the International Institute of Corporal Anthropology. In 1990 and 1999 these bodies organised international meetings on the theme of traditional sports & games, and have now combined their activities with those of AEJeST created in April 2001.

However, fun or playful practices, in comparison to sports, often have insufficient means to maintain their vitality and to assure their diffusion. Their conservation can only be achieved by their public visibility and by education.

This Meeting with the above title was held in 2002 and followed on from those of 1990 and 1999. It approached, on a first hand, the educational dimension in the wider sense that is in favour of youngsters <u>and</u> adults. To proceed to familiarise children and adults by commencing participation at school then to continue in adult life to experiment with the inheritance of the past, and to reinvest in modernity. This basic experience of learning and its functions concern more than the scholastic institution. Games can be passed on from generation to generation, in schools, associations, play areas, museums and public places. Local festivals and such events also encourage this development.

The second part of our discussions focussed on the sense that people today give to their fun or playful games. The educational dimension of a game cannot be promoted today if values and symbolic functions are not included. Games are also inherited living arts, which enhance collective well-being. The knowledge of traditional games is, from this point of view a rich resource for the present and for the future.

Traditional sports & games of skill or athletics encourage exchanges between districts, townships, and regions and maintain a sense of cultural identity by giving roots and reference marks. Such games, in spite of their extreme diversity, (one could evoke multiple variations for example in the practice of skittles, on the road or on prepared alleys), or in bowls, e.g. *Vendéenne*, *Bretonne*, *Nantaise*, *Fort*, *Parisienne*, *Flamande,* etc, produce bodily expertise and a terminology that is a shared culture. We need to preserve through training such assets of technical and human qualities. The preservation of identities is not backward looking but on the contrary is an understanding and acceptance of different ways of developing social links and access to modernity.

At the forthcoming meetings our aims were to discuss formal and informal methods of learning and to consider their perspectives of development. We were able to compare what has been done in the past and what is done today. To consider what is done were we live and abroad, to consider activities in schools, and districts and to set up modules for future teachers and organisers. To create educational tools, academic research projects, games equipment and promotional tools.

The objective was to create a cultural movement in favour of traditional sports & games in schools, associations, life museums and universities. It is also to encourage exchanges of practices and programmes of promotion, at national and international levels and to increase coordination between teachers, researchers, educators, committee members and players.

Place: Nantes, Brittany, France.

Scientific committee: President, Joël Guibert, Ph.D,
Joël Guibert, head of the Sociologist department, University of Nantes
Guy Jumel, University of Rennes 1,
Guy Jaouen, President of the FALSAB & AEJeST, researcher
Jean-Jacques Barreau, University of Rennes 2,
Christophe Lamoureux, University of Nantes,
Jacques Le Garlantezec, CEMEA,

Organising Committee: President, Guy Jaouen
Breton Cultural Institute (Sports and Games Section)
Falsab Confederation
IIAC (International Institute of Corporal Anthropology)
Federation La Jaupitre
Association of the "Amicales Boulistes Nantaises"
Federation of the Puck on Board
CEMEA Brittany
USEP Finistère
Regional association of the play areas
Association "En jouez-vous?"

1 – lecturers

- Pierre Parlebas, (Prof., Paris Sorbonne - Céméa),
- Grant Jarvie, (Prof., The University of Stirling - Scotland),
- Henning Eichberg, (Prof., Institute of Gerlev - Denmark),
- Pere Lavega, (Prof., the INEF of Lleida - Catalonia - network teachers of the traditional games of the INEF),
- Sean Egan (Prof.,The University of Ottawa - Canada),
- Gianfranco Staccioli (Prof., the University of Florence - Italy)

2 - workshop themes : transmission and diffusion

	Academic level	School level
To learn the game: to transmit	Friday p.m	Saturday p.m.
To learn by the game: to distribute	Friday p.m.	Saturday p.m.

Workshop 1: *Conception and manufacture*; metamorphoses of the equipment; games mutations. Presented by: Prof. Dominique Ferré (La Jaupitre), Guy Jumel, Ph.D (Univ. Rennes)

Workshop 2: *Traditional games used inside schools*: Presented by: Prof. Jean Claude Brélivet (Usep), Prof. Jacques Le Garlantézec (Céméa).

Workshop 3: *Traditional games, social life, and creation of networks*: Presented by: Jean Jacques Barreau,Ph.D (IIAC), Joël Guibert,Ph.D (Univ. Nantes).

Workshop 4: *Collecting, study and inventorisation of the games*: Presented by: Prof. Guy Jaouen (Falsab-AEJeST), Christophe Lamoureux,Ph.D (Univ. Nantes).

Workshop 5: *Educational steps of federations*: Presented by: Christian Quéré (Falsab), Prof. Alain Lasserre (Committee of Quoiting).

Workshop 6: *Traditional games and physical training*: Presented by: Jacques Dufeu, Ph.D (Univ. Rennes), Eric Dugas, Ph.D (IUFM Brittany).

(Permanent exhibitions was given on site; with videos projections on games from various regions of Europe; discussions about the discovery and introduction to many games; various workshops; evening discussions)

Contents

PREFACE

Educational Stakes for the 21ST Century Society Through Inheritance, Diffusion, and Transmission of Traditional Sports & Games

Guy Jaouen - President of AEJeST, the European Traditional Sports and Games Association (2001-2017); Pdt of ITSGA (Global Platform; 2009 – 2022); Pdt of the Confederation FALSAB (1994-2005).

_____

Since the late 1980s, many festivals, gatherings, and symposiums have been organised on the topic of traditional games. They have been proof that *sports and games from cultural tradition,* which are usually locally or regionally rooted, foster a new awareness. Below is a quick tour of Europe including some of the major events mentioned above:

- 1985, "Eurolympiade" of Friesland, the Netherlands;
- 1985, Seminary in Cardiff to establish an international federation of Celtic wrestling styles;
- 1988, Seminary in Vila Real, Portugal;
- 1990, Gathering and symposium in Berrien-Carhaix, in Brittany (France);
- 1990, Seminary and gathering in Louvain, Belgium;
- 1992, Festival of traditional popular games in Abadszalok, Hungary;
- 1996, Symposium in Puerto Del Rosario, Canary Islands;
- 1996, European festival of Lesneven, Brittany (France);
- 1999, Seminary of Plouguerneau & Lesneven, Brittany (France);
- 1999, Journées Européennes du jeu de palet, Aosta, Italy;
- 2001, European gathering of skittles games, Lesneven, Brittany (France)

Those events were encouraged by UNESCO recommendations for the purpose of protection and development of games, dances and traditional sports in the setting of physical education and sport as a means for preserving the world cultural heritage. European recommendations have also supported these practices.

Those meetings also showed gradually the wish to create a European Platform that would be representative of all networks, firstly of the sport and cultural movements on behalf of the traditional sports and games confederations, federations and associations, and then of a more academic movement of researchers and motivated teachers' groups for an educational use of the traditional sports and games. That wish was implemented in April 2001 with the creation of the European Traditional Sports and Games Association or Association Européenne des Jeux et Sports Traditionnels (AEJeST), its official name, at a large European event at Lesneven, in Brittany.

However, the acknowledgement has been made that the practice of traditional sports and games next to the established sports fails to possess sufficient means in general, to maintain their vitality and to assure their diffusion. These means are of course material means but they also include valorisations of practices in the social and symbolic functions. The games have indeed been often belittled as secondary activities in the advent of the world sports. Their conservation can only be achieved by their public visibility, the valorisation of their practice, and in particular the institutional, associative or spontaneous education system of the human being at the time of group free activity. This observation made us move toward organisation of a major international meeting on traditional games. Thus were born the Nantes Meetings 2002.

These Meetings of the 3rd, 4th and 5th of October, 2002, containing a symposium in the Nantes City Centre and animations in two "boule nantaise" halls, attracted about 180 participants including delegates of sports federations, academics, teachers, educationalists, toy librarians and educators. Thirty-three federations and nineteen universities were represented, and a total of ninety-six organisations from seven countries. They approached, in the first place, the educational dimension in the wider sense, that is, of the youngsters and adults with the purpose to familiarise children and adults by commencing participation at school, but also in associative environment, and then to continue in adult life to experiment with the inheritance of the past, as well as to reinvest in the present. This basic experience of learning and its functions concerns something more than the scholastic institution alone. Games can be passed on from generation to generation in schools, associations, playing areas, museums and public places. Local festivals and such events also encourage this development.

Traditional games encourage exchanges between districts, townships, and regions and they maintain a sense of cultural identity by providing marks of roots and reference. Such games, in spite of their extreme diversity – ninepins or skittles, bowls, balls, wrestling, rings or quoits, jousts, etc. – produce bodily expertise and a terminology which is a shared

culture. We need to preserve such assets of technical and human qualities through training. The preservation of identities is not looking backward but, on the contrary, it is an understanding and acceptance of differences and development of social links and access to modernity. We are, in favour of the concept of local, interregional or international exchanges, and not of standardisation and hierarchical results. When meetings are organised with players from different regions, they take place in different games making an exchange of culture through the human encounter. Competition is then a pretext to the human encounter, but it is not the finality. It is, as an intended result, a game in conviviality, contrary to the result being an intended goal.

The second part of our discussion focused on the meaning people attribute today to their fun or playful games. The educational dimension of sports practice cannot be promoted today without social values and symbolic functions. Games are also inherited living arts, which enhance collective well-being. The knowledge of traditional games is from this point of view a rich resource for the present and for the future.

Traditional games of skill or athletics are organised locally, controlled by the actors themselves who can modify rules through negotiation. The traditional sports and games are therefore a sort of philosophy to live and decide together about a way to put forward the "Us" – the group. We play, and by this we decide on our way of life. It is therefore a way to become an actor of our own existence, and not a mere spectator on the margin of another one. It is also a method of learning democracy through transversal but not vertical exchanges. The game is not only the *Rule*, the game is not just a game. It is part of a 'Whole', it is part of a culture.

What can we learn from the traditional games and sports in the challenges of our contemporary society? It is a question of society's problem and stake. What does the sporting type of entertainment represent in our society? In particular, what influences does the "agonist" practices (conflicting) of sport exert on our everyday behaviour, on our home environment of a citizen voter? The model known as 'sporty', in a society where free time gains ever greater importance, leaves its mark on the society from which it descends. There, all becomes competitive, not only in the merchant space but also in the social relations at work, school, arts, health, etc. We are therefore confronted with the 'merchandised' sport. Professor Pierre Parlebas of La Sorbonne, one of key-note speakers at the last Nantes Meeting said, "The triumphs of sport is not due to particular educational richness or a high complexity as we often pretend, but to an internal logic whose modalities are remarkably adapted to the media requirements of our time."

The purpose of the Nantes Meetings was also to sum up different experiences on practices, programs of promotion, initiatives of co-

ordination at national and international levels, between teachers, researchers, educators, federations leaders, and players. Sociological experiences about the use of traditional games as factors of efficient socialisation, free from the comparison system of results, were put forward to demonstrate that the traditional games are as rich as the sports for motor education, and that the elitist Sport concept, or the Game concept are not social theories without consequence to our societies.

The goal of the Nantes Meetings was to create an impulse for cultural movement in favour of the traditional games and sports, in schools, universities, associations and museums; and to encourage cultural exchanges at the national and international levels, diversity, and the right to be different. The traditional games are tools of life sense of responsibility. They are tools of education and transmission of our society values to the youth. They are tools of preservation of heritage and local traditions. They are also tools of economic development.

Our traditional and indigenous games are tools for the future!

An Holistic Analysis of the Educational Components of Traditional Games.

Sean Egan, Ph. D.
School of Human Kinetics
University of Ottawa, Canada

_____

1 - Introduction

A game is not just a game. It is part of a whole. It is part of a culture. It has history, a goal, a people, a purpose, a structure, a philosophy and a strategy. It has characteristics and rules; it has ritual, rhythm, dimensions, morals and it is linked to a specific environment. It has educational dimensions; it can be studied from a scientific or from an artistic point of view.

Games are an important part of life. References to games are a common occurrence in the origin myths of various tribes (Culin, 1975). Games help to refine skills, build character, express ourselves and to improve our performance. Games help us to make friends and to have fun. Fun in playing games is the main attraction to games for children and adults. Games are about teamwork, cooperation, managing a challenge, setting and achieving goals. Games are also about fair play and about winning in everyday life. Games are also about a healthy mind and a healthy body (Lankford & Neal, 1998). Through teaching, coaching and participating in games children can learn many lifestyle skills such as fair play, a positive attitude to life and living, teamwork, cooporation, healthy competition and respect for others. Games also promote active living, a healthy lifestyle and wellness. Fir fer (fair play) was the basis of the Celtic code of honour in sport and is also the basis of our legal system (Egan, 2002).

Throughout history games have had a place of honour in most cultures. The old Tailteann games had three goals: one, to honour the dead, two, to promote laws and three, to entertain the people (Aonach Tailteann, 1924). The Greeks and the Celts believed that physical activity and learning went hand-in-hand. The Highland games of Scotland consist of dancing, music and athletic events. In many games children simulate, in a drama form, the adult lifestyle and behaviors they see about them. In the game of Cnapan, the Welsh players would strive to the death for glory and fame which they esteemed dearer than any worldly wealth (John, 1988). Games are pastimes for the young and for the old alike, for males as well as for

females, for the fit as well as for the more sedentary folk, for those with disabilities as well as the able bodied.

Games are a fundamental part of animal (Huizinga, 1950) and human education (Ellis, 1973; Piaget, 1951). Representative games play an important role in the education of youth (Roberts et al., 1959). Games help man to cope with the stresses of everyday life. The attributes of games can be psychosocial, sensory, communication, intellectual or biomechanical. With the dramatic increase in premature death due to lifestyle disease, in particular overweight and obesity, games and active living, can play a positive role in reducing premature deaths (Egan, 1997).

Indian games of North America. 1902. American ethnology bureau.

2 - Inuit of Nunavut

The Inuit of Nunavut live in 28 small isolated settlements. The 23,136 Inuit are direct descendants of the Thule who first inhabited the Eastern Arctic about 1,000 years ago. Though a very small group of people, they are well known for the uniqueness of their traditional lifestyle and culture and their ability to survive and thrive in the very harsh cold climate of Canada's North. Over the past 40 years modern technology has dramatically

changed the Inuit lifestyle. The traditional dog teams have been replaced by snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, cars and trucks. The harpoon has been replaced by the rifle. The igloo has been replaced by houses with electricity, running water and television.

The Inuit have found it a serious challenge to adapt to modern life, while at the same time to protect their traditional social and cultural roots. The rapid change from a fishing and hunting lifestyle to a wage earning world has created a devastating blow to the physical, mental, educational and cultural health of the Inuit. In many cases they lead an impoverished and tragic life (Boychuck, 1999). Inuit and Cree lifestyle changed forever with the advent of self-determination agreements signed in 1971 (Alaska Inuit Native Claims Settlements); in 1975 (Cree James Bay Agreement) and in 1979 (Home Rule for Greenland Inuit).

Despite the isolation and vast distances between communities the people of Nunavut are very much a distinct society. They have their own approach to life and living - The Inuit Way - (Lanken & Vincent, 1999); their own musical instrument (the drum); their own style of singing (throat singing); their own sea transport (the kayak); their own special house (the igloo); their own style of clothing and their own specific games. The long cold Arctic winter, the prolonged period of darkness, the simple practical approach to life of the Inuit give the games a specific character. Due to confined space in the igloo most games were restricted to one or two players. The lung searing cold of winter hampered the development of activities of a running nature. Some team activities do exist and are played during their short summer. The Inuit games play an important role in ensuring survival. They helped people improve strength, endurance and pain resistance (Heine, 2002).

In Inuit society traditional games played an important role in educating their children. Games helped to develop life skills for hunting and fishing. The pedagogical concept of «pilimmaksarniq» (learning by doing) was a fundamental approach to learning in Inuit society (Arnakak, 2001). Through this pedagogical approach the Inuit parents passed on culture, skill and knowledge to their children. The games developed the young children physically and socially. It also prepared them psychologically for the harsh life in the frigid Arctic. One of the most appealing characteristics of the Inuit is their tremendous sense of fun (Harrington, 1981). In order to survive in the cold Arctic the Inuit learned to paddle, to shoot arrows and harpoons and to increase their endurance and strength. They developed their coordination, dexterity, craft-making and how to read their physical environment.

Certain Inuit games tested the athlete's aerobic endurance such as running races; some games developed muscular strength such as the arm pull, finger pull, head pull, stick pull, the muskox fight and the head push.

Other games developed strength, speed, and power: high kicks, knee jump, long jumps and gymnastics. Pain resistance (a psychological trait) was developed in activities such as: knuckle hops, mouth and ear pull, ear lift, and Inuit boxing. Ice-flow jumping is also a risky game played by the Inuit. The bow and arrow skills and the harpoon throw were important for daily life. «Skills in hunting, perseverance in the chase and continuous endurance were qualities that helped (the Inuit) to overcome the dangerous environment» (Balikci, 1970). The Inuit learned to hunt, to fish and to make tools. They learned to build igloos and to make clothes. All this learning took place in the home or on the land under the watchful eye of the parents who were the models and teachers of the children. Most of the learning was achieved through games and play. Toonik Time is a traditional festival that takes place every Spring in the Arctic. During this festival many traditional games and survival skills are demonstrated. Inuit games are divided into three groups; survival, education and gatherings or celebration games. Some team games are played in the summer, such as the blanket toss; wolfman (tag game); soccer, sand ball and Inuit baseball.

In March 2002, the circumpolar games were co-hosted by the Canadian and Greenland Inuit. They consist of a mixture of Dene, Inuit and modern games. The Inuit have also developed a school curriculum entitled Inuuqatigiit (The Inuit Way). This curriculum is sensitive to the Inuit culture and traditions. In it one finds how the Inuit see the world; how the Inuit gain knowledge, wisdom and traditional values; how the Inuit relate to each other and to other people and how they relate to the environment. Traditional games and recreation have an important role to play in this native curriculum. Traditional games are being integrated into the school system. Modern games and traditional games have equal importance in many of the schools. Prior to the arrival of the Europeans in the Arctic, the traditional religion of the Inuit was Shamanism (Saladin d'Anglure, 2001). That too is undergoing a revival among the Inuit.

3 - Cree Indians of James Bay

The Cree Indians live in a totally different physical environment to that of the Inuit. The Cree live in the sub Arctic forests of the James Bay area of Northern Quebec, Canada. The Cree lived in Tee-pees, in the Bush, from September to May, until 1972. Survival in the Bush needs somewhat different skills from those needed in the Arctic. The Cree lived primarily from hunting, fishing and trapping. The Cree games are closely linked to their lifestyle. The Cree games are also divided into survival, educational and celebration games. The Cree learned early in life that survival in the Bush was skill related. One of the oldest ceremonies of the Cree is called the «Walking Out Ceremony». It symbolizes the first day of a Cree child's life as a male hunter or as a woman. The two year old children are given

toy tools, slings, wooden guns, a bow and arrow (for the boys) and an axe (for the girls). The children are expected to play with these toys and when they demonstrate that they are skilled in the use of these tools they are treated as adults. The parents act as models and the children imitate what they see. The Cree have two major ceremonial type gatherings called: Winter Carnival and Summer Games. The Cree games can be divided into ten main categories: combat games, transport games, hunting and fishing skills, manual and imagination games, chasing games, games using poles, ball and stick games, ball games, strength games and chance games (Egan, 2002). There are other pastimes and games that do not fit into these categories. According to Father Allain, (who worked with the Cree for 40 years), chance is a concept that is embedded in the Cree psyche. Unlike the farmer, the Cree did not sow, cultivate, reap or store food. They did not feed their animals or hatch their eggs. The Cree went out in the land and obtained their food by chance. If they were unlucky finding food, they went hungry or starved to death (Egan, 1981).

The Cree games take place at three different locations: in school, at the Bush camps and at festivals. In primary school, from Kindergarden to grade 3 the curriculum is totally about Cree Culture. They play some Cree game in this program. In secondary school part of the program is about Cree Culture. During this part of the program the students go into the Bush where they experience the Cree way of living. In the school system there is also an alternative school in which students learn the skills for survival and trapping in the Bush. The Cree associate tradition with the Bush. The Bush is sacred to them. The youth council runs a canoe race called the canoe brigade. It is a six week canoe trip in the rivers. There is also a 60 km snow-shoe race as well as a marathon snow-shoe walk from Great Whale to Waswanippi. This marathon walk takes 10 weeks to finish. Their weight lifting competitions consist of canoe portages. Every year at the end of April or early May the entire population of the settlements go into the Bush to hunt Canadian geese. This activity is called the «Goose Break». All the schools are closed during this activity.

Like the Inuit the Cree love to participate in games but they have no compulsion to win. At the winter Carnival the Cree play such activities as : ice chiselling, obstacle races on foot, snow-shoe races, log sawing, wood chopping, animal skinning and dance contests to name but a few. At the summer games the activities are: pole climbing, archery, heavy portage, canoe races, fishing contests, arm wrestling and the fox-draw.

Few documents exist describing the Cree games. Even though the Cree school system is run on the Euro-Canadian model, the Cree are making a big effort to introduce Cree Culture, including the Cree traditional games into the school curriculum. Being cross-legs on two cultures (Cree and Euro-Canadian) has forced the Cree into a hybrid culture.

According to Diamond (Egan, 1987) embroidery, knitting, toy-making, drum-making and doll-making were other activities engaged in by the Cree, in the past. The drum and the violin were their two musical instruments. The Cree also danced. The old dances were known as the duck dance, the otter dance and the rabbit dance. These dances no longer exist and are replaced by Celtic dances such as the jig, the reel, the hornpipe and square dancing.

In order to get a better picture and understanding of the educational aspects of traditional games, I have examined two fundamental aspects of education: motivation for learning and the theory of multiple intelligences. Maslow's motivational theory (1998) and Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence (Gardner, 1983) could be seen as important building blocks in the analysis of the educational aspects of traditional games. This article is too short to permit me to give an in-depth analysis of these theories. However, we shall clearly indicate to the reader, in a practical fashion, how the games fit into both theories.

4 - Analysis of Cree and Inuit games

Education philosophies and education processes are legion. For the sake of simplicity in this article, I will confine myself to these two approaches (Maslow & Gardner) in an attempt to clarify the educational components of traditional games. Two separate ideas are involved: one, the motivational process and two, the transmission process by which information and skills are passed on from one generation to the next.

In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the biopsychosocial and philosophical needs of humans are elaborated starting with the basic survival needs of food and shelter at the bottom of the pyramid and ending with more abstract or philosophical needs at the top of the pyramid (see fig.1). Gardner's multiple intelligence theory breaks away from the traditional school system theory of abstract learning, i.e., the 3 R's (reading, writing and arithmetic). Gardner's theory is holistic (see fig.2). It provides an excellent tool for the educational analysis of traditional games. He defines intelligence as «the capacity to solve problems or to fashion products that are valued in one or more cultural setting» (Gardner & Hatch, 1989). In addition to biology, Gardner notes that culture also plays a large role in the development of intelligence (Gardner, 1983).

In examining the educational aspects of the Cree and Inuit games in the context of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, one must see their traditional games as part of a whole, i.e. a culture. The survival skills of hunting, fishing and trapping have been learned and perfected through the playing of games that simulate the said skills. The basic physiological needs of both Cree and Inuit are taken care of through fishing and hunting skills.

Their safety needs are also a function of their ability to feed, shelter and protect themselves from wild animals and other dangerous environmental hazards.

Both groups fill their psychological needs of «belongingness» through their families, festivals and team games. Self-esteem is an essential psychological need in us all. The Cree and Inuit self-esteem was a function of their survival skills which they developed and perfected early in life through games, fishing and hunting.

The fifth component in Maslow's hierarchy is knowledge and understanding. The Cree and Inuit learned by doing. For the Inuit it was Pilimmaksarniq (learn by experience) and for the Cree it was the Family Model (trial and error). The knowledge was passed on in a three step procedure: observation, experimentation and practice. The knowledge was passed on in a play like fashion. Games had an important role therein.

The aesthetic aspects of the Cree and Inuit life was expressed through sculpture, dance, drum, violin playing, throat singing, music, games and embroidery.

Self-actualization for both Cree and Inuit had to do with many variables but in particular to adherence to their traditional lifestyle; harmony with others, the animals, the spirits and the cosmos. As for game competition; they loved to participate. Winning was not important. Participation in a game or competition was for them a source of great pride.

Finally, transcendence for both groups consisted of being in harmony with the great spirits. Shamanism was their religion and the shaman was their spiritual leader (Saladin d'Anglure, 2001).

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS (Fig. 1)

INUIT («ESKIMO») GAMES		CREE INDIAN GAMES
Shamanism. In harmony with the great spirits. In harmony with people, animals and the Cosmos	8. TRANSCENDANCE	Shamanism. In harmony with the animal spirits, other humans & the Cosmos.
Innuqatigiit (Inuit Way). Having children. Harmony with the animals, others, spirits, and Cosmos	7. SELF - ACTUALIZATION	Cree Way. Good Hunter. Having Children. In harmony with others, the animal spirits & Cosmos
Sculpture. Dance. Drums. Music. Throat Singing.	6. AESTHETIC NEEDS	Sculpting. Embroidery. Dance. Music. Admiring & Respecting

		Nature's Creatures
Pilimmaksarniq (learning by doing). Trial and error playing games.	5. KNOWLEDGE / UNDERSTANDING NEEDS	Family Model. Trial-Error. Practical Hunting & Fishing skills in the Bush
Recognized for Hunting. Fishing Skills on Ice & Land Skilled in games.	4. ESTEEM NEEDS	Recognized as a good hunter, trapper, fisher person and athlete.
Family. Groups. Teams. Dance. Games. Festivals	3. BELONGINGNESS / LOVE NEEDS	Family. Group. Teams. Stone «rugby». Community «soccer». Dances. Festivals
Ability to hunt & fish in the Arctic snow & ice.	2. SAFETY NEEDS	Ability to hunt & fish in an unpredictable environment. Spear, bow and arrow & climbing skills. Psychological skills ...through games.
Fishing.Hunting.Kayaking. Naturalist skills. Igloo building skills. Aerobic & Muscular Endurance. Sewing skills. Traditional games.	1. PHYSIOLOGICAL NEEDS FOOD & SHELTER	Fishing. Hunting. Trapping. Snowshoeing. Canoeing. Naturalist skills. Tee pee building skills. Sewing skills. Traditional games.

HOWARD GARDNER'S MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE (Gardner 1983) (Fig.2)

		INUIT GAMES	CREE GAMES
1	Linguistic Intelligence Names. Stories. Reading. Communication	Learning names, words and stories; communicating verbally in Inuktitut during games.	Learning Cree words Communicating in the Cree language during play.
2	Logical Intelligence Patterns. Order. Categories Relationships. Solving Problems Strategies. Experimenting	Finding Logical Solutions Identifying order, patterns, categories in Inuit games. Developing strategies to win	Finding Solutions in hunting, fishing, trapping, games. Recognizing patterns & order
3	Body-kinetics Intelligence Learn through manipulation / sensations	Wrestling. Boxing. Pulls. Pushes. Lifts. Soap stone sculpture. Crafts. Dance. String games.	Wrestling. Canoeing. Manual games. Ice Chiselling. Tobogganing. Snowshoeing Embroidery. Team fighting & wrestling.
4	Visual Spatial	Quiet games	Tarp Crawling

	Intelligence Visualise results. Spatial dimensions	String games Bag of bones games Ice fishing Pretend games High kicks	Spear throw. Checkers. Bow & arrows. Daydream. Imagination games
5	Musical Intelligence Discriminate sounds, rhythms	Play & Appreciate Drum Throat-sing. Drum Dance Skip. Music	Dance. Violin Music. Sing. Skip. Drum.
6	Interpersonal Intelligence Communicate verbally, physically, emotionally	Wrestling. Boxing. Team soccer. Finger, wrist, arm pulls Throat singing. Storytelling.	Wrestle. Team Games. Laughing Contest. Chanting game.
7	Intrapersonal Intelligence Getting to know self Building one's self-image and self-worth	Success in Inuit games. Trial & error in learning Games help build self-image & self-worth in children.	Success in Cree Games Trial & Error in Learning Cree Games build positive Self-image & Self-worth in children.
8	Naturalist Intelligence Ability to recognize one's own environment	Learning & Playing Inuit games help children to read their physical and psychological environment. Ice, flora & fauna, weather patterns etc.	Learning & Playing Cree games prepare the child for the Bush life of fishing, hunting and trapping.

In examining Gardner's (Gardner,1983) multiple intelligence model we see therein eight different types of intelligence. Emphasis on today's early school learning is mostly on cognitive learning (reading, writing and mathematics). However, we do know that a great deal of an individual's learning takes place prior to going to school. Many of the child's language skills, gross and fine motor skills, music and rhythm skills, coordination, dexterity and communication skills are well developed during the first five or six years of life. In Gardner's linguistic intelligence, games, play and storytelling were the tools used by the Cree and Inuit to teach their children, words, names, ideas and communication skills (up to the 1960's few Cree or Inuit had any formal schooling). The logical concepts of patterns, relationships, strategies etc. were learned from every day experiences of hunting, fishing, building shelter and playing games.

Body-kinetics intelligence was developed in both groups by such activities as wrestling, string games, tarp crawling, spear throwing, high kicks, juggling etc. Manipulation and sensation played an important role in all these activities.

Visual Spatial Intelligence was developed by participating in games and activities such as quiet games, pretend games, bag of bones game, tarp crawling, checkers, bow and arrows and ice fishing.

Music intelligence was developed by exploring the drum, dance, throat singing, violin and rhythmic games. Interpersonal intelligence has to do with communication skills. It is only recently that the Inuit and the Cree developed a written language. For most of their history they communicated their knowledge and their emotions verbally or by using body language. Much of their interpersonal intelligence was developed using storytelling, laughing contests, chanting games, throat singing, dance, music and their traditional games.

Intrapersonal intelligence has to do with getting to know oneself. Success in work and play helps to build a positive self-image which in turn gives the individual a realistic self-worth. Today's youth, with epidemics of obesity, anorexia, teenage suicide and drug abuse, need positive experiences in music, dance, game and in sport in general. Finally, naturalist intelligence has to do with the ability to recognize and to survive in one's own environment. Despite the fact that 80% of the Canadian population live in towns and cities, the Cree and the Inuit prefer to live in the frozen tundra or in the Bush. The street smarts of the cities are of little help in the High Arctic or in the Bush. The traditional lifestyle and the traditional games help the Cree and Inuit to thrive in their Northern environment.

5 - Promoting traditional games

Success in promoting the educational aspects of traditional games among the Inuit and Cree is a function of many variables:

1. Suitable infrastructures in the community, such as fields, arenas, stadiums and gymnasiums.
2. An active organization that prepares coaches, teachers, referees and establishes rules, policies and philosophies.
3. Visibility of the games in the media.
4. Financial support from different levels of government.
5. Integration of traditional games with modern games into the school curriculum. This is perhaps the key step in promoting the traditional games.
6. Integration of traditional games with modern games into community festivals.
7. Emphasis of the amateur spirit of the games. One plays for fun, for fitness and for health.
8. Provision of different levels of competition; provide access to all levels of ability.
9. Having a research component in the organization that researches

the benefits of traditional games for youth.
10. Promotion of different values and a different vision of the future than those of the «rat race» society of today.
11. Availability of instructional manuals, videos and a school curriculum for teachers and coaches.

6 - Conclusion

Games in general play an important role in the biomotor, psychosocial and moral development of children. They also provide the young an opportunity to learn many skills, survival skills, aesthetic skills, communication skills, psychological skills, health and recreational skills. In his recent book the Dalai-Lama (1997) stated that humans and animals are motivated by two forces: the desire to avoid pain and the desire to seek happiness. Traditional games play a role in both situations.

Inuit games are alive and flourishing in the territory of Nunavut. Each community fosters the games through its schools and community recreation centres. The games are integrated into the school curriculum alongside modern games. There are macro and micro organizations throughout the territory that oversee the development and organization of the Inuit games. Written documents and videos describing the games do exist. The government of Nunavut financially supports the games. These games are played on an international level. The Inuit games are visible in the media. They have an amateur status. The games are played for fun, fitness and health. The Inuit love to participate but they have no compulsion to win. The Cree games do not enjoy the same visibility and success as do the Inuit games. This may be due to many variables. The social chemistry of the Cree is not the same as that of the Inuit. The Cree personality is less assertive in many ways. The Euro-Canadian school system has not been completely sensitized to the Cree needs. A partial Cree Culture curriculum does exist but has only moderate emphasis on Cree games. The hybrid school system does not facilitate the integration of Cree games into the schools. The Cree do not have national or international competitions. Little research is being carried out specifically on the educational aspects of Cree games. The survival type games thrive at a local level, primarily in the Bush Camps and at festivals. The celebration type games also thrive at a local level in particular at the winter carnival and summer games. By examining the educational aspects of the tradition games using existing educational and health models, one will provide credible evidence, to the school boards, on the positive educational and health benefits of traditional games. Games, in particular children's games reflect the general values of the surrounding society (Weisfeld et al. 1984; Miller & Thomas, 1972). Traditional games will help

prepare children for the roles they will play as adult citizens in society. Much more remains to be done in this area of research.

