

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF PLAY: PROBLEMS and PROSPECTS

*Proceedings of the
First Annual Meeting
of the
Association for the Anthropological Study of Play*

Edited by
David F. Lancy and B. Alan Tindall

**THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF PLAY:
Problems and Prospects**

*Proceedings
of the
First Annual Meeting
of the
Association for the Anthropological Study of Play*

**David F. Lancy
B. Allan Tindall**

Leisure Press

P.O. Box 452

Cornwall, N.Y. 12518

Selected articles published under copyright permission granted by The Association for the Anthropological Study of Play. No part of this book may be reprinted unless written permission is obtained from the editor.

LPBN: 1976-4

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number:

PREFACE

WINDS OF CHANGE

Michael A. Salter
University of Windsor

In pondering the format of this preface, I began to realize that the words I ultimately penned would be coloured by my emotions. Feelings of satisfaction and relief were being charged by an undercurrent of excitement. If, therefore, it appears at times that my enthusiasm overrides my objectivity, so be it; for it is not every day that a vision becomes a reality.

The vision — to draw together, from different disciplines, scholars capable of promoting the type of research and interaction necessary to better understand the nature, function and place of that phenomenon we label “play,” within the varied societies of our Global Village.

The reality — The Association for the Anthropological Study of Play — TAASP.

Permit me to recap, as succinctly as possible, the genesis of this organization. It was becoming obvious, as we moved into the 1970's, that an increasing number of intellectuals were beginning to analyze play from an anthropological perspective. In essence, they had taken up the gauntlet cast down a decade earlier by such scholars as John Roberts and Brian Sutton-Smith. Among the first to recognize and attempt to foster this burgeoning interest were Alyce Cheska, Howard Nixon and Edward Norbeck. Operating independently they organized “mini-conferences” in Minneapolis (April, 1972), Burlington, Vermont (April, 1973) and New Orleans (December, 1973).

The success of these meetings, together with some gentle “arm-twisting” by Alyce Cheska in May, 1973 prompted me to examine the possibility of bringing together under one umbrella the many persons sharing this concern and focus of research. There followed a period of correspondence with a variety of professional organizations and potentially interested scholars. Questionnaires, announcements, explanatory briefs and notes of information and speculation were sent winging throughout North America. This activity paved the way for a May, 1974 gathering of some two dozen interested persons in London, Ontario.

Meeting in conjunction with the North American Society of Sport History, these individuals forged the framework of the Association by electing for a one year term a twelve-man Steering Committee comprised of the following:

Chairman: Michael A. Salter, University of Windsor

Secretary-Treasurer: Alyce Cheska, University of Illinois

Members: Kendall Blanchard, Middle Tennessee State University;

Francis J. Clune, Jr., SUNY at Brockport; R. Gerald Glassford,
University of Alberta; Joseph Royce, University of California at

Preface

Berkeley; Frank A. Salamone, SUNY at Brockport; Peggy Stanaland, Eastern Kentucky University; B. Allan Tindall, SUNY at Buffalo; Phillips Stevens, Jr., SUNY at Buffalo; D. Margaret Toohey, California State University at Long Beach; and David Q. Voight, Albright College.

The Steering Committee, charged with the responsibility of structuring and promoting the growth of this fledgling organization, established six working committees, to wit: Constitution Committee — Tindall, Stanaland, Royce; Membership Committee — Clune, Salter, Toohey; Programme Committee — Stevens, Voight, Glassford; Nominating Committee — Blanchard, Salamone; Time and Site Committee — Salter; Budget Committee — Cheska. That the Association evolved in less than twelve months, from a mere concept to a tangible entity, complete with its own letterhead, newsletter and solid core of members, is largely due to the enthusiasm, imagination and perseverance of these working groups. Their efforts culminated in the First Annual Meeting of The Association for the Anthropological Study of Play in Detroit (April, 1975); their reward is housed between the covers of this volume.

In my opening gambit I alluded to a personal state of excitement tempered somewhat by feelings of satisfaction and relief. I was referring, of course, to the satisfaction that stems from a certain measure of success* and the relief associated with the knowledge that TAASP will continue to thrive under the capable and dedicated leadership of its new executives, namely:

President - B. Allan Tindall, University of California at Berkeley;
President-Elect — Phillips Stevens, Jr., SUNY at Buffalo;
Immediate Past-President — Michael A. Salter, University of Windsor
Secretary-Treasurer — Alyce Cheska, University of Illinois
Publications Editor — David F. Lancy, University of Pittsburgh
Members-at-Large — Elinor Nickerson, San Ramon Valley High
School, California; Peggy Stanaland, Eastern Kentucky University
and Kendall Blanchard, Middle Tennessee State University.