References

Aonac Tailteann (1924). Aonach Tailteann 1924. Revival of Ancient Tailteann Games. Dublin 2nd - 18th August 1924.

Arnakak, J (2001). Promethelosis. (Unpunblished document). Arctic College. Iqaluit.

Balikci, A. (1970). The Netsillk Eskimo. Garden City, N.Y. : Natural History Press.

Boychuk, R. (1999). Arctic Maritimers. Canadian Geographic.

Culin, S. (1975). Games of the North American Indians. Dover Publications Inc., New York.

Dalai-Lama (1997). Conseils du Coeur. Presse de la Renaissance, Paris.

Ellis, M.J. (1973). Why People Play. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

Egan, S. (1981). Cree chance games. (Unpublished field study). University of Ottawa. Canada.

Egan, S. (1987). How the Crees lived in the past. (Unpublished field study). University of Ottawa. Canada

Egan, S. (1997). The Health Benefits of Physical Activity. The International Bulletin of Physical Education and Sport. Vol.67, No.2, pp.5-15.

Egan, S. (2002). The Celts and their Games and their Pastimes. Mellen Press, New York.

Egan, S. (2002). Cree Games. (Unpublished field study). University of Ottawa, Canada.

Feit, H. (1986). Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience. Ed.Morison & Wilson, McClelland & Stewart.

Gardner, H.(1983). Frames of Mind. New York: Basic Books, Inc.

Gardner, H. & Hatch, T. (1989). Multiple Intelligences go to school: Educational implications of the theory of multiple intelligences. Educational Researcher,18(8),4-9.

Heine, M.(2002). Arctic Sports A Training Manual. Sport North Federation. Yellowknife, NT. Canada..

Huizinga, J. (1950). Homo Ludens. Beacon Press, Boston.

Inuuqatigiit (1995-96). The Inuit Way. Nunavut, Dept. of Education, Canada.

John, B. (1985). The Ancient Game of Cnapan. Greencraft Books, Trefelin, Cilgwyn, Newport, Pembrokeshire Dyfed SA 420QU.

Lankford, S. & L. Neal (1998). The 1998 Arctic Winter Games. A study of the Benefits of Participation. Arctic Winter Games International Committee. Yellowknife, Canada.

Lauren, D. & M. Vincent (1999). Nunavut. Canadian Geographic, pp.39-46.

Loy, J.W., et G.S. Kenyon (1969). Sport, Culture and Society. Collier-Macmillan Ltd., London.

Maslow, A., & Lowery, R. (1998). Toward a Psychology of Being. New York: Wiley and Sons.

Miller & Thomas. (1972). Blackfoot games. Child Development, vol. 43, pp. 1104 - 1110.

Piaget, J. (1962). Play, dreams and imitation in childhood. New York: Norton, London.

Roberts, J. (1959). «Games and Culture», American anthropologist, 61, 597-605.

Saladin d'Anglure, B. (2001). Cosmology and shamanism. Nunavut Arctic College, Iqaluit.

Sapona, A.V., et E.D. Mitchell (1948). Theory of Play and Recreation. Ronald Press, New York.

Weisfeld et. al.(1984). Games of the Hopi tribe in U.S.A. Ethos, vol. 12, pp. 64-84.

Zuk, W. (1967). Eskimo Games. Dept. of Indian Affairs. Ottawa, Canada.

Highland Games, Ancient Sporting Traditions and Social Capital in Modern International Communities.

Grant Jarvie, PhD
University of Stirling, Sports studies, Scotland, UK

_____

1 - Introduction

Firstly can I say many, many sincere thanks to the FALSAB and the Breton Cultural Institute for asking me to contribute to and learn from the workshops that make up this colloquium. When I look at the names and contributors to present and past meetings it is a privilege to be here to. Can I sincerely thank you for and on behalf of the University of Stirling and the British Society of Sports History for inviting me to your gathering.

Having read many of the past papers and contributions over the years I note that the defence of traditional games and sports has been made so eloquently by others that it is difficult to add to what others have said (Barreau and Jaouen, 1998; 1991, Eichberg 1998; Palm 1997, Renson 1997). Renson (1997:51) has warned us that ' we should not speak of Danish, Flemish, Hawaiian, Nigerian or Scottish games but rather of traditional games practised in Denmark, Flanders, Hawaii, Nigeria or Scotland'. Salter (1997:65) has addressed the utilitarian functions of traditional leisure time activities in developing societies in terms of ritual, commerce, politics, social control, and education while Palm (1997:77) calls for the revival of traditional games as basis for a genuine resource to promote sport for all. I am mindful and indeed sympathetic of Eichberg's (1998) ideas on body culture and popular culture as facets of association and living democracy. The aforementioned list is far from exhaustive, but all of the authors included above have revealed in some way the vitality and importance of traditional games and sports and their utility within various communities. They have done so from a particular stance or a particular knowledge base of one or more cultures while at the same time being careful to acknowledge that the utility of their approaches should not be reified or taken as any form of universalism to solve a set of common problems such as the marginalisation or lack of mainstream funding support for traditional games and sport.

No matter where we come from and despite our many differences colloquiums such as this clearly prove that internationality and indeed social capital can be sustained and developed through an interest and involvement in traditional games and sports. Fairly innocent questions about traditional games and sports can soon lead you to fairly heated debates about culture, history, the impossible search for authenticity and the values associated with sporting practices. In *Highland Games the Making of the Myth* (1991) and *Sport in the Making of Celtic Cultures* (1999) I rightly or wrongly argued that Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games and the many forms of sport within the Celtic cultures of Europe, could not be properly understood without a rigorous and systematic attempt to ask how the development of these activities were influenced by the historical and social conditions of the day. If *Highland Games the Making of the Myth* had been written to-day it would have been a far better book had the author been much more critical about America's growing obsession with its Scottish connections which are so clearly on display during the North American Highland Games season or the extent to which different traditions of Highland Games have taken on different meanings as they have travelled the globe and become much more international.

Whatever stories we tell about the changing nature of traditional games and sports in different parts of the world, the defence of the traditional needs to be sensitive to the bigger diagnostic pictures necessary to orientate social support and political focus for the diversity of traditional games and sport throughout Europe. This in itself will be an uneven story because European social relations are themselves uneven. The story I want to share with you to-day is not just a comment in defence of Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games and ancient sports such as shinty but more a critique of those arguments that uncritically accept the notion or the trend of global sport as the way things are or the way things ought to be. It is an argument that rejects the free market notion of globalisation in favour of the idea of internationality while at the same time highlighting that the residual social aspects of many traditional Scottish games and sports hold an important middle ground. A third space between the free market provision associated with highly commercialised sports and state sponsored sports supported by local authority or government lottery funded sport which, at least in Scotland, tends to marginalize traditional sports and games. The significance of these issues I hope to illustrate very superficially in the time allowed. Nonetheless the questions at the heart of this paper are relatively straightforward; (i) is modern sport truly global? (ii) what contribution can traditional Scottish games and sports make in terms of economic, cultural and social capital and (iii). how can we defend traditional games and sports against the power of global sport in the 21st century? In order to achieve this I have divided this paper into the following three sections (i) a critique of global sport; (ii) an account of

Scottish Highland Gatherings and ancient Scottish sports and (iii) a defence of the social in traditional games and sports.

2 - Global Sport, Capital and Anti-Globalisation Movements

It is impossible to describe modern life accurately without acknowledging the impact of games and sport worldwide. For example the claims associated with what has uncritically become termed global sport have been imprinted across newspaper headlines throughout the summer of 2002 and illustratively epitomised by the 2002 FIFA sponsored World Cup. FIFA is an organisation that likes to think of itself as governing the global game of football. Much of the research on globalisation and sport has tended focus upon the spread of sport across the globe in economic, cultural and political terms. A particular strand of this process has been to argue that the nation-state and the national are no longer as important as the global or the European or indeed broader configurations such the Celtic. There are two competing concepts of globalisation. One encompasses a community of human citizens and worked for, for instance by environmentalists who talk in terms of thinking global and acting local. The other is of an unregulated free market where capital is king or queen and the poor are left to struggle with the consequences of de-regulation, privatisation, and the international plundering of international corporations. Proponents of globalisation typically argue that we live in an age in which a new kind of international world has emerged, one that is characteristic of global competition for markets, consumers and culture. A facet of the free-market driven form of globalisation has been that markets have decided if we will have pensions in our old age; if people suffering from ill-health in Africa will be treated and what forms of games and sports will be supported or even whether certain regions will have football clubs or not.

Critics of globalisation insist that the process and development of global sport has neither been created completely nor produced a world that may be defined by rampant free markets or passive nation states. While globalisation may exist as a process it has not been achieved as an end point. The movement for global change IS often referred to as anti-globalisation or anti-capitalist movement. There are two competing concepts of anti- globalisation one termed radical and one termed moderate. The radical wing view globalisation as a process largely designed to ensure that wealthy elites become more wealthy at the expense of poorer countries. The moderate wing although more difficult to define tend to share the view that globalisation has the potential to be good or bad. It has the potential to provide for a sharing of cultures paid for out of the economic growth provided by free trade but that because the institutions and rules that govern the world are currently controlled by wealthy elites then inequality, instability and injustice are inevitable. In a

sporting context a corollary of this might be to argue that traditional cultural rights and traditions need to be at least equally recognised as socially and culturally, if not economically, as important as market supported forms of commercialised sport. Other solutions might involve the return of economic power and possibly political and cultural power to small localities.

Some have argued that it is important to distinguish between internationalisation and globalisation. McGovern's (2002:28) study of the migration of footballers into the English League between 1946 and 1995 prefers to use the terms Celtic and International rather than globalisation when talking of the labour migration of footballers into and within Britain. As such it is concluded that the migration of professional footballers is clearly becoming more international in nature and that this is a trend that is developing along regional rather than global lines. Thus it is suggested that as far as one sport that claims to be global is concerned the notion that globalisation has been achieved is fundamentally flawed. It might be suggested that in terms of the spread of traditional games and sport is concerned that terms such as international, local and or Celtic, for example, might be more appropriate than the all consuming notion of globalisation.

3 - Traditions of Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games and other Ancient Sports

It might have been tempting to talk of Scottish football in international terms maybe 30 or so years ago but the nation now ranked 60th in the football world failed to qualify for the 2002 World Cup. It could certainly be talked of in free-market terms as an illustrative case study of the problems brought about be the free-market international trade of footballers and the effect it has had on youth football in Scotland. Yet just as important too many local Scottish communities has been the traditional Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games season. The Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games incorporate feats of strength and agility that continue to be practised throughout Scotland but their formal organisation and annual occurrence seems to have taken off after about 1820. The identities encouraged by traditional games and sports in Scotland are usually multi-faceted and like other traditional sporting pastimes they can help to forge not only a sense of self but also a sense of place, a sense of belonging, a sense of inclusion or exclusion, a sense of geography and history. They can contribute to a mythical or real sense of community that can often last a lifetime. Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games come in different forms and sizes and collectively there defence as a forum for traditional games and sport lies not in their potential as a form of free-

market or global entity but rather their historical, cultural and international importance. But even these are secondary to their social importance as a form of social capital.

Consider the following facets of Highland Games and ancient sports and the contribution that they make to modern local, national and international communities:

(i) Highland Gathering and Games as Tartanry, Tourism and Economic Capital

As recently as September 2002 I was reminded yet again of the influence of the traditional games and sports to the 21st century Highlands and Islands of Scotland. In reading a particular Highland Cities bid to become recognised as a European Capital of Culture it was clear that there was a due recognition given to the power of the traditional in developing, and sustaining economic capital in contemporary society. This particular report went on to claim that there is a high correspondence between the attractions of the area and the rationale for being recognised as a European Capital of Culture. Themes that included the natural environment, cultural history and facilities, traditional and contemporary arts, the Gaelic language, traditional and distinctive events such as the Celtic folk festivals, ancient sports such as shinty and traditional Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games.

The Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games have not only been a traditional facet of Scotland's sporting history but there are many different facets, images or even traditions of this set of essentially athletic activities. The following are but a few. They have evoked and presented to the rest of the world a particular image of Scotland. An image that is closely associated with the traditional organised Highland Gatherings such as those founded at St Fillans (1819), Lonach (1823), Ballater (1866), Aboyne (1867), Argyllshire (1871) and Cowal (1871). An image that is closely associated with kilted athletes and dancers, the skirl of the pipes, in some cases royal patronage, the distinct sub-culture of the heavies' traditional strength events and the sense of bonhomie. In many ways this remains the dominant or most popular tourist image of the Scottish Highland Games- that is to say an image which is recognised by the tourist and one that is prioritised over other perhaps less formal local images of the Scottish Highland Games which equally have the right to be termed traditional.

(ii) Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games as Royalty, Class and Status

There is of course the distinctly Royal image associated with the Braemar Royal Highland Gathering and Games. Queen Victoria's attachment to

Balmoral, Braemar and Royal Deeside is often quoted as the most single important factor that contributed to the development of the Scottish Highland Games. They still owe much to the royal patronage bestowed by the current Royal family who attend Braemar while on their traditional summer holiday in the Highlands of Scotland. The stamp of royal approval first provided for by Queen Victoria attending the Braemar Gathering in 1848 contributed to a sense of respectability and royal approval but at the expense of some of the traditional content. As the traditional role of the monarchy declined during the 19th century royal games became increasingly important. Events such as the Braemar Royal Highland Society Gathering contributed to a growing nucleus of activities which helped to define an emerging British, Scottish and Highland sporting calendar which to-day includes the Derby (Epsom), Ascot racing week (Gold Cup) and various shooting seasons. In this sense the traditional Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games at Braemar continue to be about sociability, status, and social class.

(iii) Highland Gathering and Games as Community, Social Memory and Mutual Obligation

The Ceres Highland Games in a part of Scotland called Fife are still thriving almost 700 years after the King of Scots granted the village a charter to hold a market and fair in recognition for the part played local farmers, labourers, craftsmen and many others who joined the ranks of "the small folk" who allegedly fought at the Battle of Bannock burn in 1314. Upon enquiring about what makes these games important one local who had been coming to the Ceres Highland Games for more than 40 years asserted " you see people you never see any other time of the year and it's good to catch up-It's funny how you only see someone once a year at the games and you just pick up where you left off with them- that's what makes the games special". In this sense it is crucial to recognise the extent to which Highland Gatherings and Games foster a sense of community and social memory.

Attending traditional games and sports can bring back visions of warmly remembered places and times, friends and families and connections that have forged not just specific sporting communities but on a broader scale local and national communities. The experiences of memory in shaping people's lives has been widely explored in terms of how people make sense of various places or communities and in particular national communities. A sense of shared history and experience is important. Memories and stories of traditional games and sports, such as specific Highland Gatherings and Games or shinty matches, provide for generational stories, memories of childhood, memories of place, memories of past games which may be innocent in one sense but in

another sense they provide threads of continuity in lives otherwise lived in separate chapters, in different jobs, know living in different villages and towns. Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games provide collective moments of identification between people that should not be underestimated. Traditional games and sports cannot create community but it can make a contribution. This notion of creating community could be developed a little bit further.

It has been suggested that just as important as the glamorous commercial Tourist Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games of the contemporary period are many of the less formal, local, Highland Games (in both the Highlands and the Lowlands). Writing in 1923 in <u>*Hebridean Memories*</u>, Seaton Gordon wrote ' that the greatest event in the lives of the Uist and Barra crofters takes place in July, when the annual Highland Gathering is held'. Although the great feature of Uist Gathering is the piping, the attraction to the component events of the different Highland Games were often secondary to the social function of meeting friends and in this sense the actual contests were more of a spectacle than the raison d'etre for the games themselves. The atmosphere of these less formal events such as those at Glenelg, Skye and Uist are as equally traditional as Braemar and Lonach and yet they are a world apart from the more formal, rationalised, commercial Highland Games circuit of the late 21st Century. What is being emphasised here is the opportunity afforded by the local and the traditional to sustain a network of social groups and relationships that fosters co-operative working and community well being. It involves communities and other social groups exercising a certain degree of trust through taking on mutual obligations in the staging of traditional games and sports.

(iv) Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games as International Culture

There is the international and/or North American image that is presented through magazines such as *Celtic World, which* continues to report and carry stories of the Scottish Highland Games to all corners of the Celtic World and beyond. It is in many senses an image that contributes to an international or Celtic image of the Scottish Highland Games. Visit the Scottish Highland Games 2002 Web pages and you will be promptly transported to Scottish Highland Games in Waipu New Zealand (1871); The Auckland Highland Games and Gathering (1980); Turakina Highland Games (1856); Highland Games Sychrov-near Prague (2001); The Tri-Annual Highland Gathering Leeuwarden (1998); The Hengelo Scottish Games- Netherlands (2002) and the Highland Games Association of Western Australia to name but a few. The language and appeal of these activities now extend around the world. The Web pages of the Highland Games Association of Western Australia receive daily hits from many corners of the globe in a way that would have been unthinkable ten,

twenty or thirty years ago. All of these developments are testament to the place of traditional and non-traditional Highland Games as an International although not global form of culture.

The same might be said of the ancient game of shinty or it's Irish derivative hurling. The Web pages of the Camanachd Association and the Gaelic Athletic Association receive daily hits from many corners of the globe. Entries on the Camanachd Association web page from Vancouver, Florida, Ontario, Oklahoma City, Cyprus, Brisbane, Windang, Virgina, Dubai, are testament to the place of shinty in the lives of the Émigré. A visit to the Gaelic Athletic Association Web page will take you not only a tour of the North American GAA administered territories but also to GAA Clubs such as the Pittsburgh Celtics Gaelic Football Club, the Washington DC Gaels, the Paris Gaels GAA Club, the Taiwan GAA site, and the Japan GAA site. This is a web site that has had over 99,000 visitors since March 1998. All of these developments are testament to the place of Gaelic games in the lives of the world wide Irish Diaspora.

(v) Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games as North American Scottish Culture

A particular facet of this internationalisation has been the development of the Scottish Highland Games and the role that it plays in North American émigré culture. One cannot divorce the development of Highland Games overseas from the diverse conditions that gave rise to emigration in the first place. Numerous Scottish societies emerged in order to facilitate the preservation, albeit in a particular form, of Scottish customs- including what the 1903 register of Scottish Societies called national athletic games. Highland Games were incorporated into the agenda of Scottish societies such as those formed in Philadelphia (1749), Savannah Georgia (1750), New York City (1756), Halifax Nova Scotia (1768), St John New Brunswick (1798), Albany (1803), Buffalo (1843), New York (1847), Detroit (1849), and San Francisco (1866). By the time the *Kingussie Record* of 1903 had reported on the efforts of the New York Highlanders Shinty Club, traditional sporting customs had become part of the social and cultural fabric of many émigré communities. It is not necessary to provide example after example to illustrate the point that by the time the North American Caledonian Association was formed towards the end of the nineteenth Century Scottish Highland Games and other ancient sporting traditions had become focal points of émigré re-unions.

The Highland roots in these communities would seem to be enormously important but what exactly is it that is being celebrated at the Glengarry Highland Games and other similar festivals such as those in Glasgow Kentucky? A lost past, a romantic history, a dislocated Scottish Diaspora, an authentic Highland Games free from the encroachment of Anglicisation, an ancient sporting tradition which has flourished in an

authentic Gaelic culture. I think not. Certainly the Glengarry Highland Games and the pipers, the dancers, the hammer throwers and the heavy events give the occasion of a distinct sense of being associated in some way with some part of some Scottish/Highland culture which in itself is as different as it is similar and in any case almost impossible to define. Or does it owe nothing to Scotland at all - a celebration of a different sense of community whose substance has nothing to do with an émigré culture and whose customs and traditions have exorcised an early culling of nostalgic pride. Is it a Glengarry sense of identity that is as different in the 21st century as it was in the nineteenth century? A celebration which owes as much to the myriad of experiences which make Glengarry County and the Glengarry Highland Games what they are to-day: - **something that is not Scottish or Highland** at all but draws upon being a celebration of being a North American Scottish Highlander or Scot (Jarvie, 2000). The distinction between the two contexts is absolutely crucial.

(vi) Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games and Ancient Sports as Educational and Cultural Capital

Traditional games and sports may also be viewed as forms of educational and cultural capital**.** So widely understood is the language and vocabulary of traditional games and sports that many commentators employ its imagery to cut through complexity. Whisky advertisers extol the virtues of their product regularly by using the ancient game of shinty. "Commitment, skill and endurance- qualities we appreciate" has been the symbolism or branding that has for so long cemented the relationship between shinty and Glenmorangie, one of Scotland's famous brands of whisky. The shinty yearbook would regularly testify that such qualities are epitomised by " the sport of the Gael, shinty, just as they are embodied in Scotland's favourite malt whisky, Glenmorangie" (*Shinty Yearbook 1995-96:70*).

Furthermore both shinty and the Irish game of hurling have helped to fire the artistic imagination as artists use the sports to depict aspects of the human condition. Playwrights, painters, poets, photographers such as Sorley Maclean, Neil Gunn, Gordon Gillespie, Flann O'Brien, and Art O' Maolfabhal, have used Celtic sports to explore the scope of human interaction and freedom. Anyone who has read the magnificent collection of primary sources accounted for in *Not an Orchid* is left in no doubt about the historical and cultural importance of shinty and hurling within past and present Celtic communities (MacLennan, 1995).

The same might be said of Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games when one considers the place of these activities within Scottish literary culture and writings. For example during the 1930s and 1940s the writer, novelist and Scottish Nationalist Neil Gunn (1891-1973) continually probed the relationship between symbolism, tradition, nationalism and culture (Gunn 1991). The importance of sport within a changing way of life did not

escape the attention of Gunn who not only questioned the notion of the Highlands as a sporting playground for the rich, in particular the nouveau riche from the South, but also the commercialisation of Scottish Highland Games and the spectacle of the professional athlete travelling from village to village collecting any money that local labour and patronage could gather (Gunn 1931). Commenting upon one particular incident, Gunn recalls an occasion when the dancers were called together and the prize piper, who had carried off all the money that day, appeared not in the traditional Highland dress but in a blue suit and bowler hat. The judge, obviously astonished, called the piper over and asked him to explain what the rig-out meant. Not recognising the importance of the blue ribbon tradition of the best piper having the honour of playing for the dancers at the last event, the piper explained that he had wanted to catch an early train and therefore he had jettisoned his borrowed kilt so that he could beat it at the earliest moment (Gunn 1931: 413).

At one level, the humorous dismissal of the incident may seem insignificant and yet at another level, the writer's point is intrinsically a serious one since what Gunn was in fact commenting upon was the decline of a Highland way of life in the 1930s and the in-roads being made by a more urban, commercialised and a times anglicised culture which took little cognisance of Celtic tradition, local people and customs. What seems clear about Gunn's writings on tradition, including sporting traditions, and nationalism is the view that they were both inextricably linked and that the life and death of one was the life and death of the other (Gunn 1931).

The writings and contributions must be viewed in the specific context of time and place and I have used this example here to merely illustrate that Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games, like shinty as forms of traditional games and sports have contributed to Scottish literary culture and hence may be viewed in terms of educational and cultural capital. The emphasis here again on the cultural and social significance of traditional games and sports should not be underestimated in that social groups and individuals learn more when they can draw upon the cultural resources of people around them. They learn from each other directly but they also learn to trust that the social arrangements are in place to ensure that learning, through a multitude of mediums including traditional games and sports, will benefit them both culturally and socially. The contribution that traditional Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games and ancient traditional sports such as shinty have made to other cultural forms such art, poetry, and literature indicates they have at times been used an educational medium for saying something about the human condition and the social arrangements that exist in any given society at any given point in time.

4 - Concluding Remarks: In Defence of Social Capital and Traditional Games and Sports

Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games so despised because of their association with Gaelic culture in the 18th century have know become a much-valued part of one cities bid to become a European Capital of Culture in the early part of the 21st century. It is always exciting and sometimes a little confusing to live through a revival of any kind, when something long forgotten rises from oblivion and gains a fresh and potent currency in the present or when something like traditional games and sports marginalised from mainstream funding in the United Kingdom suddenly becomes important in terms of its cultural capital. Perhaps more importantly it serves as an example, and there are many others that could be drawn upon from all parts of Europe, that parts of the old world are still present in the new or that the classical, ancient and traditional is never dead but merely residual and in the same sense residual sporting cultures while they might never be dominant in this increasingly commercialised global and international sporting world are ever present and have much to say not just about the contemporary sporting worlds but also the way we live, who we are and where we want to go.

It seems that in the alleged era of global sport some or all of the following arguments are just as important in the early part of the 21st century. That traditional games and sports can (i) through there associational nature help in the production and re-production of social capital; (ii) contribute to a sense of civic pride, local pride and boosterism; (iii) play a vital role in the regeneration and sustaining of communities; (iv) in some cases make a contribution to the physical infrastructure of communities, provide a social focus for community and consequently influence people's perceptions of locality and even nationhood and culture; (v) illustrate that the social values often associated with traditional games and sports are even more important to-day given the alleged decline in civil society and social capital ; (vi) provide for a strong sense of collective identification but can also be divisive; (vii) (cannot) sustain vibrant living communities but they can make a contribution; and finally (viii) contribute to international sporting markets and patterns of consumption while at the same time crucially influence local sporting identity and taste. In essence the local, traditional and at times international is the natural defence against the global or the American or the dominant cultural and economic forces of the day.

Finally in conclusion I should like to finish by highlighting three points. Firstly, I have rightly or wrongly attempted to suggest that traditional games and sports in many ways may serve to provide alternative to the readily accepted notion of global sport or more importantly the values associated withy global sport. Many traditional Scottish Highland

Gatherings and Games in Scotland have their roots in the 19th century notion of a friendly society which served as a form of social welfare for local communities and individuals in time of need or hardship. These values are at times worth thinking about in an alleged global world which fosters ideological notion of a free-market driven form of global sport the consequences seem to be civic disengagement, liberal individualism and lack of trust not just in forms governance but life itself. It has been suggested that the notion of global sport and indeed globalisation is in some senses flawed and the notion of internationality might be a more reality congruent term. However with specific reference to traditional games and sport as form of middle ground or third space between global free-market driven sport and state sponsored sport, at least in Scotland where funding for traditional sports is marginal, it would seem that one of the strongest defences would be to that such activities help to sustain forms of social and cultural capital that is more than just educational. It refers to the network of social groups and relationships that fosters co-operative working and community well being. It involves communities and other social groups exercising a certain degree of trust through taking on mutual obligations. Traditional Highland Gatherings and Games have done this for centuries.

Secondly, community survival often requires a collective sense of identification and public spirit which in turn often requires the survival of other kinds of organisations and associations that help to regularly renew and cement social and cultural relationships. If traditional games and sports in other parts of Europe are anything like the Scottish Highland Gatherings and Games and other ancient sports in Scotland then they have been part of the social glue that have held communities to-gether. When the economic viability of life in certain local regions or community a, b or c is threatened perhaps it is unrealistic to expect sport to make more than a symbolic significance. Clearly their are limits to what traditional games and sports can do in contributing to community renewal, survival and sustainability. Nonetheless the role of traditional games and sports in cementing new and old relationships should not be underestimated either.

Finally, in an ever changing individualised and more home based world in which the traditional practices and forms of employment which often held communities together are increasingly under threat then the role of traditional games and sport in to-days communities becomes increasingly important. The different European groups of people who attend colloquiums and seminar such as this is in part testament to the fact that traditional games and sport is not only culture but an instrument of social and cultural inclusion that can bring peoples and cultures to-gether when the correct conditions are given. They are testament, like the enduring residual social facet of Highland Games, to the role that traditional games

and sport can play in the production of social and cultural capital within and across modern International Communities.

References

Barreau J and Jaouen G, (1999) *Les Jeux Traditionales en Europe*, FALSAB, Morlaix

Barreau J and Jaouen G, (1998) *Les Jeux Populaires: Eclipse ET Renaissance*, FALSAB, Morlaix.

Eichberg, H (1998) 'A Revolution of Body Culture' in Barreau J and Jaouen G, (1998) *Les Jeux Populaires: Eclipse ET Renaissance*, FALSAB, and Morlaix.

Gunn, D (1991) *Neil Gunn's Country,* Chambers, Edinburgh.

Gunn, N (1931) Gunn .N, 1931 Highland Games in *Scots magazine*, xv (6): 412-16.

Hague, E and Mercer, J (1998) 'Geographical memory and urban identity in Scotland' *Geography*, 83(2) pp105-116.

Jarvie, G (2000) 'Sport, the émigré and the dance called America' *Journal of Sport History*, pp27-42

Jarvie, G (ed) (1999) *Sport in the Making of Celtic Cultures*, Leicester University Press: London.

Jarvie, G (1991) *Highland Games: The Making of the Myth,* Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh*.*

MacLennan H.D (1995) MacLennan H. D. 1995 *Not an orchid*, Kessock Communications: Inverness.

Palm (1997) 'Traditional sport in industrial countries' *Journal of Comparative Physical Education and Sport* XIX (2) pp72-78.

Renson, R (1997) 'The reinvention of tradition in sports and games' *Journal of Comparative Physical Education and Sport* XIX (2) pp46-54.

Salter, M (1997) 'Traditional leisure time activities in developing societies' Journal *of Comparative Physical Education and Sport* XIX (2) pp65-71.

Seaton-Gordon (1923) *Hebridean Memories*, Glasgow: New Wilson Publishing.

The Destiny of Games Heritage and Lineage

Pierre Parlebas, Ph.D
Faculty of Human and Social Sciences-Sorbonne (Paris-Descartes)
President of the French CEMEA
Dr Honoris Causa of the Lleida University (Spain)

Translation G. Jaouen & S. Egan

Two centuries ago, in 1807, in the Dictionary of "Childhood and Youth games" by the famous author, Jean Adry, affirmed in the preface: "the games of children and especially of people are the same in Paris, in London, in Petersburg, in Cario, in Constantinople, in Ispahan and in Perking" (1). This is an exceptional statement: games are identical throughout the planet. Our author adds: "what is more astonishing, these games are absolutely the same as those that amused the children in the streets of Cusco in the time of the Incas, in Baghdad, in Caliphis's time, in Rome, in Memphis, in Athens and in Persepolis." To the identity of games in space, one adds their identity in time. One is therefore in the presence of a double identity in that of synchrony and that of diachrony in other words a universal identity.

This idea flows from the pen of many authors. More recently, in 1964, for example, the Conservatory of the "Museum of history and education" Madame Rabecq-Maillard, was pleased to announce "the University of Games". Echoing the subject of our previous author, Jean Adry, she remarks the fact that in Shanghai as in Paris, children play hide and go seek, the little packs and cat and mouse; this should bring people to realise the senselessness of borders while at the same time showing them that there exists in all areas of the world profound tendencies that are common to all humans. What suitable credit should we give to this eventual universality of the games? Is it true that play activities are the same in Chili, in Mali, in China and in Holland?

What do anthropologists think of this universal concept?

Marcel Mauss announces, in his 1934 precursory text, that "every society has its own habits" (8). "Body techniques" he notes, correspond to non natural but learned behaviours and "symbolic creations" that create a "habitus" that are closely linked to the norms and values of that society. The habitus, according to Mauss is established by "a series of individual

acts originating not simply in the individual but are also influenced by his education and the society in which he lives and the role he plays within that society". Walking, marching, digging and playing are not spontaneous but learned motor skills, skills that vary from one society to the next and even from one social class to the next.

Social groups and people in general distinguish themselves as much by their games as they do by their languages: the Scottish Caber toss, American baseball, English cricket, Basque pelote, African dug out races or the Afghan Bozkashi are practices that are as distinctive as their house or the structure of their genetic heritage. We have been led to perceive ethnology of motor movement, which one could collectively call an "ethnomotricity". By "ethnomotricity" we mean the nature and scope of motor movements as they are linked to the culture and social milieu in which they are developed.

The physical game does not appear to be just a frivolous common behaviour. It originates in the cultural identity of each community, which brings to life original play scenarios, linked to their lifestyle, their beliefs and their passions. The origin seems to be understood: games are a mirror of society and the reflections they send out are as diversified and varied as the societies from which they emerge.

If games are a reflection of the society from which they come and some games are very different (from each other), how can these games be similar and at the same time take on a universal character? How can we explain such similarities? Games are often presented as a heritage, which is passed on from numerous generations. They remain the same throughout this transition over time? When the same game appears in a far away region, is it due to a particularly penetrating diffusion or is it a coincidence linked to independent creations?

Games are a complex social phenomena that posses multiple facets; numerous authors worry only about one facet while ignoring the others thus leading them to unbalanced and sometimes debatable interpretations. The study of playing games led to the writing of many literary or philosophical dissertations and to on the spot field researches. Condemned by the church, distrusted by the authorities, sheltered by the poor classes and frequently abandoned to (the) children for many years, traditional games experienced many insults. Games were also considered not a noble topic of study: University researchers abandoned it. The part attributed to belief, passion and the ideology of games were considered very important. Few authors studied games in vivo, in action or in their original characteristics. There was a risk of presenting only alchemy of the games while at the same time avoiding a rigorous study of the real chemistry of play.

Today, we are somewhat resourceless. We must recognise that the domain of traditional games is lacking in the area of research. We even have difficulty with the basic wording we use in the study of games: it is of little help to say that the terms play, traditional games and sport have multiple roots. This causes based on evidence a cascade of confusion in all our discussions. As for the mythology used in the games, this seems to be still in limbo. However, in the last few years, new researchers have taken up the torch and have resolutely studied the nature and the role of traditional games in their culture. One can think that this promising current is going to renovate the understanding of physical and play activities.

It is important to clarify this exciting field and to bring to light some important direction for reflection and research. Rather than rush to examples that try to prove beyond doubt such or such a concept, it would appear more fundamental to follow the main trend of the general problems related to the origin of the games, their links and their spread. We are going to address, one after the other, five points that will attempt to profile major themes and at the same time suggest some answers.

On a first hand, we will address a theme that seems crucial: the **identification** of the games which seems to be at the heart of the problem and then we will bring out the origin of each game. Thirdly we will examine the relationships of the games to each other, which will provide the reconstructed heritage of the games, their transmission and their spread; then we will address the evolution of the games and the significance they take on. These different themes are often linked to one another and also influence each other. However, for clarity reasons we will present them separately.

1 - **Identification of the games**

The first obstacle that the researcher in play encounters is: to be able to recognise every play situation and to name it. To give it a name means that one is able to identify and to characterise the game. Sometimes this is fake; It is an illusion. The assignment of a name to a game is one way to discard and to avoid identifying the true precise character of the game while hiding behind false information provided by the name of the game. This is what typically happens, when an author lists the 216 games mentioned by Rabelais in the 22nd chapter of Gargantua (14). This list, apparently consistent, contains many mysteries and while courageously attempting to clarify them in his 1904 article, Michel Psichari finally recognised numerous errors and misunderstandings (12). Can we be satisfied that what we observe in game surveys is a game of nine pins, a bowling game, a game of quoits or a game of marbles? Does not each

one of these names remind us of a varied multitude of activities that are totally different?

The same name can cover many different games and different names can mean the same game. Thus, the game of Quinet, which is a game played with long sticks used to propel a shorter stick as far away as possible, poses an infinite number of names, some of which have been called, by Arnold Van Gennep: "la Guise, la Bille, la Beuille, la Bertole, la Tené, le Quéné, le Billebocq, le Billebocquet, le Court-baton, la Bisquinette and la Basculoote, among many others, according to the region of origin (17). As was accurately observed by Van Gennep, relating to the games, the same variations, derivations and innovations exist for languages (17). From region to region, from city to city and from village to village, the same phenomenon undergoes different changes based on the adoptions proposed by the local people. The influential variables in play and in languages are similar. The multiplicity of names, for the same game, can lead to serious confusion. Conversely, when we speak about Indian chess in the first millennium, medieval chess or modern chess, are we not putting together, under the same name, play situations that are extremely different? Has this game not evolved in such as to become another game?

An important problem, of a different nature, exists for those who wish to analyse and describe a playful situation? We have underlined the fact that a game is a product of a society that follows a set of rules approved by a community. Accordingly, it is a function of cultural expectations and attitudes; it benefits from historic and economic conditions that are favourable to its emergence and its development. It is also tempting to valorise the cultural elements and to reduce the origin of the game to the characteristics and context that welcomed and cherished it. In the same stream of thought, some authors emphasise the lifestyle of the players, their style of play, their way in interpreting the play situation, their adherence and their practice strategy. All these facts are important and we intend to use them in our study. However, in our view, they can be taken into account only as a secondary source of information, in their links to the actual characteristics of the games itself.

The game has an intrinsic reality. It cannot be mixed up with the aspirations and mental structures of the participants nor with the material context. In the precise case of traditional games, one is determined to proceed to the discovery of their "internal logic", that is to say to bring to light the configurations generated by their motor movements. A complete body movement is specific to physical play. This takes shape in motor movements, which are manifested, in observable motor behaviours in the field of play. In the first place, these motor behaviours can be distinguished by the kind of relationship they stimulate between the actor and the environment: the relationship they have with space, other objects,

time and other actors. In this kind of analysis, the acting individual is concerned with actions, because it is a relationship, that is to say an interaction which is brought about by the motor behaviour of the player. It also involves his attitudes, his expectations, his affection and his representation's.

However, a game cannot be adequately identified based on a collection of characteristics. It is an interaction system put in display, based on a collection of rules from the "motor-play" contract, which defines the game. It is a body of rules that puts into play the rules of the body. And this series of rules stimulates a final organisation of the motor actions from which the internal coherence can be represented, by revealing configurations of motor play functioning. These configurations are operational models that represent the basic structures for the playing of the game (10). Among these models, called the "universals" of traditional games, one will recognise, for example, the network of motor communications, the structure of scoring interactions, the system of scores, the network of sociomotor roles or the system of "gestèmes"[1]. For every traditional game, one proposes to establish universal principles that constitute the true "identification card". This nucleus and these constellations of motor movement traits are based on the play system properties itself and not on external biological, psychological, sociological, or historic facts. Let us also mention the "internal logic", as opposed to "external logic" elements which characterise the context (the stakes, the public, particularities of the players and the groups). These internal logic traits are "distinctive" traits that correctly define the motor movement by which the varied configurations allow us to make a sustained and objective comparison of traditional games. If necessary one can refine the analysis and one can enrich it with complimentary precisions while deepening the basic properties, thus obtained.

It is well understood, in the identification of every game completed, that it will be fundamental to connect the "motor-play" structures, thus revealed, with the characteristics of the players and their social heritage. The historian, the sociologist and the educator will all have an important role to play. Without such an identification based on the precise 'ludomotor' traits, the studies on heritage, transmission and play (affiliation) would run the risk of too much emphasis on the external phenomenon of the actual game and thus they would run the risk of being built on quick sand. How do you evaluate heritage and diffusion when one does not know what is inherited and what is passed on?

---

[1] Conventional signs often borrowed from a common repertoire learned spontaneously on the field: for example to raise and wave your arm to call the ball.

The failure to take into account the internal logic could lead to regrettable confusion while putting faith in partial resemblance's; for example Charles Beart assimilates the game of "la Coquille" (shell) with the game of "Barnes" (2). The first game is merely a simple juxtaposition of individuals duelling and the second one is a complex team duel with sophisticated interactions. Other authors consider the leapfrog to be identical to the Hunch Cunddie Hunch (melted horse): the confusion here is caused by body postures that are almost the same and movements that are apparently similar. However, these two games are different: The first one is a game of agility where it is everyone for Himself and the second one is a team duel stimulating collective brutality. To establish a distinction between games that resemble each other, it is imperative to compare their "*identity praxis cards*" (from praxiology) in which each one tells the respective configuration of its pertinent motor traits. In a recent publication (11), while studying the present transcultural games in several distant cultures, we thoroughly addressed the list of internal logic traits of the game "the bear and his guard". In this same goal, we identified the stable traits of this game, the variable but acceptable traits and finally the challenge traits, which are incompatible with the play situation. We were then able to affirm how different it was from the five other games that Jacques-Olivier Grandjouan became absorbed in: "la chèvre" (the goat), " la marmite" (the pot), "le jeu du mouton" (the sheep game), " la guignolle" and "le Camelot". Inversely we were able to show their fundamental similarities with the games of "le Clou, le Pivot, la Poire or the Diable enchainé" (enchained devil), games that were collected twenty centuries apart and in different countries and usually judged to be not similar. We considered them to be variations of the same game.

This identification of the stable and permanent traits and the inconsistent but compatible traits allow us to talk about variants of the same game. Thus, in the painting dated 1560 and entitled "children's games" by Peter Bruegel, the game "Diable enchainé" (chained devil), today called "l'ours et son gardien" (the bear and his guard), the bear is sitting on a chair; in the games of "Pivot" or "la poire" (the pear) he is standing up and in the present version, he is squatting on the ground. Here, one is talking about a simple modality that does not interfere with the internal logic of the game even though one is talking about variations of the same game. On the other hand, if one replaces the "player-bear" with a peg as in the game of "the Goat" or by a stone as in the game of "Guignolle" the rational play structure of the game is disrupted and thus we fall into another game.

The identification of games sometimes creates theory problems. In the Bruegel picture, just mentioned, a researcher called Meyere recognise ninety one games, while Marie Cegarra retains only sixty of the eighty six games described by Jean-Pierre Vanden Branden. From our point of view, we isolated seventy-seven games. These are considerable differences

thus weakening the interpretation of the games. In the same picture, for example, in the game of the Top, we have, in our view, identified not one game but two games: the "Clog", a psychomotor game played with the help of a whip and a spinning top which is a sociomotor game in which each player spins their top at the opponents top in order to push it out of a circle. On the other hand, in the Brugelian swimming sequence where de Meyere identifies four different games, we identify only one: a strange quasi swim team game. The identification procedure is clear: the arbitrator of the differentiation and identification of each game is its internal logic and the configuration of its distinctive and practical traits.

2 - The first appearance of games

The quest for the origin of games is a painful request. From which distant ancestry did our actual play heritage originate? In this perspective, Marc De Smedt and his collaborators declare without hesitation: "La Soule is the origin of all our ball games." We doubt this statement; it seems to be too simple an answer. For many authors, it is fundamental to discover an ancestry which is prestigious and if possible, at the beginning of the lineage. Thus, wrote Jean Michel Mehl "we seek at any price the origin of this or that game and in so doing we try hard to find some Greco-Roman or German ancestry." (9). We already agree that Charles Beart subscribed to this approach when he stated that the game of "Barres" (bars) originated in the game of "la Coquille" (the shell) an imitation of Ostrakynda which is a set of formalities practised in the city of Athens (2). This hypothesis seems somewhat audacious in that the likeness of the playful structures put forward by the author is obviously invention. Hélène Tremaud recalls with some scepticism that "authors have no fear in asserting that the game of skittles was known in ancient Egypt five thousand years before our era" (16).

The underlying hypothesis of these assertions supposes that today's games have crossed centuries and have changed very little while retaining the characteristics that give them their identity. They could be the outcome of a (lineage) line of "original-games". This ancestry would have generated by parentage, step by step, a chain of games closely related one to the other.

For the game of chess, many historians believe that it originated from the game of Chaturanga, a table game in which four players confront each other with the help of a dice. The geographic and logical journey of this cognitive game has been somewhat long and rocky as it passed from a chance game to a game of reason. In such a lineage, the ancestor seems to be well distanced from its descendants. In some cases, this birth may be expressed with certainty, such as for basketball that was invented by

James Naismith in 1891 at Springfield, Massachusetts or in the case of Volleyball, which was due to the creativity of William Morgan who invented la Mintonette, the fore-runner of Volleyball, in 1895, also in Massachusetts. On the other hand rugby is a typical myth with regards to its origin: the improper but famous move of William Ellis who during a game of soccer, in 1823, caught the ball with his hands, according to the legend, and carried it behind his opponent line thus inventing the game of rugby.

This search, highly symbolic, in many cases, seems to be of secondary interest. Except for the established cases, the origin of games is rooted in a somewhat obscure and confused past. This research, pertaining to the first apparitions, frequently depends on so called similarities in vocabulary, in putting together content that is doubtful and in relationships that are uncertain. It is up to historians, helped by archaeologists and linguists to find out the answers pertaining to the origin of games. One can imagine that a close examination of the sources will be necessary. This first apparition of each game is the most spectacular part of the search that goes from one end to the other on the reflections on play: the lineage of the games.

3 - The lineage of the games

Avalanches of games, in all societies, are part of one's heritage. Each generation passes on to its children a list of playful activities, which will be accepted by them and will often be adjusted to the new contexts. This is what is exactly meant by the word "traditional": the game is the outcome of past uses and customs which were part of the practices and identity of the community. This intrusion of tradition is found at the intersection of a desire to preserve (uses) practices, anchored in ancestral customs, and a wish to modernise them to the level of the present time.

It is not always the case that tradition puts forward a process of play lineage which is written with continuity, for contemporary situations. Games are perceived as part of a hand down from more ancient original practices. One conceives the passing-on of games as a chain transmission with some breaks in the chain, thus pushing the researchers to look for the missing link(s). It is abundantly stated, that the philosophy on the study of games is based on an underlying biological concept which seems very close to the Darwinian concept, that is related to the evolution of the species. This leads Jean Chateau to state that this study is precise in that it permits one to establish a "genealogy of the games" (4). The words frequently used to describe games are: ancestor, heritage, genealogy, lineage, relationship, family and descendant evoke this concept of 'ludomotor' lineage. In this perspective, one can consider a

phylogenic conception of games which places them in a huge network of lineage's.

One would have however, to provide proof that would attest to the fact that one is in the presence of descendants or ascendants. This hypothesis is interesting but it seems that it is frequently based on look alikes and illusions as we previously noted. It is not enough to have likenesses in the names, in the objects used, in the postures or the gestures, in order for the relationship to be valid.

Some cases underline the difficulty to subscribe to this lineage hypothesis. Take for example the well-known game of "Tablier" played in France under the name of "petits chevaux" (little horses). It was also found among the Aztecs under the name of "Patolli" and likewise in India under the name Parcheesi. This astonishing coincidence brought Christian Duverger to ask himself the question: "The enormous problem that then arises, he wrote, is to know if the Parcheelsi and the Patolli were "invented" separately, one in ancient times, the other in modern times, or in is there an historic link between them?" (5).

The meaning of descendant (progeny) must be clearly defined. In a plausible way, one can also conceive that similar games, with the same internal logic, may have been independently invented in different cultures. One can also make the same case for sports (games), knowing that the biological and physiological constraints are almost identical for all humans; the probabilities that action and interaction rules may have been adopted by different societies in a natural environment with natural objects, cannot be neglected.

Such an analysis imposes three distinct types of relationships that structure the game systems:

- A lineage relationship: based on a process of procreation of games based on continuous chains which are eventually transformed (by simple modifications or by more abrupt mutations). In this case we must precisely identify each game and we must do an historic study on each that is validated with the maximum of documentary and valid evidence.

- A proximity relationship which puts in evidence the similarities, the closeness or the remoteness of the games to each other. In this case, one would not stick with the lineage hypothesis: the proximity relationship, based on the situations studied, could be interpreted, or not, as a "kinship link". The closeness in relationship of the games would be established by the analysis of their internal logic and their pertinent traits. Such a study could provide a comparative state of the places, an objective panorama of the games based on their indisputable motor movement content. One could also locate

games that are closely related, or on the contrary far apart in geographical space and varied cultures. This "interplay" distance would certainly offer controllable elements leading to interesting interpretations (while at the same time making no reference to lineage).

- An antecedent relationship: this is based on simple dating of the first recognised appearance of games. We believe that there is a problem in that one may confuse the three relationships. The antecedent and proximity relationships may suggest a lineage relationship but they do not necessarily justify it.

4 - The passing on and the spread of games

Today, written works play an important role in the passing on of games and sports, whereas for centuries oral and sign language were the predominant tools of transmission. The adoption of games was done by imitation and by cultural immersion during everyday life, feast and leisure time.

How is it then that 'games' found in locations far apart, in time and space, are identical? There are many answers, to this question and they are always linked to migration: the games were carried in the baggage of merchants, shepherds, colonisers and pilgrims. When people migrate they always take with them their utensils, their values and their games: they bring about a geographic spread which establishes 'ludocultural' playgrounds where certain games dominate and sometimes brings about some astonishing crossbreeding of games. A game that passes from one group to another group, always experiences modifications that are linked to its new milieu.

According to diffusionist ideas it is the nomadic movement that is the basis of the increase in the spread of games on this planet; as for the Universalist ideas it is the profound communal tendencies found in all human species that brings about this great uniformity of games for all societies. From a research angle, it would be interesting to set up an atlas of games pertaining to the maximum number of regions but also to identify the spread of each game in different countries. Some researchers, such as Van Gennep and authors from other countries have started this type of work. We have begun this type of research with our team CEMEA at the Sorbonne. It is a colossal job that will take a lot of time to do.

In rapidly presenting a field example, we will recall the fundamental role played by the spread of play at the level of everyday life. One author, L.Lavigne described with much skill, in the 1920's, the games of his childhood which he played in the village of Meuse (7). Describing the

game of "la Trouille or La truie" (the sow), which is a variation of the game of the "gouret" he describes the spread of this game among the young shepherds (who were called the "pâtureux"): "when we could allow our cows to go anywhere, he wrote… we approached the shepherds of Chattancourt or those of Marre, or those of Regneville and we taught them our game. The next day going in another direction they showed the game "la Trouille" to the children of another village; it was like this that the game spread throughout the Valley". It was thus states Lavigne, thanks to this wonderful propagation, in two weeks, the game of "La Trouille" was known throughout all of Argonne. This testimony, rich in local colour, is a recalling of the everyday life facts which are at the root of the spreading of games and the transmission of socialised play, a fact that academia rarely takes into account.

5 - The evolution of games

Games are passed on; games are transformed; games are renewed. Can we attribute some significance to this evolution? Are these changes oriented in a precise direction? Finally what is the destiny of games?

One of the frequent answers consists of putting the games into a hierarchy. Just like biology has achieved a ladder of beings, going from fish to mammals in an order of increasing complexity; some authors envisage a kind of hierarchy of games. Even though he surrounds himself with precautions, Jean Chateau does not make much progress in this direction, he states: "one finds series of games, which are part of elementary moves but lead to higher activities of adults, such as art, sport and work" (4). Hopscotch, he states, prepares one for the game of chess. Likewise, he proposes a gradual series consisting of "walking, running, chasing, the game of the flea, the sparrow, the hawk and the game of the wolf". This author considers an evolution through successive steps: "one passes from one game to a superior game, by adding a new factor or a new rule." The image of the genealogical tree with play species strongly imposes itself here. Let us note that the repeated use of the term "superior" indicates a value judgement which underlines, in the eyes of the author, the sense of evolution. Without a doubt, Jean Chateau wished to indicate the successive steps of games adapted to the development of the child, rather than the description of the global history of the games?

A general orientation is drawn: many authors such as Stanley Hall have affirmed that in the domain of games, individual development (ontogenesis) reproduces the evolution of the species (phylogenesis).

While examining the lineage concept, we have observed that the presence of the phylogenic classification of games was implicitly at the foundation of

many concepts. It is true that it is tempting to apply to the Diaspora of games Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. Just like the animal species, play species are also gradually changed. They compete, they fight for survival and a selection is made between them. The games that survive are those games that have the most adaptable variables to the changing conditions of their environment. Competition between games would appear to bring about an innovative selection associated with the survival of the fittest. This selection would be cultural rather than natural. Inevitably in this perspective, emerges the idea of progress: the evolution would thus provoke, by cultural selection, the domination of the richer and more complex games, in one word the domination of games deemed "superior".

In an implicit and more real fashion, this concept underlies many didactic currents. It is typical of certain sport partisans who affirm that sports represent social practices, with reference to their superior qualities, and that traditional games are just minor games of inferior quality, that are nothing more than a mere contribution to the preparation for sports. The evolution of games would then register itself in a direction which brings the traditional games, considered as elementary, towards the institutionalised games, that is to say sports which are considered as the real outcome of excellence. We here find the same type of prejudice in which the evolution of societies would lead man from the savage or wild state of primitive societies to the civilised and superior state of our western societies.

It is without a doubt that sport(s) represent(s) a remarkable social and economic success. They benefit from a widespread attraction from both the young and the adult populations. As well, the motor skill situations emanating from these games are often positively engaged in, for educational purposes. However, sports (games) use only a restricted part of their potential ludomotor resources. They praise performance and adjusted competition rather than seeking the imperative spectacle. The triumphs of sport is not due to an educational richness or a high complexity, as we often pretend but to an internal logic whose modalities are remarkably adapted to the media requirements of our time.

To consider the evolution of games to the image of the Darwin theory appears a stimulating hypothesis, but it is too metaphoric and is not very compatible with the real content of the games. The analysis of the evolution remains still to be done; it is indispensable that this analysis focuses on the original content of the motor movement, which takes shape in the configurations of the internal logic.

Indigenous games find themselves today at a delicate crossroads. They run the risk of appearing nostalgic, conservative and out of date practices. "These games are fossils" proclaims ethnologist Juliette Grange (6). There is a strong temptation to react by transforming traditional games into institutional games. Transforming traditional games into what is now

known as sports will inevitably lead to practices that value competition and domination. By so doing, sport will not gain much and traditional games will lose their identity. The educational aspects of traditional games, as a consequence, will be greatly restricted. The 'sportification' of traditional games is somewhat of a Faustian happening. While accepting to melt into the vast domain of sport in order to get more social visibility, traditional games will have to align themselves with the homogenising constraints of the sport world: by so doing they will abandon their soul for a hypothetical profit. The peculiarities of regional play will be abolished in the universalism of globalised sport. Without a doubt there are other ways of examining the question. It is up to the young generation to find them and to exploit them. The destiny of traditional games, from now on, is in part in their hands.

REFERENCES

1 – **ADRY jean** – « Dictionnaire des jeux de l'enfance et de la jeunesse chez tous les peuples » - Paris, 1807.
2 – **BEART Charles** – « Histoire des jeux », dans « Jeux et sports » - Encyclopédie de la Pléiade – pp.181-286 - sous la direction de Roger CAILLOIS – Ed. Gallimard – 1967.
3 – **CEGARRA Marie** – « Le peuple d'enfants d'après « Jeux d'enfants » de BRUEGEL » dans « Sociétés et cultures enfantines », textes réunis par Djamila SAADI-MOKRANE – Actes du Colloque CERSATES et SEF – Collection UL3 – 1997.
4 – **CHATEAU Jean** – « Le jeu de l'enfant » - Partis – Ed. J. VRIN, 1967.
5 – **DUVERGER Christian** – « L'esprit du jeu chez les Aztèques » - Paris - La Haye - New-York, Mouton Editeur – EHESS, 1978.
6 – **GRANGE Juliette** – « Histoire du jouet et d'une industrie » dans « Jeux et jouets », textes réunis par Robert JAULIN – pp.224-276 – Paris – Ed. Aubier Montaigne, 1973.
7 – **LAVIGNE Louis** – « Les jeux d'autrefois – La trouille » dans « Le pays lorrain », 1927.
8 – **MAUSS Marcel** – « Les techniques du corps » dans « Sociologie et anthropologie », pp.363-386 – Paris- Ed. PUF, 1966.
9 – **MEHL Jean-Michel** – « Jeux, sports et divertissements au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance : rapport introductif » - Paris – Ed. du CTHS, 1993.
10 – **PARLEBAS Pierre** – « Jeux, sports et sociétés » - Lexique de praxéologie motrice - Paris – INSEP Publication, 1999.
11 – **PARLEBAS Pierre** – « Les jeux transculturels » dans « Vers l'éducation nouvelle » n°494 – Dossier « Jeux et sports » I, Avril 2000.
12 – **PSICHARI Michel** – « Les jeux de Gargantua » dans « Revue des études rabelaisiennes », Tome VI (1908) – Tome VII (1909).

13 - **RABECQ-MAILLARD Marie-Madeleine** – Préface au « Dictionnaire des jeux » - Paris – Tchou Editeur, 1964.

14 – **RABELAIS François** – « Gargantua » - chapitre 22 : « Les jeux de Gargantua » dans « Œuvres complètes » - Paris – Ed. Gallimard, 1967.

15 - **de SMEDT Marc, VARENNE Jean-Michel, BIANU Zeno** – « L'esprit des jeux » - Paris – Ed. Seghers, 1980.

16 - **TREMAUD Hélène** – « Les jeux de quilles » dans « Jeux et sports » - Encyclopédie de la Pléiade – pp.867-885 - sous la direction de Roger CAILLOIS – Paris - Ed. Gallimard – 1967.

17 - **VAN GENNEP Arnold** – « Le folklore de la Flandre et du Hainaut français » - Tome II – Brionne – Ed. Gérard Montfort, 1935.

Traditional Games and Education
To learn to create bonds; To create bonds to Learn

Lavega, Pere, Ph. D.
Professor of theory and practice of play, games and recreation
at INEFC-Lleida (University of Lleida – Cataluña, Spain)
President of AEJeST, the European Platform, 2017-2022.

Introduction

To play, to learn, to educate, to create bonds… are verbal forms that when are combined they remain active in all aspects of human being.
Among different games invented just for an singular occasion or exercises designed for particular sport training, traditional games have had a special place in their process of shaping human relations and forms of social organization which are worth recognition. Three concepts associated with traditional games should be highlight in the introduction to the following paper:

1. Oral transmission process

Traditional games are playful activities the rules of which are generally learned by oral transmission. Without being necessarily part of academic knowledge, traditional games, - like other cultural manifestations-, are learned in an oral way, by way of observation, speaking, listening and especially playing. In the essence of traditional games, we can discover important heritage understood as a cultural knowledge and habits transmitted with the passage of time [2].

2. Direct association of traditional games with their social and cultural context

In each locality (hamlet, village, city) traditional games are often accompanied by local features which provides a close connection with their surroundings. In the same way, in different periods of history traditional games are played using specific appearances, symbols and meanings. For this reason, any contextualized vision of traditional games should consider the two co-ordinates of space (geography) and time (historical period), in which any playful activity acquires its main social and cultural meaning.

---

[2] Wojciech Liponski World Sports Encyclopedia [1].

3. Traditional games as a Laboratory of social and cultural classroom

Within this conceptual framework any traditional game is presented as a kind of micro-society or socio-cultural laboratory, in which actors, thanks to tradition, learn to create bonds.

The contextualized vision of the traditional games brings us to the concept of **ethnomotoricity** formulated by Parlebas (2001) understood as "*the field and the nature of motor activities, considered from the point of view of their relation with the culture and the social background in which they have been developed*". [2]

Thanks to traditional games their protagonists represent in a simple and deep way particular, social and cultural organizations and specific manners in creating bonds, in live and its understanding.

Parlebas, the creator of the motor action science or motor praxiology, shows in a very intelligent way by applying the system theory, that any motor game[3] can be perceived as a praxiological system, whose components are ordered in a logical way and display operative mechanisms and different properties in each case. Independently of the players' characteristics, any game has a "grammar" (or a "*musical score*") and when this activity is played different motor actions ("*musical notes*" played in a motor way) emerge. A game player is a *musician* who interprets his "internal laws" or "grammar" by carrying out individualized motor actions (e.g. running, swimming, jumping, kicking a ball, rescuing a partner…) and trying to play a perfect *tune*.

In this theoretical context, the concept of **internal logic** is a important key to understanding that in any traditional game the players are invited to participate in a kind of network of internal motor relations, predetermined by a system of obligations and regulations which the rules of the game require. By observing a player who plays different motor games it is easy to note that in each activity his/her types of motor behaviours are very different; thus pillow fighting, shuttlecock, hoop, cat's cradles, bowls, tug of war and hopscotch possess their own proprieties and internal order.

The *relationship with other people* is different in pillow fight (in which players wage a pillow fight while straddling a log above a pond. The winner, of course, is supposed to keep his seat on the log) than in cat's cradles games (in which two players cooperate in order to make figures of string woven between their palms).

---

[3] Expressions such as motor game, motor praxeology or motor behaviour are to mean physical activities that need participation of the body. These activities are quite different from social games or table games in which the actors only participate in a cognitive level.

The relationship with space is quite different in the Chinese game of shuttlecock than in a Chugack Eskimo hoop game. In the first one two or more players can play by ckicking the shuttlecock between them until one player lets it fall; he drops out of the game; in the latter a hoop is pushed along by one player, who also keeps score, as the rival players from two teams took turns throwing long poles through the hoop.

The relationship with objects is different in the well-known English game of quoits than in some French games of boules (bowls). In quoits two clay "beds" stand 18 yards apart, each with an iron "hob" in the centred. Each team stands at one bed and players alternately pitch quoits at the opposite bed. In some boules games it is required that the balls be thrown or rolled on the ground toward a certain goal.

Finally, *the relationship with time* is different in a Korean tug-of-war game, than in hopscotch games. In tug-of-war six members of each team clasp their hands around each other's waists, and the team captains hold their hands tight. At the count of three, each team tries to pull the opposing players over a dividing line drawn on take ground between them. In hopscotch players act alternatively to toss an object into the pattern and then hope into, through, and out of the pattern without touching the lines with either feet or hands. The first player who completes the entire pattern wins the game. [3]

At the same time, when same players decide to play the same game all of them need to be adapted to the same regularities imposed by the rules. For instance, in hide and seek games, each player must decide to find a hiding place, consider the possibilities of success and failure, risk to run very quickly and deceive the tag player so they will remain in relation with the opponent (what to do with him?), with the play-ground (where to be hide?, How to use the subspaces?) and with time (when to run or stop?). All these aspects are distinctive regularities of the game's internal logic.

When we use the concept of internal logic we should keep in mind that the motor actions performed in any game (e.g. looking for a place to hide, fleeing the hidden place, running behind the adversary if you are the seeker in hide and seek) are the *results* of the whole of the *relationships* that any player has *with the other protagonists, space, objects and time*.

In the case of traditional games their internal logic is impregnated with the culture where they have been played, showing genuine playful inheritance, characterized by a singular ensemble of relationships, learning and symbolisms.

> *"Games are in consonance with the culture to which they belong, especially with regard to the characteristics of the internal logic, which illustrates the values and the subjacent symbolism of that culture: relations of power, function of violence, images of the man*

and the woman, forms of sociability, contact with the environment… [4]

In a recent research, about traditional 17th century games, Parlebas *[5]* focused on games described by Stella in order to reveal the features which appear in the playful practices of that time. His posed and meticulous work allows the author to affirm very eloquent conclusions: the games are played mainly by male protagonists; they do not make use of a specific and fixed playground made for this playful purpose; they do not have formal calendar; they do not have temporal conditions in their internal logic; they do not use any criteria of classification, measurement or accountancy of the interventions; they are closely related to the natural and domesticated environment, with a number of different playful objects; motor games constitute the most important group of activities (95,5%) more than among the purely cognitive. These characteristics confirm an observation that the body dimension prevailed in the 17th century. At the same time the type of interaction of these traditional games reveals a large majority of socio-motor activities (with motor interaction among players) focus on the exchange and the body communication, with preponderance of games played by a group of players than bu teams. Nevertheless, they did not privilege yet the structure of the duel and the antagonism which will characterize the sport from the 19th century onwards.

Brueguel in 16th century and later Stella in the 17th century showed in their paintings the features of the internal logic of traditional medieval games. These activities *"carry the seal of a new social organization which will try to discipline the playful disorder by founding the accounting and the power of the rules. This evolution directed towards an impeccable ordering will culminate in the 20th- century sport, which, in accordance with the values of its context, will increase very much competition, measurement and the spectacle"*[6]

Although the internal logic of the games is an excellent mirror to observe the ensemble of relationships and ways of learning that traditional games activate, this vision can be refined if the information provided by the internal logic is completed with data related to the external logic or socio-cultural conditions of the context of these activities [7]

The internal logic of a traditional game can be also completed by using the concept of "external logic" related to new symbolic, unusual or specific meanings. The internal logic pays attention to the study of the internal properties determined by the rules of a game; whereas the external logic concentrates on those local conditions, values and meanings related to the game players. In this way, if we complete the internal vision of a game with the external logic we are be able to offer a great ensemble of information by understanding traditional games as a socio-cultural system [8].

This pertains especially to *relationships* with *other participants* (according to age, sex, or social class; e.g hoop games were important to the American Indians primarily as a way of training young boys in marksmanship and some centuries later as a popular pastime of young people; knucklebones were played by Greek soldiers, women from aristocratic families and school children), with *zones* (meaning specific places for playing games: streets, squares, taverns; e.g. an English throwing game known as shove ha'penny was primarily a tavern game and some centuries later it became a pub game.), with *materials* (related to process of hand-making and personalizing objects for the purpose of the game; for instance, yo-yo is made of wood; cats's cradle of string woven; knucklebones are mutton legs called astragal and all of them are usually painted and decorated) and with *temporal localization* (concerning the moment of practice: festivity, celebration of the end to a season – spring, summer, autumn, winter; meteorological-cycle year; for example in some cultures tug-of-war was a ritual that dramatized forces of nature affecting the livelihood of people; Canadian Eskimo communities split into two teams for the autumn tug-of-war that foretells the winter weather).

TO LEARN TO MAKE CONTACTS WITH OTHER PEOPLE

Traditional games are an authentic society in miniature, a laboratory of interpersonal relations. As this condition is very important to justify the treasure and the educational potentiality of traditional games, it deserves a thorough discussion.