Excitement? How any scholar interested in the concept of play could fail to experience some stirrings of excitement following the Detroit conference is beyond me (although I must admit to certain biases!), for finally sociologists, educators, psychologists and anthropologists had assembled in one room to listen to and discuss topics of mutual concern. Hopefully, this intermingling of disciplines and the resultant interactions will lead to the rending of traditional

*At this point I would like to express my sincere appreciation on behalf of TAASP to the following organizations for their assistance during our formative stages: The Faculty of Human Kinetics at the University of Windsor, The North American Society for Sport History, The Central States Anthropological Society, The American Ethnological Society and the many professional associations who have carried TAASP information in the pages of their journals and newsletters.

Preface

academic barriers and culminate in hitherto unsuspected payoffs.

However, let us not waltz off in a euphoric state, for much still has to be done if we hope to truly understand the play world of man. While the annual coming together of academics is a step in the right direction, I would, in closing, pose this question: "What do *you* intend to *do* with the information gleaned from these proceedings?" I leave the following thought for you to mull over: I believe that the members of TAASP must do more than merely act as the generators and receptacles of knowledge. I suggest that they have an obligation to disseminate the knowledge they accumulate and to act as catalysts in the implementation of that knowledge at the "grass-roots" level.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

PREFACE

- v Winds of Change
 . . . Michael A. Salter

CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL APPROACHES IN THE STUDY OF PLAY

- 1 The Study of Play—Johan Huizinga and Modern Anthropology
 . . . Edward Norbeck
- 11 Children's Play in Africa and South America: A Review of the
 Ethnographic Literature
 . . . Helen B. Schwartzman & Linda Barbera
- 21 Sport as Art—Some Reflections on Definitional Problems in the
 Sociology of Sport
 . . . Richard Carlton
- 32 Sport as Ritual: A Theoretical Approach
 . . . Scott Kilmer
- 38 Theoretical Considerations and a Method for the Study of Play
 . . . Elizabeth C. Mouledoux

CHAPTER II: ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDIES OF CHILDREN'S GAMES IN TRADITIONAL AND ACCULTURATING SOCIETIES

- 51 Introduction
- 52 The Role of Traditional Games in the Process of Socialization Among
 the MOTU of Papua New Guinea
 . . . Annette Rosenstiel
- 58 The Study of Traditional Games in Mexico: Bibliographical Analysis
 and Current Research
 . . . Lilian Scheffler
- 66 Field Study: Children's Play in Bali
 . . . Kim Susan Storey
- 72 The Play Behavior of Kpelle Children During Rapid Cultural Change
 . . . David F. Lancy
- 79 The Reflection of Cultural Values in Eskimo Children's Games
 . . . Lynn Price Ager
- 86 Play and Inter-Ethnic Communication
 . . . Claire R. Farrer

Table of Contents

CHAPTER III: LINGUISTIC AND ETHNOSEMATIC ANALYSES OF PLAYFORMS

93	Introduction
94	Team Sports and Violence: An Anthropological Perspective . . . Kendall Blanchard
108	The Patterning of Game Preferences in the Yucatan . . . Christine A. von Glascoe
123	Poker Playing as a Dramaturgical Event: Bull Power, the Meaning and Commitment for Efficacious Gamesmanship . . . Susan H. Boyd
131	Language Impositions on Linguistic Humor . . . David Greenwald

CHAPTER IV: EXPRESSIVE ASPECTS OF PLAY

138	Introduction
139	The Rediscovery of Religious Play: A Pentecostal Case . . . Frank E. Manning
147	Religion as Play—Bori, A Friendly "Witchdoctor" . . . Frank Salamone
156	Playing a Kingdom: A Hausa Meta-Society in the Walled City of Zaria, Nigeria . . . Harold Olofson
164	Social and Judicial Functions of Bachama Song-Contests . . . Phillips Stevens, Jr.