1. From internal logic

The social nature of traditional games is identified in the network or ensemble of manners of interacting in a motor way with others. [4] When somebody is playing a game, the rules, the pacts and the symbols find life by leading the protagonists to have a global image of the network of the social relations that they develop. Who are my partners? Who are my opponents? Do I have just an opponent or must I fight against more people? With whom can I make an alliance? These questions are examples that generate different relations and symbolic representations in their actors.

The following criteria are shown in order to understand the educational potentiality of so vast and varied motor relationships that traditional games offer. [5]

---

[4] Parlebas (2001) creates an (universal) operational model called network of motor communications to study the subjacent structure of games related to the nature of motor interactions determined by the rules.

[5] See - Guillemard, G. et al. *Las cuatro esquinas de los juegos*. (Lleida, Agonos; original French version : *Aux 4 coins des jeux* (The four corners of play) Paris, Du Scarabée, 1988

1.1 Presence or absence of partners and opponents

Four groups of traditional games are considered by applying the criterion of motor interaction with the other players.

a) **Psychomotor games.** These activities offer a *relation of indifference* among the protagonists; no player can help or be prejudiced against the other participants, considering there is not motor interaction among them. It is a situation related to two jumpers; between two players of quoits or disc throwers; between two skittle players; or between two darts players.

b) **Sociomotor games of cooperation**. The motor interaction of *cooperation* can be accomplished by a body contact (run holding the partner's hand, carry a partner, dance body to body); or through sharing an object (pass a ball, hold the rope in skipping game).

c) **Sociomotor games of opposition**. To be opposed means to interact in a motor way against one or more opponents. The relations of *opposition* will directly affect the motor actions of the other players. These actions can be carried out thanks to the body contact (knock the adversary down in fight games), through the use of an object (strike the adversary in games of confrontation with instruments, throw the ball far away from the opponent in traditional ball games), or generating a negative change of roles (capture an adversary in the game of hide and seek; to eliminate a rival in tag games).

d) **Sociomotor games of cooperation and opposition.** In these games the players can be helped by their partners and can be opposed by their adversaries in a number the different options explained to them beforehand. The cooperation can also appear through a positive change of roles (for example saving a partner who is captured in the game of double flag); at the same level a negative change of the roles is another way of being opposed (for example capturing an adversary in the games of chain tags). Team tug-of-war, ball games with teams or the pétanque by teams are good examples of this category.

1.2 Characteristics of the motor communication network

Each game offers a specific motor communication network by which players will have an excellent way to establish different motor relationships. We suggest to use the basic ideas associated to the concept of this "universal model" called motor communication network created by Parlebas (2001), in order to identify all the different ways of motor interaction in traditional games.

- Bordes, P. et al. *Fichier de jeux sportifs. 24 jeux sans frontière (File of sport games. 24 games without border*), Paris, CEMÉA, 1994

a) Traditional games with an exclusive or ambivalent network

By applying this universal principle, we can affirm that a traditional game has an exclusive motor communication network when its players cannot be partners and adversaries at the same time. In these games each player always knows who his/her partners are and who his/her adversaries are. The exclusive network is present in psychomotor games (*hopscotch, throw-and-catch games, Knucklebones, tossing the weight or skittles*), in games of cooperation (*jump rope, dance and rhythmical games*), in games of opposition (*wrestling, ball games, hop races*) and in some games of cooperation and opposition (team *ball games, team chasing games, team tug-of-war, pickaback relay racing*).

On the other hand there are games with an ambivalent network in which any player can play constantly as a partner and/or as an opponent. These games are only games of cooperation-opposition and they offer interesting paradoxical or contradictory situations. The four corners (note that the middle player is opposed by all the others, while all players who are in the four corners can be helped with by or opposed to themselves) and for instance the game of the   sit-down ball (where any player with the ball can capture or help the other protagonists according to his/her intention) are examples that belong to this category.

b) Traditional games with a stable or unstable network

At the same time, the motor communication network can be exclusive or ambivalent and stable or unstable.

- *The stable network* appears in games where the relationships of competition or solidarity do not vary during the match. From beginning till the end of the match each player has the same partners and the same adversaries. In this category we can find some examples among the psychomotor traditional games (skittles, bar throw, weight lifting), the sociomotor traditional games of opposition (wrestling, individual duels, or ball games) and some sociomotor games of cooperation and opposition (team ball games, the flag).

- *The unstable network* is associated with those activities where the protagonists vary the relations of partnership or opposition during the match, i.e. the partners that I have at the beginning of the game can become my adversaries during the match, and my adversaries at the beginning of the game can become my partners before the game is over. Some tag games featuring the structure of "*one against all*" are examples of this category; in some of these games one player runs towards the others and when he or she catches one opponent, both of theme change their roles. The last tag becomes a player who want to escape. Sometimes in the

chase games a central player chases and attempts to tag or capture the other players.

There are also games with the structure "*one against all - all against one*", such as the chain tag. Here, the first one or two players are opponents of the others, and they run holding each other by their hands; when they capture an opponent he/she becomes a new partner who joins them holding their hands to capture the others. This sequence is repeated until the game Is over and all players are captured. Another example is the hunter ball (a chain tag using a ball). Finally, we can also identify some paradoxical games like the four corners and the sit down ball.

1.3. The social structure of the motor interaction

To conclude with this vast sample of possible forms to make contacts with the others, we need to consider the different categories of social structures of traditional games according to their motor communication network [9].

a) *Psychomotor games.* They do not feature motor communication among players. For example: yoyo, jumps, throws, skittles, the metal disc, hopscotch, kites.
b) *Cooperation games. Players cooperate with one another,* e.g. "corros" (rhythmical circle games), jump rope, dancing games. Children often chant traditional rhymes to the beat of the rope on the ground.
c) *One against all.* A central player tries to capture the other participants e.g. numerous tag games.
d) *Individual duels.* Confrontation between two players. Two groups of games can be distinguished:
   - Symmetrical Duels: games of combat, wrestling with hammer, with the hands, for example a game of shuttlecock in which a small feathered ball or disc is kicked from player to player.
   - Dissymmetrical Duels: e.g. striking hands.
e) *Team duels*. Confrontation between two teams. There are also two options:
   - Symmetrical duels: bars, the captive ball, team ball games.
   - Dissymmetrical Duels: the flag or the riding ball, the chambot, fisherman's net, the ball with the bear, the rod, the bear, and all the games involving two teams in a competitive relationship in which one team chase the other.
f) *All against all.* All the players oppose one another. For example, tearing off tails, sets of balls, the named ball.
g) *One against all - all against one.* In some games the players join hands with the "He" when they are caught and help him catch the other players until all the players are caught. For example, the chain, the ball with the hunter, the sparrow hawk and pigeons.

h) *All against all by teams.* Multiple teams of partnership oppose one another, for example, pickaback bouts (confrontation between N-teams of players; in each team a player carries his partner, while trying to unbalance and knock down their adversaries).

i) *Ambivalent games (paradoxical).* All the players can be partners or opponents with no clear criteria. For example, the four corners, the sit down ball, three fields.

2. From external logic

In accordance with the external vision (outside conditions form the rules of games) it is important to know which processes of transmission have been followed by traditional games and who have been their main actors. It is necessary to consider that, for example, hopscotch is a traditional game with clear religious connotations which in ancestral times was played by adults; today it is played by young girls.

The rural society usually differentiates between the roles and the statutes of people, and traditional games are a good mirror of that reality. Often the force, violence and confrontation by body contact appear in male games; while the partnership, the stylized skills and songs are often present in the female ones. For example, knucklebones for girls is a psychomotor game that consists of performing various "figures" -throws and catches of the bones in a chosen sequence. The situation is quite different in knucklebones for boys: it is a game of opposition where players can strike and punish the opponents that make a mistake when they throw the bones.

In three recent studies, Lavega & al. [10] carried out in the localities of the Valley of Corb River (the area of Urgell Lleida, Spain), the analysis of the catalogued traditional games indicates that female games are in a 65% activities of cooperation, while boys prefer games of confrontation (only 21% of boys' games of cooperation). In addition, when girls play to antagonistic games, they usually do with the structures of "all against all and one against all" (games with changes of motor relations – unstable network), whereas boys prefer to play through structures of "individual duels" and "all against all" (without changes of motor relations - stable network).

We have noted that it is girls rather than boys who play the games of ritual and rhythm and indoor games. Cooperative and rhythmic games are predominantly girls' games (rope-jumping, hand-clapping games, ball-bouncing games). On the other hand, skill games are, by and large, mostly boys' games.

Undoubtedly, the relationships, the symbols and the learning orientation are different between the two sexes, because in the rural

environment the social status is different in each case. Girls display a tendency towards cooperation-types of behaviour associated, for example, with domestic tasks; while boys make contacts with each other through antagonistic games. This circumstance could be linked to the necessity to learn to be adapted to challenge of the adversities and the discomfort of the agricultural work (trying to combat the changing weather, limitation of economic resources).

TO LEARN HOW TO BE IN RELATION WITH SPACE

1. From Internal logic

Traditional games offer a vast range of different forms to be in relation with space. In the next paragraphs some of these options which justify their pedagogical dimension are shown.

1.1. Games played in a stable space

In these situations the playing space is usually arranged, prepared and controlled in order to avoid unpredicted motor actions. In the case of traditional games these types of situations are not very common because in general they do not require specific conditioning of the surfaces. We may consider some situations from school playgrounds or examples of traditional games that have become traditional sports and need to be played in standardized spaces.

The influence of sport understood as spectacle on physical education has brought about an obsession to use standardized spaces in which the responses are very controlled and expected. This tendency offers students to be educated in situations in which the automatism or reproduction of motor stereotypes precedes cognitive answers, motor intelligence or decision-making, in order to clarify the uncertainty [11].

1.2. Games played in an unstable space

In these situations players must pay attention to the difficulties that the surface of play originates. The person must "read" and interpret the indices of this environment to decide on the best option, if it is possible by anticipating his adapted motor actions.

Although there is a scale between the two poles of (domesticated) stable space and (wild) unstable space, the majority of traditional games have been held without a need of specific conditioning of the playground, so they are played in a semi-domesticated or natural space.

Among many examples it is enough to mention the large number of marble games where players take profit of the uncertainty of space; hide and seek games which are played with emotion featuring a search for "a hidden space" on an irregular surface; in the same way, in the games of

going up or of moving on an unbalanced trunk trying to reach an object (a prize) has the emotion of being played in an unstable space. In the game of chambot (*duel of teams in which one team strike a ball with a stick towards a goal set beforehand together with the rivals; afterwards the defenders can make a defensive action striking the ball in the opposite direction, far away from the goal*) the protagonists also join in the fun playing with the irregularities of this natural playground.

In these sorts of situations making decisions, providing reflexive answers and, in addition, displaying adaptive and intelligent motor types of behaviour are very important.

2. From external logic

From the standpoint of external logic to understand the relation with space it is necessary to identify in which localities traditional games are played. Sometimes in the same locality or in villages in the same area we can observe a similar game with great differences concerning its rules (internal logic or text) as well as its socio-cultural conditions (external logic or context).

In a more specific way it is also interesting to identify the relationships originated by local traditional games in different zones of each locality. Thanks to the games people learn how to know all the corners of the locality (streets, squares, indoor-places and outdoor-places in their immediate vicinity).

J. Etxebeste [12] in his study of Basque children's traditional games observes that the zones where people usually carry out the main social activity are also used for the play purposes; so the indoor and outdoor surroundings of the rural house are the main play venues.

This relationship with local places is often so close that some games use local zones characterized by a very singular local feature. In a recent study carried out in the Lleida area in Spain [13] we have found a number of such features as flagstones located on the central square of Verdu (a small village) and some slabs in front of the town hall of that locality being the main playing surface for "camanxal" (duel of teams of human horses) and "cinquetes" (knucklebones game); the pillars of the Verdu municipal bandstand are the favourite place to play the game of four corners; in the village of Guimera children use a street with a slope to play hopscotch with special obstacles. In other villages, for instance in Campo (Huesca) women usually play a local skittle game called "birllas" at the junction between two narrow streets, using some curious and original playing pieces.

TO LEARN HOW TO BE IN RELATION WITH MATERIAL OBJECTS

1. From internal logic

Although there are many traditional games that do not need to use objects[6], these activities usually take profit of any piece of material found in the surrounding environment. For this reason there is a great amount of different objects and different ways to be used in games.

In psychomotor games the relationships concern the main motor actions: a) *Throwing games* (small objects used with precision: "hoyete" –a table with holes, metal discs, frog, skittles, "patacones" i.e. pieces of cards); bilboquet, also known as ring-and-pin or cup-and-ball, is a game of skill where players try to catch a dangling ball, bone, or ring on a pin or a cup held in the hand; b) *Games in which objects are moved on a surface*: a line, a rectangular surface, "el siete y medio" (seven and half); English quoits; c) *Jumping* (over a pastoral staff with joined feet); d) *Lifting objects* (plough, stone, trunk, bags); e) *Ttransporting objects* ("xingas", earthenware jars, bags); f) *Other skill tasks* (juggling, yoyo).

In *Sociomotor games of cooperation* we can find some interesting examples as well. For instance, skipping games, jumping using elastic ribbons, cat's cradles is a game where players try to make figures of string woven between the hands; games of passing balls among players trying not to drop the ball to the ground. [14]

In *Sociomotor games of opposition or cooperation and opposition* we can find examples of ball games, marbles, lacrosse, tug of war and some extraordinary races such as potato-sack race or hobble race.

As we can observe once again, the variety of internal relationships is an important constant or tendency of traditional games.

2. From external logic

The everyday life in the rural societies has been often characterized by taking profit of the resources from the close vicinity of players. The austere, simple and pragmatic life is confirmed by the characteristics of traditional games.

---

[6] In a researched carried out with students of the faculty of physical education INEFC-Lleida, we observed that girls and also mixed groups (with boys and girls) played, almost always situations based in traditional games when they were asked to improvise situations of play without being able to make use of objects. Lavega P. & Lagardera, F.[16].

Once more it is necessary to indicate that the results of a research carried out in the geographical area of Lleida [15] highlight that traditional games are mainly activities that use unspecified objects (66% of cases).

The materials come from the rural environment (home objects) or from public places in the village that people visit daily. For instance, worn buttons used as yoyos, copper coins used in throwing games, or farming shoes or bags used to play different games of races. Sometimes the objects for play are regarded as forfeits used for betting in different games (cards, coins, marbles or spinning tops).

At the same time there are games that use objects from the natural environment. They could be material objects or objects of vegetable or animal origin, e.g. a piece of flagstone in the game of "penillo" (hopscotch), apricot cores used in throwing games, marbles of earthen or excretions of oak; and the game called "cinqueta" with astragal sheep bones.

The objects used in games are often recycled many times before arriving at their playful function. It is the case of the "patacones" made of reused cards; hoops made of wine barrel bands or bicycle wheel rims; rubber shoe heels, or matchboxes for throwing games; and large buttons used as yoyos.

The majority of these objects are often home-made, featuring often personal details depending on individual players. In this context, all the participants are craftsmen presenting their own creations, and this condition points to the interesting educational value of traditional games.

Due to the limitations of resources only a minority of the games (28.6%) require purchased objects; e.g. crystal marbles or ball games. Finally, the research data indicate that when people want to compare the level of their skills of actions they usually play games that use objects, and often display the structures of psychomotor games or sociomotor games of opposition.

TO LEARN HOW TO BE IN RELATION WITH TIME

1. From internal logic

The educational function of traditional games is also observed in knowledge and skills acquired by different ways of being in relation with their temporal requirements. Regarding the way the games end, two categories can be distinguished:

1.1 Games with a defined end
In these games the duration of the match is subordinated to reach a mark established by the rules. These games have a score system that indicates

with clarity the classification of all the players. They are exclusive games (players know their adversaries and their partners) and stable games (no change of team, players are always in the same relation of cooperation or opposition with other players during the match).

In these games the end of the match can be defined according to different criteria:

a) Time-limit games
These games conclude after the passage of an agreed period of time. Then, the players compare how many marked actions have been performed by each protagonist or team. Sports like soccer, basketball or volleyball are the most known examples of such games.
b) Score-limit games
A game stops when one of the players or teams reaches the agreed number of points, e.g. ball games and certain skitlles games.
c) Games with a limit by a homogeneous criterion
A criterion of classification to compare the participants' results is applied in these games. For example, time spent to run a distance, the length reached in some games of jumping or throwing objects (*tossing the weight, throwing the hammer),* or numbers of trials that a player is allowed to lift heavy object.
d) Games with score- or time- limit
In these games a match ends if any player has reached a certain number of points or when a period of time has been spent; then players compare the achievements of each participant. It is the case of certain wrestling or combat games such as boxing or judo, when "K.O" or "Ippon" actions can define the winner of the match before the agreed time has been completed.

1.2. Games without a defined limit

In these games the end of the match is not defined. The motivation of the participants or other external agents (falling night, meal time, beginning of another activity) can mark the end of the match.

> The results of the players' successful actions are not shown in any score, because all successful actions appear and disappear immediately. Such is the case of chase games with the structure of "*one against all*"; or games with the structure of "*one against all - all against one*" (for example, the chain tag) or games with an "*ambivalent or paradoxical*" structure (the four corners or sit down ball).

In the research carried out in the area of Urgell in Lleida the number of identified games with a defined ending is the same as the number of games without a defined ending. Games with a defined ending usually end by the application of a homogeneous criterion or an upper point limit;

nevertheless the games with time-limited ending are not common (in fact, this is quite understandable as in rural societies the rhythm of daily actions is not by the clock, but other references to rural life).

In the relational structure of these traditional games, the psychomotor activities and games of opposition (especially individual duels and games with a structure of all-against-all) a defined ending usually ensues, since these are prize games and it is necessary to know clearly who the winner is.

2. From External Logic

In the rural societies time runs slow, without the necessity of having to control or measure time in seconds, minutes or hours. In this rural context the temporal requirements are joined by other ways of behaviour that come from:

- The rhythm of the work activity: work periods with more or less intensity.
- The rhythm of seasons of the year: hotter seasons (spring and summer) and colder ones (autumn and winter).
- Religious celebrations: major festivals, Christmas or the Holy Week.
- The school calendar: school months and holidays.

Sometimes when the inhabitants of a locality want to meet each other to celebrate, traditional games are usually present. In fact, in the programs of major festivals a period of time is allotted for traditional games (night dances, competitions after religious services, games before or after meals).

Nevertheless, almost all traditional games, except for sports, do not follow a fixed or pre-established calendar.

SEARCHING FOR A PEDAGOGY OF MOTOR BEHAVIOUR

The arguments discussed above show that traditional games include plenty of motor and socio-cultural relationships with important effects on the players' personality.

All the games have an internal logic that orders players to solve different types of problems associated with specific ways of being in relation with other people, space, material objects and time. This ensemble of motor relationships (internal logic), linked to socio-cultural relationships (external logic), offers their actors a specific socialization through the knowledge of some patterns of behaviour, of local symbols, and of social representations. All these things have a deep penetrating effect on rural inhabitants.

Let us focus on another example involving fictitious students. Oriol, Carlos, Marta and Ares are primary school pupils who have decided to play a traditional game called captive balloon[7]. The internal logic of this game divides the players into two teams. The players must use a balloon to perform actions, and they are not able to leave the zone from which they start to play, except if they are "murdered". Passing the ball to a partner, throwing the balloon to an adversary, intercepting the balloon, feinting, and clearing the balloon are examples of specific motor actions in this game.

Although the rules are the same for Oriol, Carlos, Marta and Ares, all of them play in an individualized way. That is not due to the colour of their hair or to their height, but depends mainly on the way each player interprets ("reading") the internal logic of the game while performing motor actions.

Oriol is the boldest player who takes most risks; he always wants to catch the balloon. Marta who is a more calculating player decides to secure her motor actions, without stopping paying attention to all her adversaries and partners. Carlos is always hesitant, and he is not able to anticipate his opponents' actions and, in addition, he is the first to be eliminated. Ares likes to pass the initiative to the others and she often gives them the balloon.

All these four students read, decipher, interpret "the grammar" (internal logic) of the game in a different way, by performing individual motor actions. In these conditions the abstract concept of motor action, become a personalized concept of *motor behaviour.* [17]

> The subjective way of each student to perform the motor actions is associated with the systemic and uniform concept of motor behaviour. This concept shows an extraordinary way that teachers should put in practice when they want to improve and optimize their students' personality. Parlebas [18] defines this term as significant organization actions and reactions of a person facing a motor situation. In the traditional game of captive balloon, the motor behaviour of each student incorporates whatever is observed from the outside (like a sequence of frames recorded by a camera, i.e. the way of making a feint at throwing or giving the balloon to a

---

[7] In this traditional game each team has a zone for "live players" and another for "dead ones". If a player throws the balloon and strikes the body of an adversary with it, and he or she is able to catch it, then the throwing player is eliminated and enters the dead players' zone. If this action is performed by a dead player, he becomes alive and goes to the live players' zone. The team that is able to eliminate all the opponents is the winner.

partner). Nevertheless, at the same time, the concept of motor behaviour takes into account the significance that this playful activity has for each player, by considering its affective, cognitive, and social dimensions.

Any person, understood as an intelligent system, acts in a different way in each game, displaying individual motor behaviour. Any motor behaviour provides a strictly physical or motor response, but also constitutes one's own personal experience (joys, fears, perceptions), and finally, it is a true mirror where we can observe how the players are living or feeling their life.

> Now, let us take a closer look at Oriol and Carlos, two players of "the captive balloon" game. It has already been stated that Oriol is the bolder one, he takes many risks in his actions, and he always wants to catch the balloon. On the other hand, Carlos is more reserved and hesitant once he gets hold of the balloon, so he usually gives it to his partners. In a few minutes, these two pupils decide to perform another activity: a throwing game (using metal discs). They must throw four metal discs at a cylindrical and vertical object that is put in the ground, 5 meters away, to knock it off. While Oriol, who is more impulsive, has difficulties with his concentration and throws the metal discs with precipitation, Carlos, more moderated, concentrates, adjusts the position of his body, breathes deeply and throws the metal disc with precision.

The captive balloon and the throwing game using metal discs are two traditional games with very different internal logics. In addition, they originate motor behaviours of different nature (in "captive balloon" the motor types of behaviour are associated with decision making and cognitive capacities, while in the game of throwing metal discs the emergent processes are associated with automatism, concentration, and perseverance). The evaluation of Oriol's and Carlos' motor behaviour allows us to indicate that Oriol and Carlos need a different pedagogical intervention in order to optimize their motor knowledge and their personality.

> Oriol needs to improve his motor behaviour of concentration and perseverance, whereas Carlos should optimize his behaviour associated with a more committed decision-making process. Oriol can improve his motor behaviour by playing psychomotor traditional games in a stable medium, while Carlos could be helped by playing traditional games with making decisions associated with a broad variety of forms of communication with others (reminded that the games can have an exclusive and ambivalent network; and be stable or unstable, too) as well as by participating in various

role-playing games[8] (associated with the need to take the initiative).

By applying the principles of motor praxeology, we know that each game has a specific internal logic and educates the players in some specific motor behaviour. Some examples illustrating these ideas are indicated below.

Psychomotor traditional games played in a stable medium tend to generate situations associated with automation of motor stereotypes and also reproduction of a specific technical execution of motor actions with programmed repetitions. These games require a rational use of physiological sources to perform actions with the optimal effort and effectiveness. These activities are very effective in the improvement of motor behaviours related to perseverance, personal effort and sacrifice (for example, throwing, jumping or racing games). Learning from these games can be also transferred to other situations of daily life, mainly to those situations where the result depends exclusively on our own response (effort in work, perseverance to learn how to read or write, sacrifice of leisure time to repair something at home in order to have more comfort, etc.).

Traditional games of collaboration offer an infinity of motor situations which generate behaviour associated with motor communication, compromise, generous sacrifice in collaboration, taking initiative, coming up with original and collective answers and respecting others' decisions. As in daily life, the group is autonomous to decide on the best answer for the common challenge. For example, we can find these sorts of social situations when it is necessary to solve social problems such as violence, lack of water, discrimination, etc. These difficulties are impossible to solve without the cooperation of all the group members.

Antagonistic traditional games (of opposition or collaboration-opposition) require the players to make decisions, anticipate, decode messages sent by other people, and define motor strategies. This sort of games can be used to teach behaviour associated with challenge, competitiveness or with resolution of problems. It will be interesting to work with all the different structures of internal logics by playing games of opposition and cooperation-opposition, in order to optimize this type of motor behaviour. For example, in games where players can change teams (games with an unstable motor communication network such as chain tag

---

[8] The concept of role is associated to the ensemble of rights and prohibitions associated to one or more players defined by the rules of the game. For example, in soccer or handball there are two roles goalkeeper and player of field; on the other hand the basketball rules authorize to all the players to do the same actions, with the same conditions, consequently there is just one role, the player of field.

or sparrow hawk or hen-fox[9]) the defeat is not clear because all the players finish the game by becoming part of the same team.

Games played in an unstable medium, in the psychomotor or sociomotor version, require that players "read", decode and adapt to the difficulties of the ground. This type of situations improves adaptive motor behaviour associated with intelligent effectiveness, decision making, anticipation and risk. The traditional games played in the rural medium (chambot, hide-and-seek games, games of orientation) can serve as examples.

TO PLAY AND TO BE IN RELATION WITH TRADITIONAL GAMES – Some concrete experiences.

With reference to the reflections and concepts discussed above, some pedagogical applications based on the relations activated by the internal logic and the external logic of traditional games should be described. These examples function to serve to reveal the educational potentiality of traditional games and sports.

1. Playing with internal logic. The motor richness of traditional games.

The Department of Culture of the Government of Catalonia decided to produce a documentary series about traditional games in order to popularize some pedagogical values of these activities among the schools of this region.

After having considered different options, the idea of compiling a plain "list of games" was excluded, as we decided to annotate all the games. The first episode concentrated on the motor richness of games with the purpose to offer some examples of traditional games played in Catalonia displaying a great variety of internal logics and ways of motor communication.

Considering that motor richness is one of the most important treasures of traditional games, and that they are in fact laboratories of motor, affective and social relationships we decided to use some vivid examples of games of different categories from the standpoint of motor relationship (psychomotor games, games of cooperation, opposition and cooperation-opposition). We assumed that any traditional game, played by children or adults, spontaneous or sportive modality, had the same entity and

---

[9] Gavilan ("Hen-fox") is a game where the player is in the medium, tries to capture the other players only with side displacements when they try to run till to the other side of the playground. The captured players will help the hen-fox to capture the other opponents until all the players are captured.

educational importance. In the motor field there are no better or worse games as such, but they are only good or bad games in terms of achievement of some specific goals or challenges.

The documentary was entitled "Jocs tradicionals a Catalunya" (Traditional games in Catalonia) (1999) and was 31 minutes long. It was shot in different villages in Catalonia, with participation of primary and secondary school students and the students of the University of Lleida (INEFC-Lleida).

2. Playing with External Logic. A visit to medieval Lleida (Spain) with traditional games.

In 1998 the cultural association "Ateneu Popular de Ponent of Lleida" organized a recreational event with the intention to help Lleida inhabitants to get to know Lleida of the medieval times. The event was held repeatedly for several weekends. Each weekend was devoted to one topic and cultural event from that historical period, including work, the life of the Jewish community, ceramics, the plague, and traditional plays and games.

The theme of traditional games was coordinated by Costes and Lavega [18] [10] who tried to use these sorts of activities in order to captivate the Lleida environment of the Middle Ages. We decided to design a playful, guided tourist visit using examples of traditional games that were played in some most emblematic zones of the city. So we "played" with the external logic of traditional games (places of the town) in order to display the motor and socio-cultural relationships associated with traditional games in the Middle Ages.

The above experiment was addressed to all the people of the city who wanted to follow this activity. For the purpose of the visit different zones (squares, streets) were set up in which a group of university students of physical education (INEFC) and students from other University faculties played various traditional games. The public was observing the development of a game and at the same time they were listening to comments on its rules, socio-cultural aspects and curiosities. After a few minutes, players and public walked to another zone. The event was accompanied with medieval music, jugglers, and the players were wearing historical clothes.

Little by little, more and more people joined the visit, by observing the activities, listening to explanations and playing some games. Firstly, the "old ball street" was reconstructed. This street used to run beside the St. John's Church where people usually played a ball game of opposition. Afterwards people could observe the "Belit" (game played with a stick with

---

[10] Professors at the INEFC-Lleida (faculty of physical education of the University of Lleida)

sharpened ends) – a team game of cooperation-opposition, being one of the most favourite games of the university students of that time. Next, a game of cooperation-opposition called "Xurra" similar to ancient hockey was played according to the original rules (e.g., the captains of both teams stopped the match and agreed on a new rule in a conflicting situation) Other games included the game of "Tella" (a quoits game) and a well-known betting game that used to be often banned in the past. Spectators could also see other games such as knucklebones, spinning tops, hopscotch, and the game of "vejiga of cerdo" (pig bladder) similar to the ancient game of soule played between two zones of the city, combat games with the use of weapons, and a local skittle game accompanied with magic and religious symbols.

This playful visit to the principal streets, squares and surroundings of public buildings (churches or the town hall) allowed everybody to get acquainted with the playful Lleida of the Middle Ages. Following Parlebas [19], the internal logic of these games uncovered social messages and symbolisms and at the same time showed representative forms of organization of people of that historical period.

3. Pedagogic experience based on the traditional games in the Catalan Pyrenees (Playing with internal logic and external logic).

This experiment was organized similarly to the ones discussed above. More than two hundred primary school students (aged 8-11) from the area of Pallars Sobira (Lleida) participated in this event.

The preliminary steps were made two years before local traditional games from the area of the Catalan Pyrenees began to be thoroughly studied. After identifying and analysing the internal logic (rules) and external logic (socio-cultural conditions) of the games we offered to coordinate this recreational event in the village of "Ribera de Cardos" on May 29th, 1998. The previous research was very useful in identification of different games according to a variety of internal logics and also of particular aspects of the context (external logic).

In this experience we tried to combine two binary aspects of the games: text and context, and internal logic and external logic. The students were divided into groups of ten. They visited different zones of the village where they could play one identified traditional game in that village. During this activity some local inhabitants were not able to resist the temptation to approach the students and play some well-known games with them.

Through this pedagogical activity all the students could become acquainted in a playful way with the village of Ribera Cardos. These

students played some of the most representative games, and displayed a large variety of motor relationships with pupils from other villages. In addition, they could find themselves closer to inhabitants of that village and receive the important socio-cultural knowledge by acting in the same place where inhabitants received this learning some years ago.

4. The first festival of traditional games. Campo and Lleida 2002

The final example included organization of the first festival of traditional games in the village of Campo (Huesca, Aragon Pyrenees) on May 15th, 2002 by the Museum of Traditional Games of Campo and INEFC-Lleida (university of Lleida).

About 200 university students of physical education from the INEFC-Lleida and 240 school students (aged 11-12) from the same geographical area participated in this experience. Forty university students signed for an optional course named "To live a great traditional game" and they learnt to design, organize and evaluate this great and playful event. The other university participants were first year physical education students, and participation in this activity was mandatory for them as part of the academic course "Theory and practice of play".

For most students this was the first time they ever participated in a great event based on traditional games. For this reason the I Festival of Traditional Games whose major theme was a magic trip to the country of traditional games had two complementary orientations:

- Travel by the external logic of traditional games (in the morning). The university students of INEFC were divided into six groups and played the games in six zones (stations); the schools students were also divided into six groups in order to participate in a parallel circuit with six zones stations two. The organization of these six zones helped all the students to explore some topics related to the socio-cultural conditions of traditional games:

- Traditional games and protagonists: male and female games, games for children and adults.
- Traditional games and moments: the festive environment of games.
- Traditional games and material: hand-making playing objects.
- Traditional games and magic-religious beliefs: play, mystery, ritual.
- Traditional games and sport: organization of a little Olympic competition.
- Traditional games and museum: once a group arrived at a museum, each player had to locate an object in the museum related to one of the zones, and learn about it. Afterwards, the

participants visited the museum all together, sharing information about the located objects.

- Travel by the internal logic of traditional games (in the afternoon). Pretending they were at a big *kermesse* or village fair, the participants could complete their morning trip playing some of around 100 traditional games. These games were divided according to the criteria of their internal logic: a) psychomotor games (jumps, throws, races); b) games of cooperation (skipping ropes, dances); c) games of opposition (individual duels, all against all, one against all); and d) games of cooperation-opposition (team duels, N-teams, two against all - all against one, paradoxical games).

The students were supposed to play a minimal variety of games of the different categories, to ensure many years of "magic order". The conditions to play these games indicated that it was necessary to establish contact among eight students from different groups (university students and primary school pupils). The magic trip by the external logic and the internal logic allowed all participants to win a magic gift and sgare a special and unforgettable event with other people.

Final remarks

In this article we have tried to show the extraordinary pedagogical assets of traditional games. These assets can be applied in formal and official programs of education, as well as in unofficial or formal events.

Regardless of the age, sex or nationality, when some people play together they start to share an important ensemble of motor, cognitive, emotional, social and cultural relationships. In this way, the great richness and variety of internal logics of traditional games can justify the statement that the game itself is the best teacher for any student.[11]

At the same time if we apply features of the socio-cultural context of traditional games with rigor, sensitivity and coherence, we will be able to provide unforgettable learning opportunities, making people grow and share the playful knowledge.

References

[1] Liponski, W. *World sports Encyclopedia,* Ozgraf (Poland), Oficyna Wydawnicza Atena, UNESCO, 2003.

[2] Parlebas, P. *Juegos, deporte y sociedad. Léxico de praxiología motriz,* Barcelona: Paidotribo. *(Games, sports and societies. Motor Praxeology Vocabulary),* Paris, INSEP 2001, p. 201.

---

[11] To know more about the applications of motor praxiology or science of motor action, consult the web site www.praxiologiamotriz.inefc.es (international virtual centre of documentation in motor praxiology).

[3] Lankford, M.D. *Hopscotch around the world*, New York, a beech tree paperback book, 1996

[4] Parlebas, P., ob.cit., p 223.

[5] Parlebas, P. "Jeux d'enfants d'après Jacques Stella et culture ludique au XVIIe Siècle" (Children games after Jacques Stella and playful culture in XVII century), (in :) proceedings book of Festival d'Histoire de Montbrison, 1988, p.321-353

[6] Ibid, p. 227.

[7] Lavega, P."Les jeux et sports traditionnels en Espagne. Quelques notes a propos de l'identité, le contexte et la fonction culturelle, a partir d'une vision pluridisciplinaire (transversale)" (Traditional games and sports in Spain. Some notes in connection with the identity, the context and the cultural function, from a (transverse) multi-disciplinary vision) (in:) J.J. Barreau, and G. Jaouen, eds., *Les jeux populaires eclipse et renaissance. (popular games eclipse and rebirth),* Morlaix, Falsab, 1998, pp.111-128.

[8].Lavega, P. *Los juegos y los depotes populares-tradicionales* (the traditional and folk games), Barcelona, Inde, 2000.

[9] Lagardera, F. & Lavega, P. *Introducción a la praxiología motriz*, (Introduction to motor praxiology), Barcelona, Paidotribo, 2003

[10] Lavega, P. and Al. "Estudio de los juegos populares/tradicionales en la comarca del Urgell" (study of tradicional-popular games in the area of Urgell – Catalonia-Spain). *Three Researches entrusted by the Centre of Promotion of Catalan, Popular and Traditional Culture.* Inventory of Ethnological Patrimony of Catalonia. Barcelona. Department of Culture, 2001, 2002 and 2003.

[11] During, B. *La crise des pédagogies corporelles.* (The crisis of body pedagogies), Paris, editions du Scarabée, 1981.

[12] Etxebeste J. "Reflexiones sobre la educación física de hoy a la luz de las características de la cultura tradicional vasca" (Reflections about the actual physical education considering the characterístics of Basc Tradicional Cultura) (in:) Lagardera, F. & Lavega, P. (eds.) (2004) *La ciencia de la acción motriz*, (The science of the motor action), Lleida, Universitat de Lleida, 2004, pp. 119-138

[13] Lavega, P and Al., 2001, 2002, 2003, op. cit.

[14] Lagardera, F. & Lavega, P. "conductas motrices introyectivas y conductas motrices cooperativas: hacia una nueva educación física" (introjective motor behaviour and cooperative motor behaviour: towards a new physical education) (in:) Lagardera, F. & Lavega, P. (eds.) [2004] *La ciencia de la acción motriz*, [The science of motor action], Lleida, Universitat de Lleida, 2004, pp.227-254.

[15] Lavega, P. and Al., 2001, 2002, 2003, op. cit.

[16] Lavega, P. & Lagardera, F. "La invención y la práctica de juegos espontáneos en los alumnos universitarios de INEFC-Lleida. Estudio de sus características estructurales" (The invention and practice of spontaneous games in university students of physical education in the faculty INEFC-Lleidda.

[17]Lavega, P. "Aplicaciones de la conducta motriz en la enseñanza" (Aplications of motor behaviour in the education) (in:) Lagardera, F. & Lavega, P. (eds.) [2004] *La ciencia de la acción motriz,* [The science of motor action], Lleida, Universitat de Lleida, 2004, pp. 157-180.

[18] Costes, A. & Lavega, P. "Els jocs populars-tradicionals a la Lleida de l'edat mitjana." (traditional games in Lleida in Middle Ages) (in:) Ateneu Popular de Ponent (ed.) *Coneixes la teva ciutat...? La ciutat baix medieval (segles XIV-XV).* (do you know your city...? the Middle Ages City (centuries XIV-XV), Lleida, Ateneu Popular de Ponent, 1998, pp.133-146

 [19] Parlebas, P., Les jeux transculturels (The transcultural games) in Demeulier, J. (org.), "Vers l'Education Nouvelle-Reveu des Centres d'Entrainement aux Méthodes d'Education Active . Jeux et sports", 2000, 494, pp. 6-7

Illusion and Provocation in Traditional Sports

Finding the educational sense of traditional popular sports

Gianfranco Staccioli, Ph.D
University of Florence, Italy
General Secretary of the Italian CEMEA

---

1 – Education and sport

Let us start with a simple consideration: a learning experience is effective when the persons who are learning feel they have changed. When is it that one has changed? When one perceives different ways of being, feeling, evaluating and attributing value to life. Only when an educational project – such as teaching traditional popular sports in schools – has change as a prime objective, are its effects likely to be consolidated, wide-spread and permanent. The strength of any educational action, of its incisive metabolic[12] quality, depends on numerous factors (personal, structural, social, philosophical and so on) and each formative experience is complex. At first it might seem simplistic to analyse the formative influence of traditional popular sports in terms of various fundamental elements common to education and sports. However, this analysis helps our initial question: in which circumstances do traditional sports lead to a positive change in people?

To dominate illusions

The dimension of sports is a **dimension of illusion**. The ancient Romans used the term *in-ludere* to mean various things: to tease, to pretend, to play a game. And, in fact, there is some affinity between joining in a game and pretending (*illudersi*). Children's play belongs to the realm of *make-believe*; the games of adults seem to be a little less so (or so adults often believe). Children at play are in a state between reality and the imaginary:

---

[12] The concept of 'metabletic' (from *metabolé*, change) has been developed in education by D. Demetrio (*Educatori di professione*, La Nuova Italia, Firenze, 1990) on the basis of work in the field of social psychology and the psychology of work by J.H. Van Den Berg (*Metabletica*, Nijkerk, Callenbach, 1967).

they use their playful actions as transitional time/space and as places of internal/external mediations[13]. Adult players pretend to themselves (*in-ludent*) that they are not 'being played' by their game and that they are able to control the elements which come into play. They, pretend, for example, that the sphere of playing is separate from everyday behaviour, from family, ethical and social values. They believe that they put into their game only a part of themselves (the part connected not only to moments of freedom from work but also to the more friendly, positive traits of their personality). They believe that they will find physical well-being (though physical effort does not always mean physical fitness/equilibrium); they believe that they will find richer relationships (but the relationships created in sports are principally those of competition); they believe they will better their relationship with Nature (and often find a standardised environment, where even the grass on the field is unnatural); they believe they will develop their own strategic and cognitive capacities (while usually what is involved is a standardised rather than an original action).

We do not here wish to carry out a critical analysis of institutional sports. If we have mentioned some '**illusions**' regarding sports with mass following it is because *we wish to understand if these same illusions,* or others*, are also present in traditional games*. Inevitably every illusion hides unawareness[14], which tends to deviate the player from the educational metabolic mentioned above as the formative point of reference. On the basis of these considerations, we shall be better able to discern some '**provocative behavioural patterns**' connected to traditional games, to the manner in which the games are still played and to their popularity. These 'provocations' will then help us discern the didactic methods best suited to this type of proposal.

Individual (person)

Structure (text)   Culture (context)

---
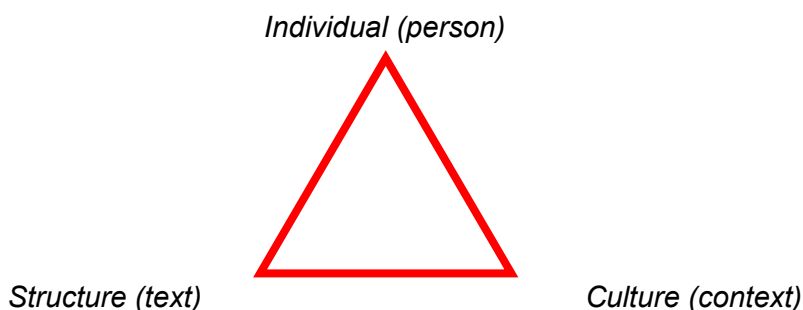
[13] Cfr. D. W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* , Tavistock Publications, Londres,1971.

[14] Cfr. G. Staccioli, *Il gioco e il giocare*, Carocci, Rome, 2004.

Each game is a complex object. The complexity of the game is determined by the interaction of three equally complex factors: the individual who is playing, the game in itself and the context in which the game is being played. Each of these factors may or may not bring about a formative action, that is, a change in the player (and, as a result, in the context).

The individual who plays

When somebody starts a game (and he must decide to do so) he finds himself, whether consciously or not, managing specific personal needs (emotional, transitional, physical, concerning self-affirmation or escape, etc). As the saying goes: "It is the player who determines the game". No one game is the same as another precisely because each time there is *diversity* due to the people who are playing. Even the same game repeated by the same people will be different each time, for people change, have different sensations, expectations or mental states. The strength of any game, and of playing in general, lies in its unpredictability and **uniqueness**. The players do not finish a game. On the contrary, for the player (and for the spectators) the game continues well after the match. It is discussed, thought about, and examined from different points of view. The player takes part in the game for more time than that of the mere playing. He maintains an 'infinite'[15] link with the match and with himself. The person who plays experiences a dimension of infinite time with which he tries to keep in touch.

Yoruba youth (Nigeria) play a traditional game called *The Lion of the Yoruba* or *Boma, Boma*[16]. The game has various phases: at the beginning there is a rhythmic dialogue in which the lion asks different pairs to carry out certain actions; then there is a sort of hide-and-seek and, lastly, once the game has concluded as we would say, there is a discussion amongst the players. In this last phase the group of players must establish which 'mother' best-defended her 'cubs', and 'she' will be the next lion. It is common to think that a game is over when someone has either won or lost. In this case, however, the rules of the game force the players to stop, to make a collective evaluation and to take a collective decision. In this game there is an interesting 'personal' element: the **uncertainty** of the outcome.

In *The Lion of the Yoruba* the players do not know who the winner is until the final decision has been taken. The game **delays its conclusion** in

---

[15] Cfr. J. P. Carse, *Finite and Infinite Games*, trad. it. *Giochi finiti e infiniti*, Mondadori, Milan,1987.
[16] Cfr. AAVV*, Fichier de jeux sportifs, 24 jeux sans frontière*, CEMEA, Paris, 1995.

order to give the players the possibility to reflect on events. Thus, the winner(s) might be he who saved himself by reaching home ground first, or the player who lets himself be 'eaten' by the lion so as to save his young or even the most astute pair of players who find the best and most secret hiding places. In this game nothing is obvious or certain, not even who wins or loses. On the contrary, defining the rules for winning is part of the game itself. Even in institutionalised sports there is uncertainty (a match is interesting precisely because we do not know how it will finish) but, in many traditional games, 'winning' or 'losing' is not based on a measurable performance (speed in time/space, etc) but on a careful evaluation carried out by the players themselves. It is as if at the end of a cycling race the cyclists were to meet up, without worrying about the order of their arrival, and decide who had achieved the highest merits.

In a game like *The Lion of the Yoruba* the principle of *the certainty of uncertainty* pervades every single moment of the game. Anything can happen, nothing is given for certain. From finite the game becomes **infinite** and it is the players who themselves construct the game. In the final evaluation the individual is considered as a whole rather than on the basis of some specific performance. The winner is not he who arrived first or ran more; instead, the rules of the game imply a consideration of the motor action in its wholeness, an organic unity of the mind, of feelings, of relationships and of social behaviour. "The participants in a finite game play within well-defined boundaries; the participants in an infinite game play with the boundaries"[17]. These are rules which do not take into account the classic division between physical and mental activity, between fitness and emotion, between final result and on-going play. They are, in reality, game actions that refer to an idea of the **unity of experience**, an idea only recently taken up in disciplines related to physical education. Maintaining an infinite link between the players and their game means experiencing the game not only as a race or a confrontation between people or groups but rather as a an awareness of one's own global action. In brief, these are games which incorporate both mind and body, a principle which our culture is still seeking.

At the same time this kind of game means placing in the foreground the person who plays rather than the game produced by that person. It means giving space to **narration**, to the personalised tale, to the elaboration of sensations and emotions. The teaching of traditional games also means going slowly (not running), giving adequate time and space to the individual, to the groups and to the dynamics which permeate them (thus rendering pertinent that fond Constructivist principle: "Attention must not be on the product but on the process"). Competition and a slow pace can go hand in hand.

---

[17] J. P. Carse, op. cit. pag. 17.

The first important message we can deduct from these considerations is that **we must render traditional sports infinite**. The more that game actions conform to the players by rendering them participants, inventors, capable of reflecting on their own playing, on the relative values of victory and defeat, on the complexity of their own physical acts, the more traditional games offer a useful, new model, highly unlike the one put forward by institutionalised sports. A **re-appropriation** of the game on the part of the players leads to several consequences: the rules must be the players' instead of being dictated by clubs and federations; the game is for the players themselves rather than for those who watch it. In other words, in a popular sport the modality of playing does not have as its point of reference a mass sport and does not try to model itself on the latter. Indeed, we are dealing with *another realm of play,* at least for the player. It is an illusion to think that the standardisation of rules, the drawing up of rigid norms and championships on a national level are the strong points of traditional sports. On the contrary, they render the game finite and adapt it to the 'winning' model in which sports clubs and associations (and the spectators) are of greater importance than the players themselves.

The rules of the games

A game is not only 'of' the player. One plays in order to be part of a regulated body and to confront others within it. As a result the rules of the game have the power to **model** the behaviour of an individual. The probable effects of competitive games are not the same as those produced by co-operative games: playing 'one against all' is not the same as playing 'group against group'.

The differing structures of games have been well analysed by Pierre Parlebas.[18]

The **structures of interaction** that are common in games influence the immediate and/or successive behaviour of the player, they determine a transfer of behavioural learning. Numerous studies have shown, for example, how the regular use of co-operative (new) games in schools weakens aggressive relationships within the class group. In such situations it is not so much the individual who has imposed change on himself as the games which have brought about a change in behaviour.[19]

Even **space** has a modelling effect. Playing in the streets is not like playing in a stadium. Traditional sports still maintain non-standardised

---

[18] Cfr. P. Parlebas, *Jeux, sports et sociétés. Lexique de Praxéologie Motrice*, INSEP, Paris, 1999.
[19] Cfr. A. L'Abate (a cura di), *Giovani e pace, Ricerche e formazione per un futuro meno violento*, Pancea Edizioni, Turin, 2001.

areas of play, close either to Nature or to the surrounding environment. Many games are played outside the stadium. Popular traditional games, on the whole, have many different and varied structural forms in comparison to more widespread mass sports. For example, we may recall one of the numerous Italian itinerant games, "Rouletta", which is played in Val d'Aosta. In this game each player throws his bowling ball in a different manner and his throw must be imitated by the other players. Other popular traditional games still played in many Italian regions are "Ruzzola" and "Ruzzolone".

A player in action is permeated by numerous **'as if'** situations. Some are linked to a role ("I am behaving as a defence"), others to the character in the game ("I throw the object as a peasant in the past"). In mass sports, the 'as if' relating to characters has become abstract if not completely lost. It does, however, remain in some traditional games, especially those tied to folklore or to shows as, for example, the historical pageant of Florentine Medieval football or the human chess game in Marostica). In many traditional adult games this was, however, not the case. We have to examine traditional children's games in order to find, appreciate and recover the hidden make-believe aspects of playing.

The practical consequences of the influence of game structures on the players are evident: he who plays must be able to experiment different structures, structures which bring into play differing relational mechanisms, which evoke different emotions in the player and which enable him to experiment diversified roles, making him feel like an actor in many parts and like a character in many comedies. An enrichment, a transformation, an educational metabolic action is possible when, in the game, one finds different characters who 'excite' our *personality*, when one can personify different roles and the various 'egos' which are part of us. And, it is also necessary that the players **try out different structures and characters,** each of which has its own specific link to space, time and to the role played in the game.

By offering pupils different forms/structures of games, we avoid the danger of **local ethnocentricity** often found in traditional games. One is not playing 'the' game but 'a' game, one does not experience 'the' best cultural modality but 'a' modality among many possible. In other words, if there is a difference between traditional games and 'official' sports, this lies in the variety of the structures that they contain. It follows that the greater the number of the game varieties with which a player can confront himself and 'de-centre' himself, the greater the formative enrichment. This last consideration seems to negate one of the main characteristics of traditional popular sports: its tie with the context, with the history and with the culture of a specific place, i.e., re-proposing the same game, which is part of a specific game tradition. But let us look more closely.

Bringing culture into play

A game does not take place without a **context**. The emotions, the values, the expectations that accompany the game depend on the group, the environment, the time, the space, the historical period and the culture of a people. A modern football match would not impress spectators of *tachtli*; instead, they would probably note the banality of a game that only allows the ball to be passed by foot or by head since *tachtli* players can also pass it with their hips, thighs and back.[20] Global sports respond, as we know, to the needs of a global culture (we do not mean this statement to be a judgement). These needs and this tendency cannot be stopped.

No game lives in the abstract; it always lives in relation to the context in which it takes place. There is a deep relationship between games and society, between the specific forms of games and cultural values, which explains why certain games have prevailed in given historical periods and not in others.[21] All games are something more than a mere game. That is, all games refer, whether consciously or not, to other dimensions, touch on layers which may or may not be obvious and activate fantasies and emotions which are not necessarily manageable. **Every game is a *deep game***. The sport most representative of our culture today is football (or soccer), complete with its related lotteries and market, and this phenomenon has repeatedly been studied on psychological, social, economic and political levels.[22] It is a game which "produces in the imagination a dimension of Western experience that in our daily routine is usually hidden from sight… Football as a ritual is not only a mirror of society or its escape valve, but also an interpretation of society. The game of football is a 'story' through which society narrates itself, thus contributing to society's own recognition of itself."[23] In this case the game interweaves playing and context, transforming into ritual the models of the society in which it is played. Hence, the game becomes a *deep game*, a game full of meaning.[24] An activity of this type is transformed into an important cultural moment because it enables those who participate in the 'rite' to recognise themselves, to be with others and to participate in an identical model of collective thought. Generally, a deep game implies a

---

[20] Cfr. C. Duverger, *L'esprit du jeu chez les Aztèques*, Mouton, Paris 1978.
[21] Cfr. *LUDICA, annali di storia e civiltà del gioco* (1995/2002), Viella, Treviso, direttore Gherardo Ortalli.
[22] Cfr. A. Roversi, *Calcio, tifo e violenza. Il teppismo calcistico in Italia*, Bologne, Il Mulino, 1992; Vinnai G., *Il calcio come ideologia, sport e alienazione nel mondo capitalista*, Bologne, Guaraldi, 1970.
[23] F. Dei, *Il calcio: una prospettiva antropologica (le football, une perspective anthropologique)*, in *Ossimori*, Anno 1, n.1, automne1992, pag.11.
[24] Cfr. C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York, Basic Books, Inc., 1973.

number of themes which are present in daily experience (victory, defeat, revenge, strength, courage, hostility, etc.) and "orders them in a sequential structure of actions with a high level of formal elaboration, from which a particular concept of human life emerges. Thus, going to a football match is for a young Westerner a kind of sentimental and moral education".[25] In the same way all traditional sports and games are linked to a specific context and to relational, economic and ethical models. These too were *deep* games.

If we wish to propose traditional sportive games to the youth of today, if we propose that they learn and play them, then we must be aware of the depth of these games. Of which models are they carriers? Which ethical, relational or social messages do they express? It is not just a question of revisiting history, of helping young people to learn about lost traditions or of idealising the past. We believe that the 'as if' present in these games allows one to experience events which today are improbable (cutting a tree with an axe or crossing a stream with a board) and, more significantly, to experience the deeper meaning of these events. And the deeper meaning of these events has repeatedly been highlighted: localisation, the link with the neighbourhood, belonging to a group, the right to maintain one's own specific characteristics and diversity, and so on. Today, these aspects can be stated in more up-dated terms: welcoming different customs and ideas, understanding that all values, even in sport, are cultural and relative, giving citizenship to small groups and upholding the personal and group context in which the game is carried out. **A deep traditional sportive game** is a game which renders meaningful its origins and its social and cultural implications.

Trinum est prefectum (Number Three is perfect)

So far we have discussed the three aspects of games - the **person** who plays, the **rules** of the game and the **cultural context** – aspects which intersect and which determine a game situation which is always difficult to understand and to manage. Yet, as we have tried to say, in order to construct a triangular project of formative change it is necessary to bear in mind the specific elements which characterise these three aspects. A traditional game may offer a meaningful methodological and educational model if it brings with it significant values, however different to those of mass sports.

Since 1985 the Italian school curriculum has included an activity called **gioco-sport** (game-sports). Originally, this new curriculum was an attempt to free juvenile sports activities from mass sports and to separate it from 'mini-sports' (a gateway to institutionalised sports). The educational value

---

[25] F. Dei, ibidem

of 'game-sports' did not lie in the activities in themselves but in the values that they (as deep games) contain.[26] However, in reality, motor activities in Italy still pursue the 'strong' cultural model linked to better known sports, even if recently there has been an increase of interest in athletics. The 'downfall' of the ministerial proposal was caused by various factors, last but not least, incomprehension concerning the educational objectives of that proposal. The ministry was unable to 'explain' the 'reasons' behind the idea of 'gioco-sport' which would have launched an enormous cultural challenge. With few exceptions, the 'gioco-sport' project has been transformed and now adheres to the rules of official sports, with their championships and trophies.

One of the dangers to avoid when playing traditional popular sports in schools is precisely that of adapting to the rules of institutionalised sports, which have a separate statute and different formative objectives. (Although mass sports must be taken into consideration, they should not become the only models of reference.) Traditional games must not pretend to be like other sports. They are different and it is necessary to insist on their difference. Guy Jaouen has more than once stressed the *authenticity* of traditional games: "In order to play this role the Committees and Federations of Modern Sports need know that they do not have to copy the other Federations of Modern Sports. In so doing they would lose their soul, for their current attraction lies in their *difference* and if the games lost this difference, they would risk no longer being of public interest."[27]

One of the other things missing in Italian game-sports has been a lack of conviction of their **difference** and, thus, an inability to **communicate** with awareness that they bear strong, meaningful values. We know that it is not easy to implement a coherent project in a school, a project which links practice to a specific idea of coexistence, to a different relationship to time and space and to a model of personalised growth. Yet, such a project would avoid an even more unwelcome outcome, that of transforming game-sports into something else. Traditional, popular sports are neither preparatory nor parallel to mass sports. They are a different way of playing, which is interlocutory and communicative because it represents different values and thus offers it own **perspective of cultural meaning**.

Research into the sense of traditional games and coherency in practising them may avoid their being side-lined and excluded. A recent study on the

---

[26] Cfr. AA.VV., *Progetto gioco sport* (Federazione Italiana Nuoto – Comune de Certaldo), Florence, 1998.
[27] G. Jaouen, *The development of a traditional sport at an international level*, in *Les jeux populaires. Eclipse et renaissance*, FALSAB, Karaez, 2001, pag.182.

drop-out rate of young people from mass sports[28] shows that an even greater number will stop when there is no motivation, that is, when youngsters no longer feel the activity to be part of their **self-fulfilment**. Self-fulfilment is linked to strong ideas of meaning, which young people identify in sports situations:

- In which they must feel that success is the purpose of the game, and not that the game is based on the binary of victory/defeat (in other words, where the competitive spirit of the game is secondary to the fact that the game must be played for its own sake).
- In which there is the possibility of discussing the match (so-called 'corridor learning').
- In which the instructor is a teacher and a friend (there is mutual respect).
- In which the game has a personal and social value which can change them and make society better.

The educational success of traditional game-sports lies their ability to influence *change* in pupils. This change is based on various aspects of the games. As we have seen, they are aspects linked to the person, to the structure of the game and to the context in which it is played. Our aim - not easy - is to offer 'complete' experiences, without succumbing to the illusions which are part of playing. We must be aware that diversity can provoke defensiveness and resistance. But provocation can be tempered through dialogue, through confrontation grounded in one's own roots and values, and in the 'perspective of meaning' which we have discussed in these pages. Traditional game-sports may continue to be a minority in the broader field of sports, but not because of this should they be considered 'minor'. We are not, in fact, dealing with an 'inferior' proposal which needs to be adapted to other models. If we wish to educate young people towards a game culture, we must underline the **'difference'** of traditional games, avoiding illusions and accentuating provocations, through dialogue: a dialogue based on strong, clear models which aim towards more human and educational sports.

---

[28] cfr. A. Bortolotti, *Sport addio. Perché i giovani abbandonano la pratica sportiva*, Editions La Meridiana, Molfetta, 2002.

In this need to belong expressed by young people (as in the case of mass sports) and, at the same time, to experience a context which has personal and social value, we find an affinity to those same values which we call 'meaning in traditional games'. The following table lists some of these values:

**TOWARDS A MEANINGFUL EDUCATION
IN TRADITIONAL POPULAR SPORTS**

- To help the INDIVIDUAL (person) to manage uncertainty (of and in playing)
-   infinity (not playing to win but to live)
-   re-appropriation (of rules and personal presence)
-   narration (which makes each game unique and infinite)
-   self-fulfilment (with mutual respect).
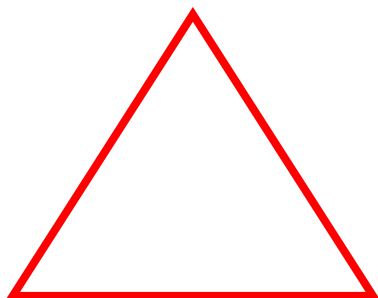
To offer various STRUCTURES (texts)

With "staging" (of play)
-   relative to space
-   relative to time
-   relative to the rules
-   relative to roles
-   relative to evaluation and points.

Promotion of a CULTURE (context)

To make the game 'deep'; holder of meaning, of dialogue value with:
-   the local environment
-   daily life (the right to play outside official times and spaces)
-   polycentric practises
-   the awareness of being different
-   the ability to exchange

References

AA.VV., 24 jeux sans frontières - Jeux sportifs, CEMEA, Paris 1999.

AA.VV., Gioco e dopogioco, primo manuale di debriefing del gioco, Edizioni La Meridiana, Bari 1995.

AA.VV., Jeux, sports et divertissement au Moyen Age et à l'age classique, Ed. du CTHS, Paris 2003.

AA.VV., L'activité ludique dans le développement psychomoteur et social des enfants, numéro hors série "Vers l'éducation nouvelle" , CEMEA, Paris 1974.

ACHENG, Il re degli scacchi, Bompiani, Milano 1992 (1989).

BERTOCCI C., Tra terra e cielo. Tanti modi per saltare la corda, LudoCemea, Firenze 2003.

DAUDRY P., Tra golf ed hockey… La 'truye', il passatempo europeo degli antichi pastori, in "Lo joà e les omo, rivista di studi e testimonianze sui giochi sport e cultura dei popoli", Musumeci Editore, Quart, n. 5 1988 .

DI PIETRO A., Ludografie.Riflessioni e pratiche per lasciare tracce con il gioco, La Meridiana, Bari 2003.

FITTA M., Giochi e giocattoli nell'antichità, Leonardo ArteMilano 1997.

FONZI A., Cooperare e competere tra i bambini, Giunti, Firenze 2001.

L'ABATE A. (a cura di), Giovani e pace. Ricerche e formazione per un futuro meno violento, Pangea, Torino 2001.

LOOS S., Novantanove giochi cooperativi, Edizioni Gruppo Abele, Torino 1989.

MARCHAL J.C., Jeux traditionnels et jeux sportifs, bases symboliques et traitement didactique, Vigot, Paris 1990.

MINISTERE DE L'EDUCATION NAZIONALE, Les jeux du patrimoine tradition et culture, Ed. Revue E.P.S., Paris, 1989.

ORLICK T., The Cooperative Sports & Games Book, Pantheon Books, New York 1978.

PARLEBAS P., Jeux, sports et société, lexique de praxéologie motrice, INSEP, Paris, 1999.

ROBERTI G., I giochi a Roma di strada e d'osteria, Newton Compton Editori, Roma 1995.

STACCIOLI G. Il gioco e il giocare, Carocci, Roma 2004.

STACCIOLI G. Culture in gioco, Carocci, Roma 2004.

STELLA J., Les jeux et plaisir de l'enfance, Editions Slatkine, Ginevra 1981 (1657).

Three dimensions of pull and tug.
Towards a philosophy of popular games

Henning Eichberg, Ph.D
Institute of Sports sciences and Clinical Biomechanics, Centre for Sports,
Heath and Civil Society. Odense, Denmark.

Contents:

Two human beings are standing shoulder by shoulder. They put their arms around the partner's neck, mutually, symmetrically, like good friend. Opening their lips, they grab with their forefinger into the other's mouth. And then, by one signal, they begin to pull. The mouths and cheeks are distorted, the eyes are rolling, the sight gets grotesque features. The competitors tug and tug. Intensifying their draught, they turn their heads outward, trying both to relieve of the pain and to resist effectively. Finally, one of them will give up, at first slowly following the pull by turning his head and then overtly surrendering by turning the rest of his body. He is overcome.

The context of an Inuit game – the cultural approach

We start our intellectual inquiry by the question whether the Inuit game of mouth pull is a sport or could become a sport in modern understanding.

Similar other Inuit games and activities - like "Eskimo boxing" - as well as competitions of pull and tug in other non-Western cultures have typically been categorized as "sport" by sport anthropologists. And likewise, sport historians have presented Old European popular pastimes like *Finger-hakeln*, finger pull, as early forms of "sport". In fact, at a first glimpse, mouth pull will appear as a bodily action, which is competitive and oriented towards performance. With these three elements, mouth tug fulfils the criteria of sport, as they were proposed by erudite sociologist analyses - defining sport by bodily action, competition and performance.

On the other hand one might doubt: Is tug-the-mouth really sport? There is no Olympic discipline of mouth pull, nor will there ever be one, probably. Our doubts reinforce when we have a closer look at the cultural context of the game.

Start
ᐱᒋᐊᖅᓂᖅ

Action
ᐃᒪᓈ ᐱᔪᐲᕙᒃᑐᖅ

Mouth pulling.

Mouth pull was practiced in the traditional world of the Inuit, the Arctic Eskimo. During the long, dark winter season when the sun remains below the horizon during weeks or months, people draw closer in their communal long houses where every family disposes over a sort of cell with sleeping bank and an oil lamp, while the communal life determines the daily life. In the dance houses, *kashim*, the drums are booming and rumbling for permanent festivity. The drum dance, *ingmerneq* or *qilaatersorneq*, makes people high and provokes their laughter. The shamans, *angákoq*, practice their ecstatic healing displays, putting their settlement fellows into states of changed consciousness. In this atmosphere of social warmth and intensity it happens that people challenge each other, especially the strong men. Besides fist combat and competitions of lifting and balancing, a lot of pull

and tug games are practiced - to tug the stick (*arsâraq* or *quertemilik*) or the match stick, to pull the rope (*norqutit*) or the smooth seal skin (*asârniúneq*), arm pull, finger, wrist or hand pull, neck, ear or foot pull, elbow pull *(pakásungmingneq)* and wrist pressing *(mûmigtut)*. For competitive pleasure, people may tug or turn each other's nose or ear - or even the testicles (Mauss 1904/05; Jensen 1965; Joelsen in: Idrætten 1978; Keewatin 1989).

During the summer time, the traditional Inuit society changed its social character fundamentally. It dissolved into nucleus families forming smaller groups of hunters and collectors. They met, however, again to summer festivals, *aasivik*, where drum dance and competitions again played a central role.

One of these summer events was portrayed by the famous Greenlandic painter Aron of Kangeq (1822-1869), showing one of the most eccentric pull exercises - pulling arse. In an open air scene, one sees a group of ten Inuit assembled around two men competing with trousers down. Jens Kreutzmann (1828-1899), collector of popular stories and traditions, described in more detail how people used a short rope with two pieces of wood fastened at the ends. They put these pieces into their backsides in order to tug the rope by their back muscles (Thisted 1997, 152-154).

Sport or not sport? The particular case of pull and tug and its problem of definition opens up for some more comprehensive questions: What is sport – what is play in human life – what is the human being in movement? From the concrete play, the way leads to fundamental philosophical questions of human movement and human existence.

Pedagogy of "the unserious" – current experiences

These philosophical reflections are also stimulated by actual experiences with play and game in pedagogical practice.

Since some years, the International sports playground in Gerlev has worked practically and pedagogically with this challenge. It resulted from some fundamental considerations about the place of play and game in the pedagogical world of sport. Game and play are generally regarded as important aspects of sports, though they tend to be neglected in practice in favour of disciplinary training. In sport, play and games are considered to be educational entertainment for children and are used as warm-up, i.e. as marginal in relation to the central process of achievement. On the ideological level, reference to play and game is often made in Olympic rhetoric. However, play is more than that, also in relation to sport. It is experimentation, role game and challenge of one's own identity, revolt, team building, flirtation, contest and competitive engagement, processing of fear and anxiety, background for a good laugh... If play was to be taken

seriously, a new approach was required – play and games as experimentarium.

The International sports playground, which opened in spring 1999, covers an area of three hectares and offers fine views towards the Great Belt. The playground is composed of different sites. There is a "natural site" with a lake, a brook, shrubbery and a swamp. An "urban site" features an asphalt rink for skating and street games and will later on also include a climbing tower. Pavilions around a "market place" form the "village site" with equipments for numerous Danish, Swedish, Breton and Flemish games as well as other games. Visitors may test their abilities in about fifty or hundred games within the playground area (Møller 1997).

Among these games, which are also described in some handbooks (Andkjær/Møller 1992, Møller 2000), a certain group is organized around the process of pull and tug:

Trækkekamp – Pull competition. Two competitors try by pulling and other bodily actions, foot against foot and arm against arm, to get each other out of balance

Trække stok or *Svingel* – Pull the stick. Two opponents, sitting feet to feet, seize a short stick and try to pull each other out of the sitting position.

Trække okse – Pull the ox. The same is done by two competitors, who lie backwards on the back of two helpers. The helpers help pulling by crawling from each other, pulling the pullers from each other.

Trække sømandshandske – Pull the sailor's glove. Again, two opponents try, sitting feet to feet, to pull each other from one's position. This time the fingers are used as a hook, hand in hand.

Stikke Palles øje ud - Cut out Palle's eye. Two competitors seize a long stick, which is placed between their legs. Backside to backside, they try to pull the opponent towards a certain place, often a plug in the ground. "Palle's eye" may also be a burning candle, which shall be extinguished by one's own end of the stick.

Grænsekamp – Pull over the border. Two teams challenge each other over a marked line on the ground, trying to pull single persons from the other team to one's own side. One may form chains to hold each other on the own team.

Tovtrækning – Tug-and-pull. This is the well-known team competition, which one has tried to transform into modern sport.

Trække kat – Pull the cat. The two competitors put the rope around their body, placing themselves on the opposite sides of a brook. They try, backside to backside, to pull each other into the water.

Snøre vibe - Tie up the pewit. Two competitors tie their feet to each other by a crossed rope. By pulling from foot to foot, one tries to get the opponent loose the balance and stumble to the ground.

Firtræk – Four men's pull. Four persons hold a circle-formed rope and try to pull their opponents into their respective directions, so that they can reach a certain plug on the ground. This includes the tactical element, by in cooperation to hinder the others in succeeding so.

Troldehoved or *Balders Bål* – Head of the troll or Fire of Balder. The players stand in a circle, hand in hand, around a circle-formed rope lying inside. They try to pull each other into this inner "fire", and who steps over the rope, is "out". The hands may not be loosened.

Games of pull constitute, thus, a considerable group side by side with the other main groups: games of run-and-catch, ball games, skittle games, competitions of force or agility, single combat and table games. In relation to modern sports, they balance between the possibility of becoming sportized or not. Many of the arrangements have grotesque elements, displaying the body backside to backside, not unlike the Inuit arse tug, and making the spectators and the competitors laugh.

By this "experimentarium" of play and games, a lot of practical and educational experiences have been collected – about laughter and the "non-serious" of games, about gender, about violence… The transfer of experiences from action research and participant observation to structured results in theory, is, however, a difficult process, which will take some years. So far, the telling of history and comparative culture studies will continue to dominate our knowledge in this field.

Evolution and disappearance – historical approaches

From many societies all over the world, tug-and-pull games are known, which may look similar to mouth pull, though less eccentric. We know these pull competitions especially from ancient Scandinavia, from Celtic cultures as well as from the Pacific, from Melanesian and Polynesian societies, and from Africa. They can be subject of historical and comparative studies.

The richness of forms reaches from simple actions of finger arm and neck pull over tug-of-war and stick pulls to more complex variations like the Danish games "Pull the calf from the cow" (*Rykke kalven fra koen*) or "Pull the ox". There may be used more complex arrangements of ropes and balance like in "Tie up the pewit", rope and water like in "Pull the cat", or stick and candle like in "Cut out Palle's eye". So-called hide games, Old Nordic *skinnleikr*, were different variations of pulling hide or skin, which could resemble ball games, but also develop towards belt pull (Old Nordic *beltadráttr*) and rope pull (*reipdráttr*). A Nordic variation of the latter was "ring pull", *at toga honk*, where two man, normally in a sitting position, pulled a rope, which was formed as a ring. As "four men's pull" this could also become a group game where each of the pullers tried to reach a

certain object, while the others hindered this by their tricky rhythmic pulls, trying at the same time to reach their own respective objects.

However, between all these popular cultures of pull and tug, the parallels and connections should not be overemphasized. The Medieval Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus did not only tell about the Danish king Erik Ejegod who liked tug-of-war and practiced it so busily that he was able, while sitting, to pull with one rope in each hand four men towards himself. This may have been amusing. Another man, however, Erik Målspage, pulled the rope against a lord Vestmar, both having waged for their life. When Erik finally won after a hard fight - "*resisting with full power both with hands and feet*", as Saxo described it - he neither dismissed the looser with a noble "sporty" generosity nor did the competition break up into laughter in the Inuit way, but Erik put his food on the back of his opponent breaking his backbone and, to be quite sure of his victory, broke his neck, too, accompanying this by insulting words (Wahlqvist 1979, 125-6).

Whether we believe these stories or not and how representative ever they may have been, they witness of a warrior culture, placing brutal pull and tug in the context of competing and killing. This was deeply different both from the sociality in the Inuit winter house, from the Bavarian folklore and from the modern sport of tug-of-war. Pull is not just one.

The way of tug-of-war towards modern sport went through the Scottish Highland Games. When these games were newly started after a period of English suppression in 1819, they included piping, dancing, foot race and stone lifting. Already in 1822, however, it was reported that *"the most remarkable feature was the tearing of three cows limb from limb after they had been felled"* (Novak 1989, 43; Jarvie 1991). Whether the game of tug was an artificial romantic construction or had its roots really back in older practices, remains an open question. In any case it was since the 1840's, that tug-of-war appeared on the programs of various Scottish Highland Games and soon became a specific feature - side by side with tossing the caber - of their athletic profile. In the Scottish Highland Games held in Paris in 1889, the combination of tug-of-war, caber tossing, Highland dancing and tartan fashion already draw near to an ethno-pop show, organized as it was side by side with a Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.

During the early take-off of modern sport, this Scottish game met with popular traditions in English villages and towns. On the market place of London, rope pull was annually held on Shrove Tuesday. It was said that up to 2000 people participated in the tug event and held a festivity afterwards when the rope was sold. The custom was dated back to the time of King Henry VI and connected with the fight between a red and a white party, one fighting for the king and the other for the Duke of York (Georgens 1883, 155).

Parallel again since the late eighteenth century, philanthropic educationalists had (re-) discovered popular games of tug. They integrated pull and tug - often in an abstract and systematic way - into their handbooks of exercises, gymnastics and games, adding health-related and moralistic recommendations. In spite of this pedagogization, the pulling games were often "overlooked" in the gymnastic literature of the nineteenth century, until tug-of-war reappeared as sport at the end of the century.

As a competitive sport, tug-of-war entered around 1880 into the practice of the *Amateur Athletic Association (AAA)* and seemed in the beginning twentieth century to be established as an Olympic discipline. However, it was soon excluded from the Olympic canon again, being regarded by serious athletes "*as something as a joke*" (Arlott 1975, 1058). An international federation - the *Tug of War International Federation (TWIF)* - is since 1958 busy, working on a regular system of championship with weight classes and detailed rules of competition. For 2004, one had expected the return of tug-of-war to the Olympic programme, but this seems not to be realistic so far.

History leads, thus, not only to evolution, but also to disappearance. And the exclusion of tug-of-war from the Olympic sport is analytically not less interesting than the reverse, the modern integration of the game into sport. Historically, the competition of rope pull had its place somewhere between the eccentricity of mouth pull (or even arse pull) and the rationality of modern sport. There is something "unserious" in tug-of-war, too, and this opens for the question, what the "serious" of sports is consisting of.

The way of contradiction – a philosophical attempt

Pull and tug have often been regarded as an elementary form of sport - along with running, jumping and throwing. These "elementary activities" have developed in an evolutionary and necessary way towards modern sports. This is the myth.

Pull and tug shows, that something might be wrong in this story. Educational practice shows, that the definition and delimitation of the so-called "element" are not as easy. And the historical experiences are not only about evolution, but also about disappearance, discontinuity and change. Philosophy has the critical task to reveal the inner contradictions of the sportive myth and to find alternative tales.

With pull and tug as material from human practice, we can approach the deeper contradictions in human movement, which play and games express. When we choose the starting point in the epistemological contra-diction between objectivity and subjectivity, some existential dimensions of human movement culture become visible. With a little help of Martin Buber

(1923) we can ask, what the objective "It" and what the subjective "I" in mouth pull is, and in play and games more generally. And how meaningful the contradiction is between It and I, between objectivity and subjectivity. But this may also lead us to some limitations of this binary construction. Do these limitations urge us to think a third, the relational "Thou" of play and game? And where is the place of identity in human movement?

'It' - The objective dimension of movement

Human movement can be seen under the aspect, that it produces something. In modern sports, these are especially results and records. "Go for it!" Sport, but also modern gymnastics and physical education are in a special way built up around this "it". By this reification, sport differentiated from older games and play. Tug-of-war is illustrative for this process.

Achievement

When modern sport took its definitive modern shape at the end of the nineteenth century, its founders often regarded it as nothing but a "natural" prolongation of older popular practices of game and competition. As these games traditionally included rope pull, tug-of-war would be regarded as sport, too, or even as a sport of an especially long historical reputation. Its place in the new world of sports was, however, far from clear. Tug was sometimes treated as part of **gymnastics**, but sometimes also set in connection with combat or **fighting sport**, as they were practiced in military and police. In other cases, tug-of-war was regarded as **heavy athletic** event (German *Kraftsport* or *Schwerathletik*), but also categorized as **track-and-field** (German *Leichtathletik*, Danish *fri idræt*). From this multi-dimensionality – which can also be found in many games and forms of play - the question arises and remains controversial, what type of achievement tug-of-war was producing.

Anyway, tug-of-war was an evident candidate for the Olympic programme. From 1900 to 1920, the rope was pulled in the Olympic Games, and in Paris 1900, a mixed Danish-Swedish team gained the first gold medal. After 1920, however, tug-of-war disappeared as an Olympic discipline and never returned until today, in spite of some efforts of sportization from the side of the *Tug of War International Federation*.

This discontinuity shows that - in contrast to naive sport ideology - competitions of pull and tug do not as such represent the modern principle of achievement. Concentrated efforts to transform and reorganize the game of pulling were needed to adjust it to the configuration of sportive production of achievement. In sportive tug, the point is no longer an immediate comparison of brute, "primitive" strength here and now, but a systematic development of purpose-oriented skill and technique. In spite of

this sportizing transformation, tug-of-war remained on distance from the sport of record. How to measure achievement in tug-of-war? The "record" of the longest tug event in history as it was controlled by the *Amateur Athletic Association* and measured in 1938, was 8 minutes and 18,2 seconds. This was no record of achievement, but a typical record of curiousness. In tug-of-war, performance and fascination are to be found at another place than the modern type of quantified record.

Under this aspect, the early difficulties of categorizing tug-of-war as a sport become illustrative. Whether tug ranges alongside ballgames and other gymnastic games as *Turnspiel*, alongside running, jumping and throwing as a track-and-field event, alongside weight lifting and tossing the caber as an athletic event or alongside wrestling as a sport of combat - the goal of achievement is different. Tug and pull is characterized by a conspicious "impurity" in relation to the rationality of modern achievement. It is not so easy to answer the question, what the It is, which this "sport" shall produce.

Probably there were further features of tug-of-war, which have hindered the integration of the game into the Olympic canon. From popular culture, the tug "sport" has inherited the grunting and grimacing of the actors - and the laughter. It is near to the grotesque that the victors finally, in the moment of their triumph, probably will fall on their arse. Strong men or women, snorting and groaning, and tumbling backwards on the grass - this fits very well to a popular culture of play and carnival, connecting actors and spectators by the social convulsion of laughter. It does not fit to the culture of achievement as it was developed by the industrial bourgeoisie, and it fitted still less to Olympism and its strategy to assimilate sport to aristocratic norms and to develop a new type of "serious" elitist style. The doubts concerning the seriousness of tug sport may have been enforced by an event of the Olympic Games in Paris 1900. After the official Olympic tug, a "friendly" tug was arranged for the American team, which had been hindered to participate before. But this event broke up when American spectators rushed forward to join the game (Wallechinsky 1992, 667). Tug was, indeed, "*something as a joke*".

Even much more difficult would it be to imagine mouth pull as an Olympic sport. A consequent application of technique and rational skill on mouth pull would lead to mutual mutilation or self-mutilation. An "International Mouth Pull Federation" would sound strange. The "unserious" features of popular laughter and grotesque carnivalism stand in the way of consequent sportification. And though the tug - or tearing-off - of nose, ear or mouth may appear as "extreme", it does not fall under what has become the actual fashion of "extreme sport", either.

It is just by their non-sportive configurations that mouth pull and tug-of-war illustrate what the configuration of sport is. Sport is not bodily movement

and competition as such, but follows a specific pattern of **production** - producing results, quantifying the outcome and following the upward line of growth and maximization (Hoberman 1992). Sportive activity produces an objective "It". Sport displays in ritual forms the productivism of industrial capitalist society. Last, but not least, results can be money.

Rule

Achievement is, however, not the only form of reification, which characterizes modern sport. Another form of It is the rule. "Make it like this," is the message of the "sport for rules", which was typically developed in modern gymnastics. Here it is not of primary importance to produce a result, but to complete a given movement "in the right way" - sport appearing as a disciplination of rule correctness. Training is correction and regulation of movements. Ideally, the trainer or instructor, standing face to face to the exercising athletes, takes a position with panoptic overview, and applies the rules by commanding, inspecting and reviewing the gymnasts' movements.

Historically, while the sport of results took form in English and Scottish sports and became the international mainstream during the twentieth century, the sport of rules found its early manifestations since the later eighteenth century in Nordic gymnastics, German gymnastics (*Turnen*) and Slavonic gymnastics (*Sokol*). These were forerunners of modern sports, in periods also opposing models to competitive sport and - all in all - an important under-stream of modern body culture. While sport of achievement reified results, the gymnastical sport of rules reified movements by analytically dissecting them into defined pieces. These elements were trained in certain choreographic patterns, forms and processes, which were codified as gymnastic "systems". Some of these systems referred more to aesthetic, others more to physiological and anatomical rules.

Sport for rules developed, however, not only in contrast to the sport of results. There were assimilation processes, too. The discipline of rules entered as training into achievement sport and became a secondary measure to prepare the production of the final top achievement. From this supporting position, the training of rules could make itself more or less independent, creating an autonomous sport of health and an educational sport. In sports pedagogy for instance, the idea developed that the rule was central for the understanding of sport. Sport was in its educational essence a formation and training of rules. In this perspective, keeping the rule appears as the core of sporting sociality, the great "It" of learning through sport.

Under the aspect of rules for bodily training, also Inuit games have found the attention of educationalists. Supporting the politics of identity of the

Inuit societies, which were increasingly gaining cultural and political self-determination during the 1970/80's, several Inuit games were set to rules, among these also mouth pull.

"Equipment: None. - Stance and Start: Both competitors stand side by side on set line. Inside feet are meeting. Each competitor grabs mouth of opponent with inside hand by going around the neck and grabbing outside corner of opponent's mouth with middle finger. - Movement: On a signal, competitors try to pull opponent to their side of the line. Strongest mouth wins. - Judging and Scoring: Wash hands before competition. Best out of three tries" (Keewatin 1989).

There is a grotesque sound over these rules. If really strictly applied, they would imply mutilation. The competitive pattern does not fit. The rule of hygienic behaviour adds a special note of "something wrong".

The failure of rules for mouth pull illustrates, that this tug does not require rules at all. The technique will best be transmitted mimetically, from face to face and from movement to movement. View and feeling are enough. There is hardly anything like "correctness" or "incorrect implementation" in the game. And a systematic training of mouth pull has no meaning, neither for educational means nor for the production of a top result.

In this respect, the gymnastic training of rules was not at all an alternative or resistance to modern achievement sports, as the ideologists of gymnastics, but also advocates of sport sometimes have claimed. Sport of rules was the back-side of the sport of production, both of them being united by reification as the hegemonic over-all tendency.

Instrument, facility, function
Achievement and rule were maybe the most important, but are not the only elements in the creation of It-practice in modern body culture. Equipments and facilities made the innovation visible, too. New invented instruments were and are permanently a starting point to create new sports - from "machine gymnastics" in the nineteenth century over roller skating, - cycling and motor sport to surfing, mountain biking, hang gliding, inline skating, snow board and bungee jump. And we cannot think modern sport without the "sportscape" of highly specialized fields and halls for the mono-cultures of fenced-off activities. Also in this respect, sportization went around pull and tug.

On a more abstract level, as a superstructure above the It of sectorial spaces, we find the "function". The "function" of sport and games was invented in order to understand movement culture and to canalize it towards certain societal goals. Sports science ascribes to sport certain physiological functions of health, educational functions of personal development, psychological functions like stress reduction, social functions of integration

and reduction of violence as well as political functions of state conservation. Concerning dance, one has recognized "pattern maintenance", "socialization", "tension management", "adaption to societal goals" and "integration" as central, useful functions. Architectural functionalism created the classical "functions" of residence, work, trade, leisure and traffic in order to justify strategies of urban parcellation.

Functionalism reached a new level in the system theory of Luhmann-type. System theory exalts the sector divisions of administrative practice to some higher type of theoretical, "functional" logic, taking the banal parcellation as expression of economical, juridical, educational, political, religious, scientific etc. functions, which are said to be based on binary codes of global significance. In this model, sport derives from medical and educational functions, which are determined by the codes of ill/healthy respectively educated/uneducated; but since the take-off of modernity, sport has developed towards an autonomous own functionality, following the sportive code of win-or-loose.

As accidental and artificial as all these series of assumed functions may look, the different approaches have in common a strategy of reification, linked to a program of socio-political stabilization. "Function" is derived from mathematical terminology and receives from there its "scientific" and "objective" undertones. Function is imagined as a quasi-thing or factor, an "It" of higher quality. The meaning of "function" oscillates somewhere between essence (*Wesen*), intention, purpose, aim, value, instrumental meaning, cause, reason and driving force (*Triebkraft*). As it is typical for a myth, the ambiguity of the notion is hidden away, and the misty term appears as a convincing expression of objective truth. What the *Wesen* or essence of a thing is, may be a mystery, but its "function" seems us to be clear. Function is, as Norbert Elias expressed it, a hidden notion of causality (*ein versteckter Ursachenbegriff*).

The reified "It" of the "function" is furthermore characterized by a conservative undertone. Implicite, the notion postulates some ideal, normally hegemonic societal goals as "functional" and rejects oppositional values as "dysfunctional". Existing relations of power are, by naming them "function", withdrawn from conflict, naturalized and justified, while subversive dimensions systematically are neglected. "Function" is not what is installed by power, what can be disputed and changed on the base of alternative needs - function is function. It is true, the discourse of a "revolutionary function" is not quite unknown and has been tried now and then, though it proceeds as reifying as the conservative model - but it seems not to be accidental that the functionalist reification predominantly goes hand in hand with stabilizing attitudes towards existing power structures.

We are, thus, warned to use the term of "function" for the analysis of play and game. Which "function" has mouth pull? Does pull and tug contribute

to health, personal development, stress reduction, social integration and pattern maintenance or tension management? Also the utilitarian functions of "training for work", "preparation for chase" or "exercise for war", which the older ethnology-anthropology has assumed for so-called "primitive" games, are difficult to apply to mouth pull - as to many other games, ball games for instance. That is why the earlier functionalism has by the notion of "fertility cult" opened the door towards highly speculative imaginations. And indeed, the finger in the sleek, moist and warm mouth may lead to psychoanalytical interpretations...

Functionalism is not only an academic luxury, but political. Western strategies of "sport development aid" for the Third World use functionalist assumptions against the native sports of the Non-Western countries: While Western sport is said to serve the development of personality, social and political integration (nation building), identification, health, equality of chances and satisfaction of basic needs, native games like finger pull are "*folkloristic marginal activities*" without any "functional" value (Digel 1989, 165).

The "function" may, indeed, help to exclude unwanted activity from practice and reflection. It does not help to understand movement culture.

Objectivation, reification and the impossible game
The result of movement, the rule, the instrument, the place and the function - they all have in common that they give the impression of objectivity. The practice of movement becomes an It. What is flowing, becomes a quasi-object. Mouth pull is illustrative, because it shows how limited this perspective is. In this respect, mouth pull is not only harmless, but also subversive. Or more generally: The practice of popular games is a living critique of modern myths – a practical alternative philosophy.

This critical result does not mean, that objectivation is an evil in itself. The relation between I and It is neither specifically modern nor illegitimate as such. The objective elements of movement like the glory of a winner (which is not identical with modern achievement), the mimetic and repetitive transfer of bodily technique (which is not the same as the modern rule of sport), the agreement over a place of meeting and play (which is not the modern facility) and the myth of what is good and bad (which is not yet the modern "function") are much deeper rooted in human cultural existence. The relation of the subject I to the objective world, to It, is basic for the human being. This existential objectivation got, however, a new expansive dynamic when the configuration of modern achievement production appeared with its quantification of results, its systems of rules, its production of things and its standardization of the sportive space.

It was in the context of the ware-producing society, of industrial productivism and capitalist economy, that the practical reification of life became a problem of new dimensions. And above this, the epistemological reification in terms of "function", "system", "evolution" etc. became a mythical superstructure, dominating the discourse of modernity. "*Die Zwingherrschaft des wuchernden Es*" was established, "*the dictatorship of the proliferating It*", as Martin Buber (1923) called it. The golem takes over - the robot servant makes himself the master over the human being. Others called this *Entfremdung*, alienation.

Play and game deliver living pictures for these processes, which otherwise have been described in highly abstract terms. These pictures may be illustrative as well as critical. One of the critical pictures is "the impossible game". Many games are impossible to carry through, if one really follows the rule. If the rule of competition for mouth pull were implemented strictly - "strongest mouth wins" - it would lead to mutilation. In another way are games of run-and-catch impossible, i.e. a large part of children's everyday play. If all participants are acting according to the rule, running away as quickly as possible, the slowest runner will very soon stay behind, in tears, and the game will end abruptly. The game, however, lives from continuation and flow. If the process of play shall go on, this can only happen against the rule, against the production of the "fair" result of speed. Instead, the quicker runner will approach the slow one, teasing her, provoking him: *"Du kan ikke fange mig* - you can't catch me"*. It is in the interest of the quicker runner to be caught. The game lives from the chance, which the stronger runner gives to the weaker one. It is in the interest of all that no looser is produced.

The rule is not the game. The flow of the game is in contradiction to the achievement. The game is what starts beyond the rule and beyond the striving for the result - beyond the It.

'I' - The subjective dimension of movement

Beyond the It of objectivation we find the subjectivity of the player, the I. In movement, I experience something, i experience the other, I experience myself. Movement has a dimension, which withdraws from objectivation, from the It-relation.

Personal and situative experience
In pull, I experience **strength** as my strength: "I can". Force is felt as a physical power, but also as a radiating energy, as my **inner force**. Mouth pull has a component of I-proof. I prove myself, my resistance and my perseverance. Do I stand it, do I endure it? In movement, the 'I' enters into a relation to itself, to its self. In game, I enter into contact with my feelings.

The subjectivity of I-proof has been cultivated in different cultures in different ways. The Inuit practiced a lot of exercises where - like in mouth pull - the point was not so much to win over the other, than to endure. The difference between Inuit fist fight and Western boxing is illustrative. In Inuit fight, the opponent is not knocked down with a hard kick, but is slapped with the slack hand. This technique cannot produce a knock-out, but each fighter is challenged to endure: "You don't get me down - I stand it." Inuit society cultivated traditionally the strong man, *nipítôrtoq*, whom nobody can force down. "Beat me!" - he challenges all around. People are invited to box him, to tear his nose, to tousle his hair - he remains stolid and laughs.

In our Western world, however, we experience similar situations when the father challenges his small son: "Hit me!" The boy knocks his father in the belly, the father laughs, and both have their pleasure. From Bud Spencer we know the entertaining film version. The configuration of sport is different from this. What the sportive fight cultivates as tension, is in those games a demonstration of relaxation and of a strength, which shows by **laughter**.

Another component of self-experience in mouth pull concerns **intimacy**. The other is breaking through the limits of my body, as it happens in different forms of wrestling, too. And what is more - the other grabs into my mouth. I may be touched by feelings of shame or disgust. Where is my integrity, where is my surface? My bodily I is challenged at its delimitations.

In this bodily clash, **pain** arises. The grip of the other aches me. I suffer - and I resist.

In the play between pain and resistance, however, I feel **pleasure**, too. There is flow and energy. I end the action by laughing.

The subjective experience of mouth pull is an experience of a **situation**. The event is here and now. I pull, I am pulled, pain and pleasure are meeting in the totality of the moment. The I has a situational presence similar to what happens in dream and love. The situation whose totality never can be caught in all its dimensions, constitutes an epistemological contrast to the structures and processes, which can be objectified (Lefebvre 1959).

From *Eigen-Sinn* to epistemological solipsism

In the tension between It and I, modern epistemology has unfolded its main contradiction. The modern science of science consists typically of two main parts: Analytical methods promise "objective" knowledge, the truth of It, while hermeneutical and phenomenological methods comprise the subjectivity of I.

Like modern reification, the modern subjectivation follows specific historical and societal dynamics, too. The modern state produces the individual as subject of panoptical and disciplining strategies. The market produces the individual as consumer who is going his or her way and choosing between offers. As individual, everybody is "the smith of one's own fortune": "*I shop, therefore I am*". Identity appears as self, and self as identity, producing the illusion of sameness: I am I. I am myself.

In the superstructure of mainstream discourses and interpretations, the epistemological solipsism treats the human being, as if she or he was alone in the world. The individual is the primary base, and sociality just something added, something secondary. Sociologists say "individual and society" as if society was not in the body of the individual, but somewhere outside. (It is this separation, which Norbert Elias built his whole figurational sociology up against - with very limited success.) The discourse of "individualization" translates this into the historical process of modernization and postulates that we are on the way to become our own "*gesamtkunstwerk I*" (Beck 1998).

The modern I referring only to itself, appears, as Martin Buber (1923) expressed it, as a ghost in the back of the modern It. Where the golem produces results and nothing but this, the Ego flutters as a bodiless phantom of soul and mind, shadow-like through the factory.

The specific monumentalization of subjectivity and individuality in the process of modernity should - again - not block the view for the fact, that the I is a basic relation of the human being. Like the I-It relation, the I-Self is existential. The person has monological potentials, the I has *Eigen-Sinn* - a meaning of her own. (In German, *Eigensinn* denotes at the same time this own, proper and singular import of a being - and a capricious, obstinate attitude.)

It is a wide-spread stereotype that the pre-modern human being has no I. This assumption follows the colonial myth that "the others" have "not yet" reached our level of development, of subjectivity. However, where people pull the mouth or tug the finger, their person and the person's relation to itself is active, the *eigensinnige* human being is playing the game. Whether modern or pre-modern, whether Inuit or Danish, I have the experience of strength and disgust, of pain and pleasure, it is me who laughs and who is in the centre of "the moment".

The I of personal experience is human and universal. The modern subjectivity, in contrast, the pseudo-sovereignty of the individual, is historical. It is as historically specific as the individuality of choice in the super market.

Equality, inequality, and the 'third'

The attention to subjectivity in game helps to a deeper understanding of human movement. It turns our attention to the difference between two sets of rules, which are contradicting each other under the aspect of equality. Pull delivers pictures of this contrast.

The one model shows **two equal parties pulling against each other** in order to produce a fair outcome, to produce It. Rules aim at creating and guaranteeing the balance, which makes the result fair. Though this pattern may look "natural" from a Western point of view, equality does not deliver the only model of pull.

In another model, we see one person challenging the others. **All pull against one**. There is fundamental imbalance, and this is not a mistake or cheating, it is the meaning of the game. The unequal game shows the force of "myself".

However, the two models don't tell the whole story. Their contradiction is illustrative, but incomplete. This is shown by games of the type *Brobrobrille*. As one of the most well-known and most-practiced children's games in Denmark, Brobrobrille combines song, catch and pull game. Two children form a bridge with their arms, and the other children walk or dance in a row under the bridge and around the two, singing: "*Bro bro brille, klokken ringer elleve*...(*Bridge bridge brille, the bell is ringing eleven.*) One after the other, the children are caught by the two bridge persons and choose one of them, thus forming - by "secret" and accidental decision - two teams. These teams finally tug against each other. Embracing each other in a long row, the two rows pull their foremen "sun" respectively "moon" from each other, who are holding each other hands. The game ends when one team has tugged the other over a marked limit (Tvermose 1931, 220-230).

Like in other types of joint pulling games, it is difficult to describe this activity in terms of the I-It or I-Self relations only. Neither is the result of the pull, It, of central importance, the two teams being composed unequal and by accidental choice. Nor does the individual experience and proof of the I play any remarkable role, as it is the case in the endurance competition of "the strong man". A third relation appears: togetherness, body-to-body contact, the interaction between I and You.

'You' - The relational dimension of movement

In game we do not only produce It, nor do we only experience the subjectivity of I, but we meet each other. Game is encounter: "Who are you - who am I?" In pull, we meet the other in different relations: I meet the opponent on the other side of the rope, I meet the other on my own side whom I embrace like in Brobrobrille, we meet the spectators, and - what mostly is overlooked - we meet the environment as otherness. This meeting should

not be understood in idyllic terms only. Encounter can also be dis-encounter, *Begegnung* can be *Vergegnung*, if we say it in the words of Buber.

Encounter, the human being as 'With' and 'Also'

Pull - like other types of fight and combat - make us meet **nearness**: You are near to me. With your finger in my mouth, you break through my limits of intimacy. This proximity contrasts with the principle of distancing the other, which characterizes the politics of space in modern sport.

Your nearness may become sensible in my **pain**. Pain cannot be measured, that is why it is problematical for the medical system, which is programmed towards It and tries to overcome pain by drugs, doping or psychological tricks. On the other hand, pain is not only an individual feeling either, not only pure subjectivity of the monological I. Pain comes into being by a collision between me and the world, in clash with otherness. In this respect, pain is near to Buber's *Vergegnung*. You cannot prove your pain for me, but I can meet your pain in fellow-feeling. Mouth pull, fight and combat tell also about this dialogical relation.

We experience encounter and relation by **rhythm**. My movement is a rhythmical answer to your movement, and vice versa. By the to-and-fro of pull, the two opponents find a joint time. In this respect, tug-of-war - like wrestling of the backhold type - is a sort of dance. The rhythm fills the space between you and me.

The You-relation shows not only in the opposition of fight, but also in the combination of forces, in togetherness by **body contact**. In Swedish games like "To pull the ox" and "To tame the mare", the players ly on the back of their team-mates who crawl from each other. And in the Breton game "*Ar vazh-a-benn*", each puller is held in the air by three or five comrades, who help tugging. This type of pull fight results in a common outcome, which is amusing and sensual at the same time. "You" and "we" are linked together. I pull "with" the others and the result is "also" mine - the human being appears as With and Also, *Mitmensch* and *Auch-Mensch*.

In another way, encounter happens in the **show**, in the meeting of the players and their audience. Mouth pull and other tug and fight is display, drama, expression, performance. The active player enters as an actor into dialogue with an audience. The game creates a scene, a situation of seeing and being seen. There is a reciprocal effect between one's own grotesque body movement and the laughter of the others.

Tug-of-war is said to be "*famous for its vociferous participants and supporters*" (James 2000). In the show, there is interaction by collective cry and shout. The noise expresses the passion going high both on the field and on the ranks - and in between.

Identity, non-identity, alterity

In the action of pull and fight, identity is expressed. Tug displays the relation between We and You. The game is a bodily practice of nostrification: Who am I, who are you, who are we?

This was expressed in the description of a Danish tug-of-war event in 1938. *"There were gigantic achievements. The blacksmiths quickly defeated the bakers, and the tailors could not stand long time against the coal-heavers who weighed at least twice as much. But there arose a gigantic competition between the dairy workers and the brewery men - and much to the distress of the agitators for abstinence, the beer won. The final was between the brewers and the coalmen, and here the brewery workers had 'to bite the dust'. 'This is not at all surprising', said the captain of the coal-heavers. 'You only carry the beer, but it is us who drink it.'"*

The contest, described by these words in the Danish daily "*Social Demokraten*" (Hansen 1993), was the highlight of *Fagenes Fest*, the workers' "festival of professions" in Copenhagen 1938. As "we" and "you", the professional groups challenged each other, displaying of themselves an overstressing picture, a sort of identitary caricature.

Play and movement was in *Fagenes Fest* a theatre of identity. By bodily practice, people were saying "you" and "we" to each other – as bakers and coal-heavers, as men, women and children (socialist scouts), as workers, as Danish workers and as Danes… During the Second World War when Nazi German held Denmark occupied, *Fagenes Fest* developed towards a demonstration of national togetherness and attracted at that time the largest spectatorship in its history. Sport in this respect is not only an instrument of national (state) identity policies, but a bodily way of expression, discovery and display of complex you/we-relations.

The nostrification expressed in the Danish tug was especially complex by displaying non-identity at the same time. The "brewers" of the tug were not only "themselves", but at the same time ironically non-selves. They played a role. In role game, movement is a sort of mask, just as one can play the king, the witch or the fool in carnival. Role is imitation of the other, whether a proud (re-) presentation, a caricatural mimesis, an impudent travesty - or a grimace of "the quite other". The grimace of mouth pull is not only a part of myself, but also an expression of otherness. I am another, this is what the distorted face tells about my own alterity. The Inuit culture is especially rich with elements of grimacing - grotesque, frightening and ridiculing, expressive and therapeutic. On this base, modern Inuit theatre - like *Tukak* in Denmark - has developed a dramatical world of quite own character (Jørgensen 1979).

Festivity and environment, death and laughter

An important position between identity and non-identity has the play of gender, the **erotic** dimension of game. The encounter in You-game offers a broad spectre of erotic display. Games of flirt like Brobrobrille give chance to touch and to be touched. Tug and wrestling can display gender roles in caricatural forms up to the transvestitical. The erotic is a mostly overlooked, but effectively exploited aspect of sports (Guttman 1996).

The great meeting in human life is **festivity**, the festive celebration of saying "you" to each other. Festivity puts rhythm into social time by, on one hand, lifting certain situations out of the flow of normality. On the other hand it is by repetition, that festivity creates ritual "holiness". By ritual meeting again and again, the I assures itself of the other as You. In festivity, we get high in the here-and-now - together. In this respect, game and festivity are in family, holding the complex balance between both the unique situation and the ritual repetition. And festivity is the social frame for play and game, from mouth pull in Inuit winter festivity to tug-of-war in Danish workers' *Fagenes Fest*.

The larger part of what modern sports historians have reconstructed as "sports history" is at closer look nothing but a history of festivity. It is true, that the modern disciplinarity of sports made festivity tendencially disappear, but through the back door, the festivity reappears as surrogate, as the show - the media event, the Olympic show.

In game, togetherness is expressed also in a more extensive, trans-human way: The human being is related to **environment**. Whether we tug the rope over the lawn of the suburb, whether we pull the finger in the smoky pub or as folklore for a tourist audience, whether Arctic people pull each other in the over-heated winter house, naked bodies close to each other, in a smell of carbon dioxide, sweat and train oil, under the deafening noise of the large skin drums - by movement, the human being meets the other, which is larger than the individual. Whether we build climbing architecture for children's game, form thread figures with the hand, roll the marble on the sandy ground or push the swing high up into the air, whether we run on the cinder track or swim in the lagoon, whether we search the "untouched" nature or let us challenge by landscapes of risk - by movement, the human being says "you" to environment. Game is a sort of living deep ecology.

The terms of meeting and ecology may be misunderstood as idyllic, but this is not the whole story. In games like "To pull the cow to graze" (Danish *Græsse ko*), two opponents tug each other by a rope, which they have tied around their neck. In some variations of the game, a pole or a fire is placed between them. You pull my head against the pole, I pull you into the flame ... the tug tells, if realized in this full consequence, about - **violence** and **death**. In some variants of Scandinavian wrestling, one

could break the back of the opponent - if it came so far. Whether it really comes so far, this is the theme of the game. Movement and game is also **dangerous**, it includes that children make themselves or others unconscious, creating situations of fainting fit, and that mature people climb dangerous rock faces or house facades, having drunk themselves from senses. Game is also playing with risk.

It is just "the impossible game", which demonstrates human mortality. By the impossible game, people play their finality. The human being is not only at home in the game, but also homeless - and a You nevertheless.

On homelessness, pain and the proximity of death - how to react? People **laugh.** Laughter is also a way of saying "you". Its bodily expression is the convulsive interaction, reciprocity from face to face, from body to body. Laughter is catching, infectious between you and me, like a "possession". Games are part of popular carnivalism (Bakhtine 1968), contrasting the solemnity of achievement production in "serious" Olympic sport. And on a very basic level, tickling tells the story of the more-than-individual body. I cannot tickle myself, but you can tickle me. For tickling, the I needs a You.

Ex-centric theory of the body - and squint-eyed research
The dialogical relation to 'You' turns our attention to an alternative understanding of "the human", which has its centre not in the individual human being as **individual**, but in the intermediary space, the **in-between**. Where the I-perspective centralizes, the You-perspective opens for the ex-centric dimension of "the human". The grimacing mouth pull and other eccentric tug tells, thus, about the human ex-centricity - a social as well as bodily story. The human being has no isolated existence. The human is not - not only, not primarily - inside the skin-body, but between the human beings. And this is the case not in a idealistic, bodiless sense, but in a concretely materialistic understanding. In tickling, "you" make me laugh - and you are necessary, because I cannot tickle myself. By playing hide-and-seek with the baby, *titte-bøh* in Danish, *Guck-guck* in German, we are "away" - and feel the tension tickling in the belly, until the You reappears. By making noise - tam-tam - we create rhythm as a relation of resonance between you and me and environment. Movement is a bodily medium showing - like the navel, the breath and the hearing - that the human being is not alone in the world. Human is the inter-body. **Humanism is inter-humanism**.

By the dialogical movement, we are able to transgress the dualism, which has established itself in the theory of the body, confronting the "body we have" with the "body we are". This contrast, as it was unfolded in German theory, can be illustrating and prolific, indeed. To have body vs. to be body, was based on a pre-existing dualism in German language between the objective and material *Körper* and the subjective and spiritual *Leib*.

109

Körper is It-body, *Leib* is I-body. American somatics have copied this by confronting the objective "body" and the subjective "soma". But this is, again, not the whole story, as the Danish dualism of *krop/legeme* shows, which is constructed in another, more complex way. It is only via the You that the body and movement of the human as fellow-human, *Mensch* as *Mitmensch*, can be described. **Inter-body is the third**.

What we need for understanding this, is a squint-eyed theory. Squinting means to focus on two points at the same time. We focus on the historical: All is change, all is particular, all is relative here and now. And we focus on the anthropological, existential: All is related to human existence, to the existence of human beings in plural, to life as an inter-human and inter-bodily process. When squinting with our eyes, we do not produce the wholeness of one consistent picture. There is overlap - and this will sometimes make us dizzy. But - as the pictures of the *Magic Eye*, the great craze of the 1990s, have shown - squinting makes it possible to look behind the surface of things. We are able to see something third. By a technique of bodily ex-centricity, we discover patterns. In this respect, the work of the historian-philosopher has a shamanic dimension.

Literature

ANDKJÆR, SØREN/JØRN MØLLER 1992: *Leg selv*. Copenhagen: Gjellerup & Gad.
ARLOTT, JOHN 1975 (ed.): *The Oxford Companion to Sports & Games*. London: Oxford University Press.
BAKHTINE, MIKHAIL 1968: *Rabelais and His World*. Cambridge, London: MIT.
BALCK, VIKTOR 1886/88 (ed.): *Illustrerad Idrottsbok*. Vol.1-3, Stockholm: C.E.Fritze.
BECK, ULRICH 1998: "Gesamtkunstwerk Ich." In: RICHARD VAN DÜLMEN (ed.): *Erfindung des Menschen*. Wien: Böhlau. Pp.637-654.
BUBER, MARTIN 1923: *Ich und Du*. - In English: *I and Thou*. New York: Collier 1986.
BURAT, TAVO 1990: "Il tiro alla fune." In: *Lo joà e les omo*, Aosta/Italy, 7, 37-46.
CRAWFORD, SCOTT A.G.M. 1996: "Tug of war." In: DAVID LEVINSON/KAREN CHRISTENSEN (eds.): *Encyclopedia of World Sport*. Santa Barbara: Pp. 1107-1110.
DIGEL, HELMUT/PETER FORNOFF 1989: *Sport in der Entwicklungs-zusammenarbeit*. (= Forschungsberichte des Bundesministeriums für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit. 96) Köln: Weltforum.
EICHBERG, HENNING 1983: "Einheit oder Vielfalt am Ball? Zur Kulturgeschichte des Spiels am Beispiel der Inuit und der Altisländer." In: OMMO GRUPE et al. (eds.): *Spiel - Spiele - Spielen.* Schorndorf: Hofmann. Pp.131-153.
EICHBERG, HENNING 1990: "Stronger, funnier, deadlier: Track and field on the way to the ritual of the record." In: JOHN MARSHALL CARTER/ARND KRÜGER (eds.): *Ritual and Record. Sports Records and Quantification in Pre-Modern Societies.* New York: Greenwood 1990. Pp. 123-34.

EICHBERG, HENNING 1989: "Trommeltanz der Inuit - Lachkultur und kollektive Vibration." In: EICHBERG/JØRN HANSEN (eds.): *Körperkulturen und Identität*. Münster: Lit. Pp.51-64.

EICHBERG, HENNING 1995: "Body, Soma - and Nothing Else? Bodies in Language." In: *Sport Science Review*, Champaign/Ill., 4:1, pp.5-25.

EICHBERG, HENNING 1997: "Otherness in Encounter. Thinking Folk Identity, Democracy and Civil Society with the Help of Martin Buber." In: Ove Korsgaard (ed.): *Adult Learning and the Challenge of the 21st Century*. Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag, pp.88-99.

EICHBERG, HENNING 1998: *Body Cultures. Essays on Sport, Space and Identity*. London: Routledge.

ELIAS, NORBERT 1981: "Zivilisation und Gewalt." In: *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*, Berlin, 10:43, pp.5-12.

ENDREI, WALTER/LÁSZLÓ ZOLNAY 1986: *Fun and Games in Old Europe*. Budapest: Corvina.

FLOC'H, MARCEL/FANCH PERU 1987: *C'hoariou Breizh. Jeux traditionnels de Bretagne*. Rennes: Institut Culturel de Bretagne.

FREY, RICHARD D./MIKE ALLEN 1989: "Alaskan native games - A cross-cultural addition to the physical education curriculum." In: *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, Nov./Dec., pp.21-24.

GEORGENS, JAN DANIEL 1883 (ed.): *Illustrirtes Sport-Buch*. Leipzig, Berlin: Otto Spamer. New ed. Münster: Lit, no year (1980s).

GRUNFELD, FREDERIC V. et al. 1975: *Spelletjes uit de hele Wereld*. Amstelveen: Plenary Publications.

GUTSMUTHS 1793: *Gymnastik für die Jugend.* Schnepfenthal. Reprint (= Quellenbücher der Leibesübungen. 1) Dresden: Limpert 1928.

GUTTMANN, ALLEN 1996: *The Erotic in Sports*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press.

HANSEN, JØRN 1993: "Fagenes Fest. Working class culture and sport." In: KNUT DIETRICH/HENNING EICHBERG (eds.): *Körpersprache. Über Identität und Konflikt*. Frankfurt/Main: Afra. Pp.97-129.

HELLSPONG, MATS 2000a: *Den folkliga idrotten. Studier i det svenska bondesamhällets idrotter och fysiska lekar under 1700- och 1800-tallet.* Stockholm: Nordiska Museets Forlag.

HELLSPONG, MATS 2000b: "Våldets plats i den traditionella svenska idrotten." In: JOHAN R. NORBERG (ed.): *Studier i idrott, historia och samhälle.* Festschrift for Jan Lindroth. Stockholm: HLS. Pp.63-73.

HOBERMAN, John 1992: *Mortal Engines. The Science of Performance and the Dehumanization of Sport*. New York: The Free Press.

HOWELL, REET 1986: "Traditional sports, Oceania." In: DAVID LEVINSON/-KAREN CHRISTENSEN (eds.): *Encyclopedia of World Sport*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO. Pp.1083-1093.

JAMES, TREVOR 2000: "Tug of war." In: RICHARD COX/GRANT JARVIE/WRAY VAMPLEW (eds.): *Encyclopedia of British Sport*. Oxford: ABC-CLIO. Pp.401-402.

JARVIE, GRANT 1991: *Highland Games. The Making of the Myth.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

JENSEN, BENT 1965: *Eskimoisk festlighed*. Copenhagen.

JØRGENSEN, OLE 1979: *Tukak'teatret - Eskimoisk trommesang.* DK: Tukak.

KANEDA, EIKO 1999: "Trends in Traditional Women's Sumo in Japan." In: *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 16:3, pp.113-119.

Keewatin Inuit Associations: *Inuit Games.* Originally published by the Department of Education, Regional Ressource Center, Government of N.W.T. Rankin Inlet 1989.

KORSGAARD, OVE 198: *Kredsgang. Grundtvig som bokser*. Copenhagen: Gyldendal.

LARSEN, HELGE 1972: "Sport hos eskimoerne." In: HENNING NIELSEN (ed.): *For sportens skyld.* Copenhagen, pp.117-127.

LEFEBVRE, HENRI 1959: *La somme et le reste*. Paris: La Neuf de Paris, vols.1-2.

MAUSS, MARCEL/HENRI BEUCHAT 1904/05: "Essai sur les variations saisonnières des sociétés Eskimos." In: *L'année sociologique,* 9, 39-132. - In English: *Seasonal Variations of the Eskimo. A Study in Social Morphology.* London: Henley 1979.

MEYER, A.C. 1908 (ed.): *Idrætsbogen*. Vol.1-2, Copenhagen: Chr. Erichsen.

MØLLER, JØRN 1984: "Sports and Old Village Games in Denmark." In: *Canadian Journal of History of Sport*, 15:2, pp.19-29.

MØLLER, JØRN 1990/91: *Gamle idrætslege i Danmark*. New ed. Gerlev: Idrætshistorisk Værksted 1997, Vols.1-4.

MØLLER, JØRN 1997: "Traditional games – The Danish project." In: Amador Ramirez, Fernando/Ulises Castro Nunez/José Miguel Alamo Mendoza 1997 (coord.): *Luchas, deportes de combate y juegos tradicionales*. Madrid: Gymnos. Pp.771-785

MØLLER, JØRN 2000: *Euroleg. 121 gamle lege og spil fra Idrætshistorisk Værksteds internationale legepark*. Gerlev.

NEWTON, CLYDE/GERALD J. TOFF 1994: *Dynamic Sumo*. Tokyo: Kodansha International.

NOVAK, HELMUT 1989: *Schottische "Highland Games". Traditioneller Volkssport einer ethnischen Minderheit im Wandel der Zeit*. Düsseldorf: Institut für Sportwissenschaft der Universität.

SCHECHNER, RICHARD 1993: *The Future of Ritual. Writings on Culture and Performance*. London, New York: Routledge.

SLOTERDIJK, PETER 1998-99: *Sphären*. Bd.1-2. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp.

STEJSKAL, MAXIMILIAN 1954: *Folklig idrott*. Helsingfors. Doctor dissertation at the University of Åbo.

SUTTON-SMITH, BRIAN 1983: "Die Idealisierung des Spiels." In: OMMO GRUPE u.a. (eds.): *Spiel - Spiele - Spielen.* Schorndorf: Hofmann. Pp.60-75.

THISTED, KIRSTEN 1997: *Jens Kreutzmann. Fortællinger og akvareller*.

TVERMOSE THYREGOD, S. 1931: *Danmarks Sanglege*. Copenhagen: Schønberg.

ULF, CHRISTOPH 1981: "Sport bei den Naturvölkern." In: INGOMAR WEILER: *Der Sport bei den Völkern der alten Welt.* Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft. Pp.14-52.

WAHLQVIST, BERTIL 1979: *Vikingarnas vilda lekar*. Stockholm 1978. - In Danish: *Barsk idræt. Sport i vikingetiden*. DK: Hamlet.

WALLECHINSKY, DAVID 1992: *The Complete Book of the Olympics*. London: Aurum.

POSTFACE

Which Sporting Leisures, For which Society of Tomorow?

Guy Jaouen
President of AEJeST,
The European Traditional Sports and Games Association
Researcher in cultural anthropology

---

1 - Introduction

In 2001, at a meeting, which gathered together dozens of organisations, the European network of traditional games decided to create a platform, an official body whose goal would be to promote traditional games in general. Nevertheless one of the objects was also to formulate questions about the future of our societies in consideration of the role and place taken by the sport system in our live today; indeed behind sports are very important questions and stakes. In the years that followed some of our conferences had as for objective to treat the inheritances and transmissions that we have received through traditional games, and the development and promotion that we agreed to do. We are precisely there in the value of the word *tradition*. In other words, today what do we think we have received, what do we think it is necessary to transmit, why, how? It is there an important debate in society that we would like to open. We are therefore in front of important questions as: « which forms to give to our leisure, to these moments of life and shared emotion? », our leisure pursuits being linked directly to the society in which they were forged. It is now necessary to bring to fruition all the ideas contained in the different exchanges that researchers have had for several years on this topic. Here are some directions that should not leave the reader indifferent.

The word tradition or traditional is a word used for many different meanings, it is also sometimes attacked. Many presuppositions are stuck to it, often carried as cannonballs. Some people say "all sports are traditional games by origin". They are right but his affirmation is also too basic, nearly grotesque, like a hand gesture to push away an embarrassing question, as if to show that it was not important to treat it in

a serious way. In fact, in this short sentence, this people's representative had told too much and not enough[29].

Sports are all traditional games by origin: it is correct if we only glance; they are similar, like a path in the countryside and a motorway, both human constructions used for human displacements, as traditional games and sports serve to displace the pressure of everyday life, during leisure time. Soccer, the best known sport in Europe, has some traditional games ancestors almost everywhere that I won't call foot-ball, an English term that only means *foot to the ball*. The word ball in German and English, *boll* in Swedish, *bold* in Danish, *bal* in Dutch, is also the word *pelota* in Spanish, *palla* in Italian, *pila* in Latin, designates a sphere, *bhel* in Indo-European, and symbolised also the sun, the source of life of revival every spring. Most of our games originated to close funeral ceremonies or life revival (births, weddings, May festivals), formerly in Greece, in China and with the Incas for example, but still today in Mongolia, in Uzbekistan, and even sometimes in Europe at saint's day festivals, after Mass. We can notice a certain similarity between the games of the former Roman stadiums, and their violence, and some soccer matches of today serving as an outlet for the population. We have the same similarity between the antique *pancrace* and the modern *pride*, more precisely in the structure of the sport itself.

2 - From the 'Foot to the Ball', to the soccer of the stadiums

Variations of the 'foot to the ball', often thought to be exclusively English, were played almost everywhere in the world, with different rules according to the regions and different environments. It even mixed the game with hands and feet, which means that the old style of Irish Gaelic football is a part of soccer's ancestors. Nearly all peoples had their game of ball, as they had their wrestling style, at the same time similar from a distance, but also very different when we analyse their internal[30] logic, in two words the universality and the local. A ball is a ball, wrestling is wrestling. Among the most well known, in addition to soccer, the European football, we have Australian football, American football, and many others, hundreds of them undervalued. Indeed, in the modern world, who knows the Melanesian foot to the ball where the ball is an empty coconut, or the Chinese Tsu-Chu, a

---

[29] Several years after the adoption of the 2003 Convention of UNESCO on the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), we currently link TSG to the ICH which is in fact a choice to which society we are looking for.

[30] According to the concept of Pierre Parlebas, the internal logic appears in the system of constraints imposed by the rules of a game. The code of the game introduces by these rules predetermines to participate in a particular type of corporal relations carrying the print of the culture that generated them. It doesn't refer to psychological or sociological type of considerations.

sport of the Chinese emperors for centuries, but hurling is a word that speaks to us. Yet the game that are described as hurling, *la Soule* or *Choule*, *Chole*, *Velad*, *Cnappan*, *Shrove Tuesday Foot-ball*, etc., was played by foot, by the hand, with both, with a stick, in the different regions of Europe. Therefore, sometimes the same name represents different games, and at other times different names are sometimes given to the same game, according to the cultural areas. In the regions from North England to the Southwest of France, these games have often differences in their internal logic, the rules, but the external[31] logic, the context, had strong similarities in these different regions. Thus, every year, for many centuries, the different farming or urban communities have organised recreations during calendar festivals, where the authorities accepted some excesses, as a social valve "to let off steam".

Re-speaking about the modern soccer is now necessary, to question the myth of a game that would have existed since the eternity. Joseph Strutt, the great reference for medieval games in England, described towards 1790 a game called Goal at Foot-ball or Camp-Ball[32] : "*When a match at foot-ball is made, two parties, each containing an equal number of competitors, take the field, and stand between two goals, placed at the distance of eighty or an hundred yards the one from the other. The goal is usually made with two sticks driven into the ground, about two or three feet apart. The ball, which is commonly made of a blown bladder, and cased with leather, is delivered in the midst of the ground, and the object of each party is to drive it through the goal of their antagonists, which being achieved the game is won. The abilities of the performers are best displayed in attacking and defending the goals; and hence the pastime was more frequently called a goal at foot-ball than a game at foot-ball. When the exercise becomes exceeding violent, the players kick each other's shins without the least ceremony, and some of them overthrown at the hazard of their limbs*". The internal logic of the game looks like that of present day soccer, but Strutt specifies that if this game was formerly very popular among the people at the end of the Middle Ages, it was completely abandoned by the time he wrote. Later, in 1826, William Hone, who had republished Strutt's work and was a specialist in the popular traditions of England, wrote that the game of Foot-Ball « *is, and remains a game of Shrove Tuesday in England and in Scotland*[33] ». The same year,

---

[31] The external logic is the context, as the type of sociocultural relationship lived by the protagonists in very distinct geographical zones, at a date or a very determined temporal period.

[32] In *Sports and Pastimes of the people of England* – 1801,published after his death.

[33] In *The Every day book and table book* - written in the 1820', published in 1841 by William Hone, London, Hone mentions the letter of a Scottish gentlemen from 1815 that speaks about « foot-ball » as an old tradition still perpetuated in some

a British gentleman reports, following a festivity of Shrove Tuesday that the term of *Foot-Ball day*[34] was unknown to him, these two examples confirming the Strutt explanations concerning the *Camp-Ball*. The *Foot-Ball day* or *Foot-Ball of Shrove Tuesday* was indeed different to the Camp-Ball, it was played like *la soule* and one of the main goals was also to collect money to pay for the feast in the pubs. It appears therefore that the modern soccer is a reconstruction, in the second half of the 19th century, from a former practice whose ashes were still hot, without a complete rupture of memory, a bit as it was the case for judo and ju-jitsu in 1882.

Now about Australian football, this game is derived from Gaelic football played in Ireland and was revised by the Australians. They introduced an oval ball instead of a round one, and an oval pitch instead of oblong. This example shows once again that human beings, even in a society highly "technicised", always look for activities in which their community can recognise itself. In this case it was mainly due to the fact that the Irish had suffered from prolonged English expansionism and wanted to develop their own sporting identity. Their motto was, until recently, that a sport must be developed in the cultural community that forged it, where the game offers understandable cultural references to its members. Gaelic football is also a ball game descended from what is often mistakenly considered as one and same game: hurling. An Irish text from 1527 informs us that every hurling match had about hundreds players, later another one describes a meeting between married and unmarried people at a saint's day festival. The game was considered as brutal and was codified around 1880 by the Gaelic Athletic Association, which is the time when it was fashionable to transform the internal logic of games to create what we have called sport everywhere in the world (the word sport, in England, originally meant "leisure, pastime and also competitive games").

---

towns in Scotland on Shrove Tuesday, between married men and bachelors. The married had to hang the ball, hanging symbolised by a ball put 3 times in a nest of moor. The bachelors had to drown the ball 3 times in a river. At the end the game the ball was cut in slices as in the game of Ruzzolone (throwing the cheese) in Italy where slices of cheese are offered to the participants…

[34] A friend of M. Hone, who passed by coach on shrove Tuesday through several cities in the vicinity of London noticed that all the inhabitants secured their windows on the street side. The players push a wooden ball forwards, and beg money from door to door (misfortune to the house windows that didn't give anything some…). Several teams of subscribers went all over town. At noon, on « foot-ball day » matches took place in the streets, and after four hours all players retired to the pubs to spend their collection money.

The author have participated in such similar games on February 2008 & 2009, for the "Hurling Silver Ball", the day before and on the shrove Tuesday, at St Ives and St Columb, Cornwall - England.

American football also descended from modern English soccer; circa 1870 in the US the game developed in the universities and then diverged in numerous directions, to such a point that in 1873-74 it was no longer possible to organise a match between different universities because each had introduced new rules locally. Later, under the influence of what today we call rugby, an association was created and decided to develop independently from the corresponding European game. Today, even if the speech of the actors still affirms that there are elements of soccer and rugby in the game, we can say that the internal logic of this game looks more similar to what was probably the ball game of the Indians from Central America, the Tlachtli or Pokyah. This game was organised during ceremonies to celebrate the sun and the stars, symbolised by the ball. It opposed two teams, whose structures reflected the dualisms used during religious ceremonies to represent good and evil, or day and night, summer and winter. The game was so violent that the players had to wear leather protections on the shoulders, hips, and elbows, and the rules, with long runs, had similarities to American football which therefore carries its name well … The paintings and bas relief's of the time show this similarity. May we note that in the 1905 season American football, matches had eighteen deadly injuries and one hundred fifty nine serious injuries[35]!

This is to focus the incontestable relation between sports and traditional games. It is often confused, but real, and their internal logic has common points if they are of the same games family. If we take the family game of ball, it is an object with which we have to run or to hit then a goal we have to reach. If we take a small ball, it is an object that we have to hit, to throw, to try to catch. If it is wrestling, it is a game where we must defeat the adversity by throwing him, reversing, or the immobilisation of an opponent (according to the different representations that the different social groups have of games). It is the universality of games, but we know that next to this universality, all the games have been in fact constructed in a different way, through their environment, language, history and different cultures, what we call the *habitus*[36]. Today's modern sports are not therefore an evolution of the former traditional games. Volleyball was thus created in USA in 1895, and basketball in 1891; table tennis was invented in England in the 1880s, popularised in 1890s when an American created a factory to manufacture and to sell the materials of the game. All could have instituted continuity with existing games, that of the Chinese for table

---

[35] World Sport Encyclopedia – Wojciech Liponski, 2003, Poland. French version by Guy Jaouen, 2005. *L'Encyclopédie des sports – plus de 3000 jeux et sports du monde entier*. Gründ.

[36] The *habitus* is the social print left on the personality of any human being by the various structures at the very centre in which this person has lived: culture, language, social, legal, natural environment, personal experiences, etc… It is a social matrix of the community giving individual grids of interpretation.

tennis, or the Aztecs for volleyball, the Dutch korfball for basketball, but to erase the local culture and substitute it with a new one is a strategy that had already been proven effective during colonial times. For commercial companies, it is as always easier to penetrate a society without references, acculturated, than a so-called traditional society. It is therefore necessary to distinguish, on one hand, the game itself and the actors of the game, and on the other hand the other various external elements that create a situation whereby the game becomes the central element of a commercial activity in which the goal of the game is not to play, but to win and earn money.

3 - Traditional games and Olympic Games

The modern sports, or rather the sport system, are in fact very different from the traditional games of today. However, we live in the 21st century and we are not cherishing social activities from antiquity, the Middle Ages or even late 19th century. The process followed by the majority of modern sports, in the 19th and especially the 20th century, saw the bureaucratisation of sports and their internal logic, not for the game itself, but for control of the system, for power, following the model of the state, but also from the economic revolution, elitist and productivist, the 'market'. The rupture of a corner stick is enough to stop a professional soccer match! This tendency to complexification of the rules by elements having nothing to do with the game itself is characteristic of all modern sports. Our example is significant of the system of sportification: control of the game by the bureaucracy – the fundamental role of the economic through material calibrated to the millimetre – the social power of those who control the whole system. The big international sporting federations and their satellites, specialised newspapers, TV, commercial markets, tend therefore to become globalisation companies of culture, with objectives of control, of power and of finance, precisely like multinational companies. The doping scandal on a big scale, particularly those implied by big laboratories working with professional athletes is meaningful; their details are very quickly suppressed from the press. Otherwise, how is it still possible to say that the Olympic games are not concerned by the politics, as Mr. Serandour, president of the French NOC and member of the IOC proclaimed it in April 2008, at the time of the controversy on the Beijing Olympic games?

On this subject it is interesting to do a small parenthesis on the modern Olympic Games, which were reinvented at the end of the 19th century by Pierre de Coubertin and his Anglo-American allies. Previously, from 1612, games looking backwards to antiquity, the *Cotswold Olympick Games* had been organised by a group of former catholic dissidents of Queen Elisabeth 1st, some having been young friends of Shakespeare. The ethos

of the games was in opposition to the rising puritan movement, which sought to control and destroy all the old joyful traditions of England and impose their bleak views over society, which brought the Civil War of 1646-1649. The games had in their programme wrestling, sword fighting, cudgel-playing, leaping, horse-shoe throwing, hunting or hare coursing, women dancing and various other activities in what was the natural environment of games of the period in this region of England. Then in 1788 a project started in Harvard, USA, in 1793, it was in Germany, in 1813 in Rome. In 1834, it was the turn of Sweden. Greece finally, when it gained independence in 1829, wished to restore the games of Olympia to its roots and especially its prestigious past, and organised the Hellenic Games in 1859, 1870, 1875 and 1889. In this case the so-called link with tradition was false and relates solely to the myth. Indeed, when a practice dies and when someone rebuilds it, the transmission has been broken, it is a false tradition. It is the case with the Olympic Games, the construction of the myth is comparable to the myth of the origin of States.

The new Olympic Games used therefore the Olympic myth to dress with respectability a new practice, but with a code of Western Anglo-Saxon thought. Indeed, the development of modern sport in the United States, bound to the commercial system, was the American lobby and had the need to support the utopian Pierre de Coubertin and his English supporters to create a system of competitions at world level. This was created on the society model already put in place by the New World inhabitants, according to their own *habitus*. This was a system whereby adventurers, the poor, ordinary workers or outlaws could gain a decision-maker's position, exploiter and rich, by an almost religious concept of the right to succeed and to be part of the elite. This concept is partly inherited from frustrations felt before by these same adventurers, the poor, ordinary workers and outlaws. Constructed by them, the Olympic Games were originally an event with Anglo-Saxon games, but reserved for the upper classes and the aristocratic elite, because the high-level working class athletes had been professionalised since the mid 19th century. We are aware that games, as languages, are the results of thought models and of different environments. The 1896 recreated Olympic Games were therefore, in fact, even involuntarily, greatly ethnocentric games, as they still are largely today. They inoculated, often without obvious pain, an acculturation in all countries not having sufficient economic strength to develop their own indigenous games. They were and remain, games of the rich countries, representing the economic dominating model.

On one hand we have modern sports which pretend to be the heirs of the former physical activities or traditional games, affirming to be the extension, the direct descendant of these practices which therefore gives them respectability. This has been so much emphasised by official speeches that researchers, during the last hundred years, haven't judged

it necessary to be interested in the traditional or indigenous games, as if these last had evolved merely, as explained by the Darwinism, throwing their old clothes aside just to put new ones. So the old games would no longer exist as they were transferred into modern sports, this untruth can be found in the statement of a French high sports ministry commissioner at the 1988 symposium in Villa Real, Portugal, organised on behalf of the Council of Europe on traditional games. He said that France supported other countries working on this topic, but stated that his country was not concerned because there were no longer any alive traditional sports or games in France! He was and is utterly wrong because there are several hundred thousands of players of hundreds of different games!

4 - About the ignorance of traditional games in the Universities

Next to these complex connections between traditional games and sports, the word *traditional* is often used to designate the evil, the grain of sand that embarrasses the well lubricated mechanic of the dominating sporting system. The image is animalised[37] in order to have the complete right to destroy it, which has hidden the true problems, as in a conjuring trick. Is it this motivation, masking the genocide of traditional games, which inspired Mr. Stefano Cavazza, professor in the University of Bologna, when he wrote in the preface of the book *Giochi tradizionali in Valle d'Aosta*, a book financed by the Valdotan regional government to valorise traditional games? "*Almost everywhere in Europe we notice nationalistic implications at the level of traditional games collection, as it is the case for the Serbian Karadzic (…), this interest for survival is bound to the refusal of industrialisation and modifications brought to society, that industry introduced (…). We find the proof of this* (of the modernity refusal) *in the debate on the presumed decadence dragged by the development of the cultural industry and mass culture (…) the ideological combination between right wing regimes and folklore is henceforth amply documented* ". To conclude, he advances, "*that fortunately the Valdotan games showed a better spirit hiding themselves in the CONI, the Italian Olympic committee*", which means that they are therefore absolved from any sin…

There we touch the taboo of the Olympic Games, to the taboo of Sport. The OLYMPICS, it is necessarily the picture of the well, it is universal human values, egalitarian; those of democracy, of friendship between peoples, etc. Therefore modern Sport is also necessarily a tool with exemplary social and human values. Thus, when a parent brings his child

---

[37] Concept where a human being is dressed as an animal picture to justify treating him like a lower human. Descartes spoke of « animal-machine, opposed to the man that reasons »; Taine spoke of « The primitive animal who subsists indefinitely in the human being ».

to the door of a training room, he leaves completely reassured, absolutely convinced that it is a place where his child is entirely in good hands. The sporting activities have taken more and more space in our present world and these places have therefore more and more importance, but nevertheless the positive *a priori* stays. There is no surveillance of the system, not even the setting up of interdisciplinary structures whose role would be to control the correct democratic and educational functioning of an activity which is widely subsidised by public taxes. In the French sporting federations, the agendas of the council meetings only foresee points concerning the organisation of competitions, the formation of trainers, refereeing, and selections for the main competitions; nothing concerning their non elitist and educational role, cultural training, the blossoming of youth in general. Is it solely for this that these official organisations get public money, and are fully conscious of their role in the formation of the society of tomorrow?

But perhaps the reflection on youth education is reduced to the reproduction of an elitist sporting model? Whereas traditional games are accused of playing the nationalist game, what is still obviously to prove as a general law, nothing is said about Olympic state nationalism and that of big international sport meetings. The bigger the lie, the more it is believed, says the adage. It is saddening that this scientist, Mr. Cavazza, who is not the only one, was not capable of seeing the innovative, critical, and alternative work of the movement that gives life currently to traditional games. It is however possible to find works about this movement in many scientific texts, where play and games are used for social education and the education of future generations. However Mr. Cavezza is right when he puts us on guard against the quest for origins, against false traditions, of rediscoveries, but then, why is he not also critical of the OLYMPICS? Like Don Quixote attacking his imaginary windmills, he abstracts a part of the reality. He doesn't want to see that for about thirty years some federations of traditional games, of which in particular, the one of the Val d'Aosta, have proposed egalitarian international exchanges, with very interesting experimentation's and results. These meetings put forward games of all the protagonists, without standardisation of the rules, without one unique language of exchange. Everybody must play the game of the others as a sign of respect for the other's culture. There are also competitions, but they are merely a pretext for the human encounter.

However, in this debate, forget the false signification given to the term "traditional games" by Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning demonstrated in the book "Quest for excitement, Sport and Leisure in the Civilising Process" (entitled "Sport and civilisation" in the French version), arguments used by these opponents of traditional games. Indeed, these authors obviously don't know the world of what we currently call "traditional games" because they only refer to sports existing in the 18th century such as foot-ball,

wrestling and boxing and they call them *traditional games* instead of *games played formerly*. In fact they refer to the external logic, or context, of the games from the 18th century, and of course the environment of the 18th century in England is not that of the 20th century even if the internal logic, or the rules, are still more or less the same with an adaptation to the present cultural values! i.e. description of Camp-ball by Strutt in the 18th century. This is true for all the games still alive today. Moreover, the authors speak about only one society, England, and a society that has changed greatly, where sport practices are only one of the elements to have made changes in this society (the society of the 18th century was probably more violent, but it changed, and the games followed this change). We still await the same evidence about the evolution of games from other areas of the world, with a complex comparative process including a survey of the context; there the conclusions could have been very different. Besides this ethnocentric approach, the authors refer to a text by Richard Carew written about 1590 and published in 1602. This text describes two different practices of Hurling[38] in Cornwall at that time, but why did they not refer to one of these games still practised every year and why did they not go to observe them? Why did they not go to study the wrestling style described by Carew and still practised in England?

Elias and Dunning suggest that modern sport, invented in England, would have the effect of releasing tensions caused by the very strong and increasing social constraints of our modern societies, to pacify the relations between the actors while causing tensions and emotions out of real time, and very much framed by regulations. Indeed, humans being animals, they explain that in civilised societies where the states of tension and excitation are permanently greatly curbed, sport releases, in a very controlled setting, the liberation of emotions, which is necessary for mental health. Without entering into the debate about the concept that they defend, which could also be applied globally to current traditional games or any leisure practise with emotions, it is necessary to note that this is especially the general theme of states, which seek for control of individuals. States try more and more to control everything, and generate rules that ordinary citizens are forced to respect. The demonstration could have been done using other themes such as work rules, those of commercial exchanges, but there the critic is very vigilant.

Through the modern sports the two authors imagine also the Olympic sports; sports which draw their mythology from antiquity, exactly in these former games in which the authors condemn the violence; there we can find the same paradox as in Cavezza. Elias and Dunning had therefore a certainty to demonstrate, an important and recognised academic thesis,

---

[38] One is the same as described by Mr Hone (Shrove Tuesday ball game), and the second has an internal logic similar to modern Rugby.

but it is not their demonstration or logical gait, that demonstrates this theory. The tool "traditional games", which did not exist as far as they were concerned when the articles were written, was a scapegoat, which would not answer them… When they promote sportification[39] as being a process of civilisation, a fundamental element for the creation of a *habitus* where the human being learns to control himself, then to re-inject this impulse control into his own society; we are not convinced. Is to complexify the rules or to impose a uniform a way to achieve this goal? Is to impose referees at all levels in all sports, at school for example, a way to generate debate and negotiations between the players, and thus a way to reduce violence? If the objective is justifiable, it seems that we must be very prudent of the means, if sport is first of all education. The violence has perhaps only changed, it could be still there, but different.

We must be always very prudent with concepts, which announce "an improvement of the civilisation process". It is when Elias declares that it is more violent for a hunter to kill a fox with his own hands than to give this work to his dogs (to delegate the act of killing therefore), does that mean to him that it is less violent to delegate the act of violence to someone else, even to the State? One can pursue this demonstration while saying that it is less violent to decide to bomb a city rather than to go there and fight in the streets! It is the apologia of disempowerment, of the scapegoat, and also of the expert's right to think for the whole of civil society. It is the right to "animalise" the one who doesn't think like you, to justify the necessity to destroy him. The setting up, in Britain, of millions of camcorders to supervise the streets, motorways, roads in the countryside, and even in villages, is the logical continuation of this state civilisation process whereby it is necessary to impose control of oneself, following a logic that we find in the two books: *Brave New World* by Huxley and *1984* by Orwell.
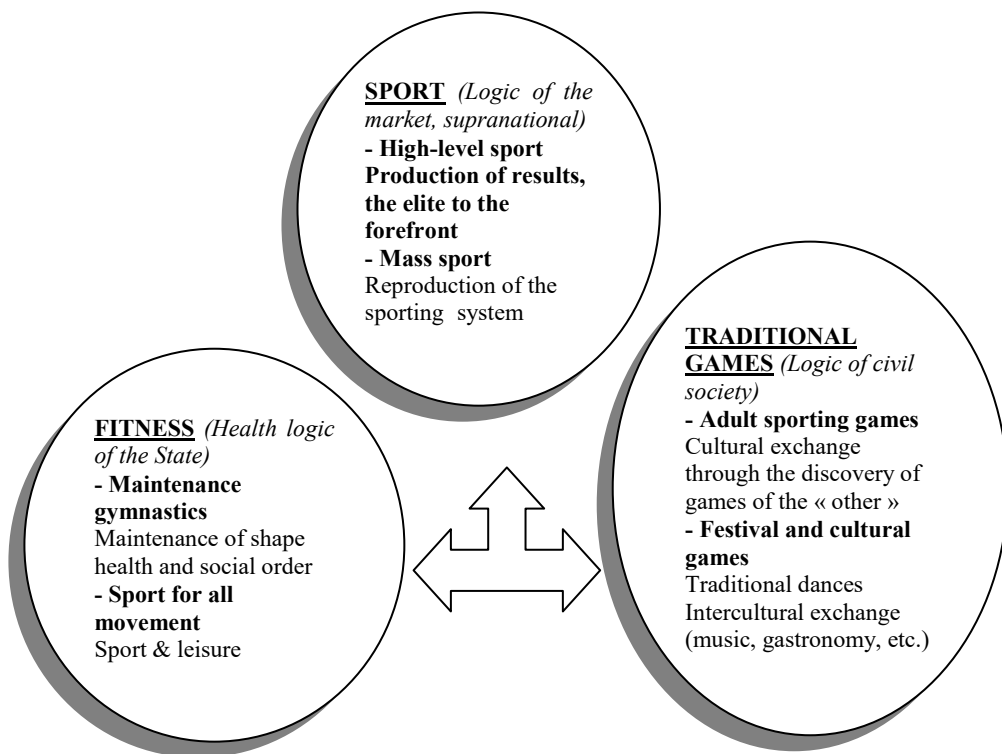
Norbert Elias, a well known scientist who is studied in numerous Western universities, used his appraisal for demonstrations where we can see the logic of the religious environment, the culture and the language of his adopted country, England (after having fled Hitler's Germany). The approach is, like the games, universal and local at the same time, rich in its differences. Let's take the example of languages that are constructions of thought codes modelled by the *habitus* from which no one can completely escape. Languages are therefore the spoken representations of situations limited geographically and temporally. The notion of Logic

---

[39] The sportification process is a complex ensemble consisting of rationalising the practice: standardising the rules and the dimensions of playing areas, the creation of institutions and bureaucratic organisations, regulatory decisions, laws, quantification, scientific statements and specialisation of roles.

(the science of the language, of clear and coherent expression of thought) expresses itself only through the elements of a language, and is only valid for the human beings immersed in the environment of the culture represented by this language. Thus, when we intend to install any societal logic in another country, as the Elias "process of civilisation", we in fact speak only about the representation of our own logic, or of one mode of thought of a particular civilisation. There is therefore a part of ethnocentrism in the concept, and it is the same thing with sporting games. This system of thought can be assimilated to a will of acculturation for the societies on which it is imposed, as it is always accompanied and accentuated by the technological means of our time, much more influential if we also possess economic power. It can be compared to the globalisation phenomenon that we observe currently, where the dominating economic system tries to impose its concept, where everything can be merchandised.

The body culture
(These three elements are to be considered as social facts)

SPORT *(Logic of the market, supranational)*
- High-level sport
Production of results, the elite to the forefront
- Mass sport
Reproduction of the sporting system

TRADITIONAL GAMES *(Logic of civil society)*
- Adult sporting games
Cultural exchange through the discovery of games of the « other »
- Festival and cultural games
Traditional dances
Intercultural exchange (music, gastronomy, etc.)

FITNESS *(Health logic of the State)*
- Maintenance gymnastics
Maintenance of shape health and social order
- Sport for all movement
Sport & leisure

We are aware that today numerous structural modifications of our societies are imposed by multinational companies, and before we can start to analyse whether we have to adopt or to reject them, another modification invades our lives, ruining all possibility of answering, and so forth. Everybody loses by this their reference marks and therefore their critical spirit, since the critic is always fed by the reference marks that we have. Moreover we perceive that the sports system promotes activities that are more and more merchandised, purposely, to increase the temporal space in which the citizens become more and merely consumers, of TV, at matches, in training rooms and in fitness halls. The following diagram presents three shapes of the societal physical education expression, with three different logics. The sporting system is at the summit of the hierarchy, the activities of the second movement, fitness, are considered lower because they are non-competitive, even though they copy many elements of sport. The third movement, cantered around the regional festive and traditional activities, is in general completely unknown or infantilised[40]. While considering that sport follows the logic of the 'Market', the fitness system another logic of the state, and traditional games a third logic so-called of civil society, we approach the true problem, that of democracy, because the sports system tries in general to establish a decisional supranational level whereas the traditional games are at the level of local decision making. It is in this approach that we truly find today the difference between traditional games and mass modern sports.

5 - To return to an open mind, exchanges and loans world

The equitable exchange, balanced and respecting the cultures of others, without domination or expansionism, that has already been discussed, once put in place through traditional games meetings, is much more efficient for the progress of democracy in the world than that where the dominant model wishes to impose its vision, its personal representation of democracy by strength and by competition. Egalitarian exchanges, participants with an open mind, who wish to learn from one and other. This creates exchanges and cultural loans, which are very rich if we consider the great diversity of traditional games. The loans are also the transmission of what we think right for our community, in order to give to civil society the governance of progress. It is also necessary to wonder very seriously about the results they will have, on several generations of youngsters, the habits created by human encounters called sports

---

[40] The "infantilisation" is an attitude consisting in considering the other as a child, incapable to manage himself alone, to take the good decisions or to judge by himself what is good for him.

meetings, where the main objective is always to dominate the "other" through competition. The introduction of this antagonistic spirit in all sporting competitions risks at the end returning to the rituals of the South American Indians of the 13th century "my team is the good one, and the other the evil one ".

However, let's remain very humble and let's not reverse an absurdity, with modern sport as a miracle solution to social problems, then by putting forward traditional games instead. These are not evidently by themselves an answer to all the problems of society, but questions revealed by their survey permit us to detect the concerned problems, sometimes to unmask them, and therefore to approach them. Traditional games can then become alternative post modern tools, in the domain of leisure and sports, not to become themselves sports of the modern type, because they are different, but on the contrary to serve as a laboratory for a global reflection on this theme, to help society to reform the system of leisure and sports competition. For this it is necessary to re-nourish curiosity and knowledge through a fundamental and experimental scientific research, into the historic, ethnological, sociological and psychological domain.

We must never forget that to know where to go, and why, it is first necessary to understand from where we come.

REFERENCES
1 - BARREAU J.-J. & JAOUEN G., *« Les jeux populaires, des traditions aux régions de l'Europe de demain ».* (1998), Confédération FALSAB.
  - *« Les jeux traditionnels en Europe - los juegos tradicionales en Europa ».* With LAVEGA P. (2001), Confédération FALSAB.
2 - CAREW R. "*Survey of Cornwall*" (text from 1592). (1602), Reprint 1968. London, Melrose.
3 - EICHBERG H. *« A Revolution of Body Culture »* in *Les jeux populaires, des traditions aux régions de l'Europe de demain.* Barreau J.-J. & Jaouen G. (1998), Confédération FALSAB.
  - « Playing and displaying identity » in *Postmodernity and Olympism*. Pawlucki A., (2003). Academy of Physical Education and Sport, Gdansk.
  - « The people of democracy ». (2004), Klim/Ifo, Arhus.
4 - ELIAS N. et DUNNING E., (1994), *« Quest for excitement : Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process.* Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986.
5 - GUIBERT J. & JAOUEN G., dir. (2005). *« Jeux traditionnels – Quels loisirs sportifs pour la société de demain ? »* Institut Culturel de Bretagne (France).
6 - HONE W. "*The every-day book and table book, sports, pastimes, ceremonies, manners, custums and events*". Written in the 1810' & 1820', published in 1827, T. Teggs, London.
7 - JAOUEN G. Articles.

(1996). – « *The necessity of preserving and promoting traditional games"*, dans *I° congreso internacional de luchas y juegos tradicionales* – Canaria, Gobierno de Canaria (Spain)

(2003). – « *L'éducation et la culture au travers de la transmission des jeux traditionnels »*, dans la revue Hopala, Brest (France).

(2006). – « *Les jeux et sports traditionnels en Bretagne, Inventaire 2006 »*, in *Juegos tradicionales y sociedad en Europa*. LAVEGA P. dir. AEJST, Santander (Spain).

(2007). – "*Un necesario recoñecemento para os xogos tradicionais"*. In Revista Galega de Educación N° 37, Santiago de Compostela (Spain).

8 - JAOUEN G. & BAXTER W., *« Celtic wrestling, our culture - les luttes celtiques, notre culture »*. (1990). Fédération Internationale des Luttes Celtiques.

9- JAOUEN G. French version of the Wojciech Liponski encyclopaedia: **L'Encyclopédie des sports – plus de 3000 jeux et sports du monde entier.** Gründ.

10 - JARVIE, GRANT (1991), "*Highland Games. The Making of the Myth".* Edinburgh University Press.

11 - LIPONSKI W. & JAOUEN G. (2003). « *Ethnology of Sport. Special issue of Studies in Physical Culture and Tourism".* University of Poznan.

12 - LIPONSKI W. (2003), *« World sport encyclopaedia »*. Atena, Pozñan, Poland.

- *« Rochwist I Palant »,* (2004) Akademia Piaseckiego, Poznañ, Poland

13 - MacALOON J. (1981), "*This great symbol, P. de Coubertin and the origins of the Modern Olympic Games".* University of Chicago.

14 - MAUSS M. (1950), « *Sociologie et Anthropologie »* PUF, Paris.

15 - PARLEBAS P. (1999) – *« Jeux, sports et sociétés »* - Lexique de praxéologie motrice - Paris – INSEP Publication.

16 - RENSON R. (1997), "*The reinvention of tradition in sports and games",* in *Journal of Comparative Physical Education and Sport*, XIX (2), pp. 46-54.

DEBATE

*All the texts in this book were produced in 2002 for the symposium of Nantes. **Today, in 2022** there is a major challenge for everyone: to organize a sustainable future for our societies, at the economic and socio-cultural level. Indeed, the economic system of the headlong rush, which consisted in considering that the planet could bring us inexhaustible resources, is today indefensible, particularly among young people who will have to suffer the consequences.*

Thus, in the same way that the current economic model will have to be redefined, sports leisure will probably have to be reviewed because the current sports system is directly derived from the economic system described in the previous paragraph.

Perspectives for Indigenous Sports and Games

A) What are Indigenous or traditional sports and games (TSG)

"A game is not just a game. It is part of a whole. It is part of a culture. It has history, a goal, a people, a purpose, a structure, a philosophy and a strategy. It has characteristics and rules; it has ritual, rhythm, dimensions, morals and it is linked to a specific environment. It has educational dimensions; it can be studied from a scientific or from an artistic point of view" said Sean Egan[41] in his text.

The term 'traditional' is a word added to mean that the practice is transmitted by the population of a particular cultural zone and that one can call *Ludic Community*[42] or Community of Players. Indigenous sports or games, Popular games, sporting games of cultural tradition, cultural sports, are other appellations.

Traditional games as intangible cultural heritage
Social practices which are called traditional games are creations of a culture and fruits of a particular history. Often descended from the local or regional territory, they are the expression of a way of life and to act, of a way to communicate with others. Linked to old beliefs, inspired by sacred rituals, the traditional sporting games are among the most meaningful

---

[41] Symposium of Nantes, Brittany, France – October 2002.
[42] The Ludic community shares the festive traditions, of which games and regional sports, dances, forms of musical or theatral expressions, gastronomy, etc.

cultural activities of a society of which they are the testimony. They are part of the body heritage of a culture. These practices stage resurgences rooted in the deep memory of the social group which lives through the memory of body gestures. It is a heritage that every child can make alive at the time of his game relationships with other children.

TSG, along with other playful activities from the cultural tradition, reveal the deepest characteristics of the inner culture to which they belong. Then, through the rules, one can partly discover different conceptions of life: tolerance and aggressiveness, valorisation of the image of man and woman, link to nature and technical objects, way to treat animals, place given to the spirit of cooperation and competition in the social life.

These playful (or ludic) practices are at the same time universal, by their functioning structures, and local because each culture models its activities according to its own "habitus" (the cultural and social determinism).

They are elements that are defended henceforth through the 2003 Convention of UNESCO for the safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the humanity (ICH). As a result the ICH commission of UNESCO has recognized over the past ten years some TSG practices: Human towers of Catalonia (Spain), Turkish traditional oil wrestling at Kirkpinar, the games of the Nadaam festival in Mongolia, the exercises of Zurkhaneh in Iran, etc.

Promotion of the practice and level of sportification respectful of the cultural context.

In 2009, an important meeting was organised in Tehran on behalf of UNESCO. This meeting was organized to build a platform of development for traditional sports and games (TSG) at the world level. The agenda was to form a committee of experts whose role would be to supervise the actions of this platform for TSG, and also to build a definition of traditional games that generated the following text:

"*Traditional games are motor activities of leisure and recreation, which can have a ritual character. Deriving from regional or local identity they are part of the universal heritage diversity. Practised in an individual or collective manner, they are based on rules accepted by the group which organise activities, competitive or no. Traditional games have a popular character in their practise and in their organisation, yet if turned into sport tend to become uniformed and institutionalised*.

To compare, according to the definition of Parlebas[43], modern sport is a practice that has:

- *a motor action*
- *a written regulation identical for the whole planet*
- *a selection organised by competitions and championships*
- *an institutionalisation through globalized federations*

The graphic below shows the pyramid of the sportification. The apex is the point of origin of the process and the base spread out until a complete alienation. As the elements of global regulation increase, the more enlarged and rigid the base becomes, where any fantasy is prohibited. The "seriosity" is privileged. We also move away from the system of the participative democracy implying people invested in the organization of the practice.

So, the more a federation increase its regulation and the more it move away from the space and the spirit of the Feast as this one represents the unexpected event (the sport wants to eliminate this aspect when it cannot domesticate it). When external agents to the practice appear, there is the risk that the organization forgets the foundational origins of the practice: the socio-cultural relationships, and emotions, between human beings who share the same culture.
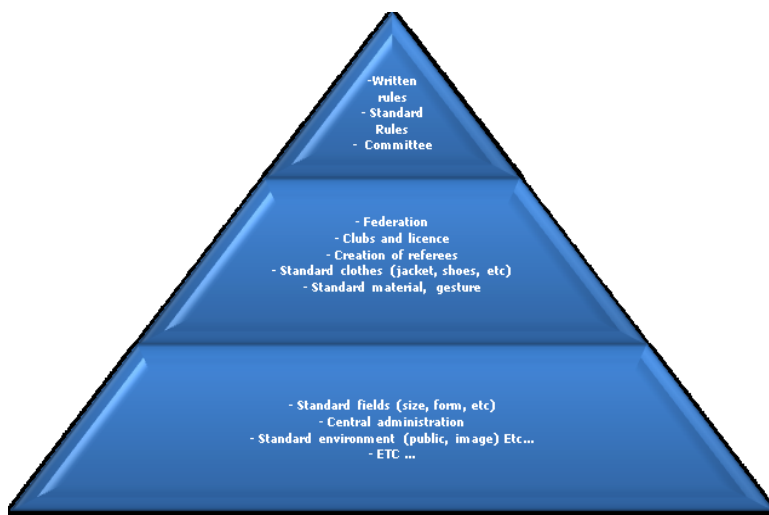
The process of Sportification: *"It is the whole transformation of a game, or a physical activity, to a sport, regulated by rules and norms, all legitimated by institutions"* wrote Elias & Dunning[44].

---

[43] Parlebas, P.: *Activités Physiques et Éducation Motrice*: Dossier EPS, 4.Paris. 1986

However, we must consider that Sportification is not inevitably a binary and rigid process that must result in the extremes as illustrated by Ellias and Dunning. If we consider that there are several stages in the process of Sportification that are often necessary in order to safeguard TSG, these can only be constructed when necessary. All must be decided by the local actors according to their needs, wishes, and customs. It is important to understand that every step is an alteration of the former social structure, such that every decision concerning the rules or the organisation must be analysed carefully. For example, the introduction of referees in a game stops the negotiation between players and of course affects one of the former roles of traditional games, which served to reduce social pressure (in the case of wrestling, self refereeing is not a simple process).

B) Weakness and strength of traditional sports and games

The turn of the twentieth century had seen the advent of modern sport with for counterpart the progressive extinction of hundreds of local popular practices that we today refer to as "traditional games". These practices had simply been disregarded, as much by the authorities as by the universities.

Many people consider that most of these popular games have disapeared, only remaining in photographs of a past world. However, we know that many or most of them had continued to be transmitted locally, most notably at the local feasts. Later some games structured themselves in small federations, others remained in the ritual and festive practice, and finally many nearly disappeared. In this last case we must consider that they are often still living in the collective memory.

What are the tendencies that are threatening the maintenance of TSG

Many popular games have disappeared as the result of:

1 - Direct repression. Indeed, in a lot of countries they were condemned as old fashioned, obsolete, reactionary and incompatible with the modernity of the dominant system, of which the one of sport.

2 - **Indirect repression** has been not less effective through:

   - Rejection from the school system and the media resulted in a lack of information and a diminished interest within the school system. With a general lack of visibility, this outdated image as a TSG leads to an overall decline in participation.

---

[44] Elias & Dunning. *Quest for excitement: Sport and leisure in the civilization process.* Oxford 1986

- Expropriation from their spaces and areas of expression in towns or in the countryside was often justified by the modernity that had to get in place.

- **Marginalization**: The economic and social **marginalization** resulted in a lack of financial support and low interest from sponsors and, by reaction, in a limited amount of young volunteers. So TSG were generally classified as a non-priority of the political and financial plans.

- Decontextualization. Some games have been integrated into the system of the performance sports with an imposed standardization. This process generally results in a loss of significances and ties with the usual way of life. Other games have been exploited for strategies and external goals, often to serve as preparatory exercises leading to globalized sports.

- Folklorization. A rigorous conservatism also threatens the games with often the interruption of their transmission to the young generations. The folklorization or the museumization can disconnect them from their social and daily context, and transform them into folk attractions alone.

Facing depreciating tendencies and hostility, the future of TSG has to be built on an undeniable social and cultural significance.

Indeed, we must consider that the **Ludo-diversity**, i.e. the cultural diversity represented by the playful culture and traditional festivities of the human beings (theatre, handicrafts, music, physical culture, body expression, etc) is a wealth that it is necessary to preserve and to develop for ourselves and the generations to come.

TSG are places of meetings, exchanges and experimentations between the different generations. It is an indispensable source of individual and collective enrichment because to know where one is going, it is necessary to know first who we are and where we comes from.

The equipment necessary to the practice of popular games is usually cheap and simple. This reality facilitates the social dynamics of the games while offering a potential of extremely varied realizations for local social projects, as the realization of the material or areas of the games.

By their diversity TSG form a field auspicious to the training. Like "school for life", they can bring a renewal of the educational practices: games of sharing rather than games of competition.

TSG participate thus actively to the physical and mental health of human being, and contribute to a sense of well-being. They are elements benefiting the "global health" as defined by the World Health Organization, a fundamental point for the protection of the "social health" of a community.

Games and sports of cultural tradition are also important under the dynamic aspect. They form a sort of philosophy by which to live and to decide together is a way of life for the group – the "Us". Indeed they are also, by the link to the playful community of a region, the basis of the expression of a strong sociability. This one becomes then a force for proposition, production and intellectual energy.

C) To protect and promote TSG, but for which objectives?

We have seen that TSG have some assets. The work achieved in the last thirty years begins to carry its fruits in Europe and numerous institutions appear to be aware and concerned. Traditional games are therefore at delicate crossing paths. What direction will the restoration movement take? Here are some points of debate.

If we listen solely to the 'modernists' the risk is high that the different negative phenomena mentioned above will be amplified, with an increased marginalization of the TSG practices. The norm would then become to only copy the globalized sport system while applying to the maximum the process of sportification, with the adoption of all matters connected with it, included the standardization. It is a form of reproduction of the present economic model and the easy solution for some people, but we know that globalization drives inexorably to standardization and that these two phenomena are associated. However, it is also well-known that it is the desire of differentiation through originality and personal achievement that is the motor of Humanity. The situation seems paradoxical.

A first point is fundamental to understand: if we have 100 similar TSG, standardization will therefore have as an objective to reduce this number to one. The globalization of the activity is necessary to ensure its use as a commercial activity and/or to be included in the Olympic program. However it is necessary to be realistic and to know the following point according to the Olympic Charter: "To be included in the program of the Olympic Games, a sport must conform to the following criteria: Only sports widely practiced by men in at least seventy-five countries and on four continents, and by women in at least forty countries and on three continents, may be included in the program of the Games of the Olympiad." This very restraining condition shows how much the path to climb is enormous and that very few games could reach this objective. They risk to abandon their soul in this process to the profit of a very hypothetical glory.

The previous point shows the incompatibility between globalization and the notion of intangible cultural heritage. This introduces two other important points. First, we remember that this process has already eliminated hundreds of games. The examples are numerous beginning in the middle of the 19th century. "American bowling" is a type of skittle

game (although the term doesn't indicate this), its promotion has marginalized and/or contributed to the disappearance of at least 150 up to 200 traditional skittle games in the west of Europe. Second, there is an existing process of the creation of "new games" from traditional practices, with a commercial objective for recreation offer in the big cities. These practices are in fact inventions that cannot claim a real tie with the Intangible Cultural Heritage of any particular TSG.

Otherwise, a drastic sportification of traditional games into institutionalized sports will inexorably drive to practices strongly valorising the competition itself and the system of domination. Nevertheless, on this point, it is necessary to wonder very seriously about reflexes created by solely competitive sport meetings during several generations, where the objective was always to dominate the 'Other'. We know that it is the reproduction of the economic system with monopolistic tendency, but the introduction of this antagonistic spirit in the mind of youth is an element that it is necessary to consider with a lot of attention. That is what the equitable, balanced exchange, respecting the cultures, without idea of domination or expansionism proposed through TSG meetings are much more efficient for the progress of democracy in the world than the one where the dominant model wants to impose its idea, champions or model of democracy by force.

Whatever the direction that a practice takes, leaders must have conscience that without the support of the *Ludic Community*, the social contract should be considered broken. This joins the note of the philosopher of games, Johan Huizinga, who wrote that the traditional sport is an action devoid of any material interest when it is deeply associated with a culture as a pastime. That means that the introduction of a logic in which people bend this system to their own profit corresponds to a diversion of property, one or more person appropriating the collective good without the knowledge of the others, who consider themselves possessors of the intangible elements of their culture.

D) There are numerous alternative ways to explore. Let's see some tracks without closing others that future generations will be in a situation to develop.

We know that the world that we have developed during the last two centuries privileged the system of competition. It is the strongest that decides. Yet the ecological and humanitarian challenges that appear as the Earth is depleting show that it will be necessary to deeply reform the system. From a system of seeking dominance, it will be (should be) probably necessary to develop and embrace a global system of sharing, where we will return to human values that one can still experience in *Ludic*

communities. The games and sports of cultural tradition could then function like laboratories or fields of social experimentation for the future.

Otherwise, since a lot of traditional games have a similar vocation beyond the state borders, with festive contexts often so similar, they are in reality bearers of a universal human dimension. This attractive diversity opens up to new perspectives for the development of cultural tourism because there is a substantial interest for TSG. This is linked with the general impulse toward a need for authenticity, discovery of the roots, simplicity and conviviality.

Research works on the educational, sportive and recreational application of TSG are still scarce in many countries. We need to elaborate and strengthen the foundation of knowledge that help us to survey, compare and analyze TSG. It is necessary to generate and support some vocations in which to do publications: books, encyclopedias, movies, Web sites, etc. The scientific research must also be developed. The same is true for the inclusion of TSG in schools and for the development of socio-cultural activities for adults and for tourism. For the successful management in these fields, we have to develop training courses for socio-cultural animators, sport professors and teachers.

All these works will generate the setting up of social and economic applications, as the social integration in the districts, the local animation, tourism, sport leisure, festivities and revitalization of the rural areas.

We can see that the future of TSG would find many advantages in the development of models bound to culture and education. They can be promoted at least in at least three directions:

>   - **The development of regional or trans-regional federations** (cross-border) always in order to remain linked with the related Ludic Community (and therefore the ICH), including within the diaspora.
>
>   - **The transmission of TSG to the youth** by introducing the most significant practices into school programs as promoted by the Declaration of Verona, a manifesto developed by ITSGA (International Traditional Sports & Games Association) and its partners in 2015.
>
>   - **The development of collaborations** in the context of sustainable development relying on networks involved in local development and cultural tourism economy.

TSG are tools of responsibility of citizens, tools of education and tools for the transmission of social values to the youth. **Traditional sports and games are more than just sports or games, they are culture!**
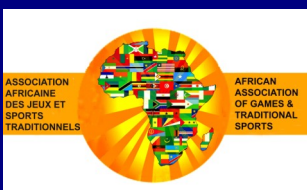
ITSGA - Global network

AEJeST -
European organisation

APJDAT - Panamerican
organisation

AAJST
African organisation

ATSGA
Asian organisation