CHAPTER V: OBSERVATIONAL STUDY OF PLAY IN PRIMATES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

172	Introduction
173	Methodological Considerations for Studies of Play in Primates . . . Fredericka B. Oakley
179	Differing Responses to Social Play Deprivation in Two Species of Macaque . . . Fredericka B. Oakley & Peter C. Reynolds
189	The Differential Effects of Multiple and Single Niche Play Activities on Interpersonal Relations Among Preschoolers . . . Patrick H. Doyle
198	Children's Play: A Sideways Glance at Make-Believe . . . Helen B. Schartzman

Table of Contents

CHAPTER VI: SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF PLAY AND HUMOR

206	Introduction
207	Play/Non-Play Determinants
	. . . James H. Duthrie
211	Binocular Resolution as a Function of the Play Identification Class
	. . . Ann Marie Guilmette
217	Ethnic Humour as a Function of Reference Groups and Identification Classes
	. . . Lawrence La Fave & Roger Mannell
230	Humor Judgements and the "Playful Attitude"
	. . . Roger Mannell & Lawrence La Fave

APPENDIX A

239	Constitution of the Association for the Anthropological Study of Play
-----	---

CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL APPROACHES IN THE STUDY OF PLAY

THE STUDY OF PLAY—JOHAN HUIZINGA AND MODERN ANTHROPOLOGY

(Johan Huizinga Address)

Edward Norbeck

Rice University

The contributions to the anthropological study of play of the Dutch culture historian Johan Huizinga are examined against the background of his personal and professional history and his views of culture and society. So examined, his writings are seen to have added value for anthropological research, particularly in broadening the field of study and in suggesting new topics and, correspondingly, new approaches.

I WISH FIRST to offer congratulations to The Association for the Anthropological Study of Play upon its successful establishment and to express thanks to the moving spirits whose efforts led to its founding. I am honored to have the privilege of delivering the first Johan Huizinga Address at this gathering, the first annual meeting of the newly formed association.

For more than one reason it is appropriate that my remarks give attention to Johan Huizinga and his role as a pioneer in the study of human play. Against the background of his life and times and his career as a Dutch historian of culture, Huizinga's writings seem to me to take on meaning that they otherwise lack and his contributions to the study of play appear to have value of which I think anthropologists have been largely unaware. Acting on this judgment, I shall discuss Huizinga's study of play in a context of his personal history and his views of the nature of culture and civilization. As a preliminary step, I shall first discuss, somewhat speculatively, certain aspects of the history of the emergence of play as a subject of scientific inquiry.

A relevant question arises in connection with the founding of The Association for the Anthropological Study of Play, an event that happened in 1974. Why has this organization, and play as a subject of study, been so late in developing? For some time, various of us have held that the undesirable effects of the complex of attitudes and values we call the Protestant ethic have included the retarding of our recognition of play as a valid subject of scientific study. I have also suggested that the late emergence of play as a topic of study is a reflection of a broad general trend of the growth of science and of related changes of attitudes about the nature of the universe, the human condition, and propriety of behavior (Norbeck 1971, 1974). I have called my speculations along this line "Man's Rediscovery of his Animal Nature," a phenomenon that I think is recent. I mean to say that the educated public of our nation and many other nations has

only recently become willing to acknowledge openly that man-animal behavior, such as sexual activity, is a vital part of human existence and something that need not be disguised, concealed, or kept secret as being unseemly conduct. The anthropological version of this view seems only slightly different. I think we now have the opinion that, although important in the development of human society, when we have called “the cultural molding of basic primate urges” may have gone dangerously far in channeling and suppressing universal human traits that are part of our biological inheritance, traits that cannot be strongly suppressed without harmful consequences. The world now seems safe for all of us to acknowledge that we breathe, eat, excrete, sleep, have sexual lives, and do many other similar things that are the universal behavior of all species of the mammalian class.

For many decades the grand taboo in the scientific study of human beings was the subject of sexuality. But the study of play has been even slower to develop—and play, we may note, is fundamentally man-animal behavior. Only its specific forms are learned, cultural acts. Taboos are rules explicitly prohibiting behavior that might otherwise be followed. No such explicit restriction seems to have prohibited the study of play. For the most part, we did not study play because it was somehow beneath our attention, so that no overt expression of prohibition existed. Sexuality became an appropriate subject for scientific study a number of years ago, but I wonder if play is even now wholly respectable, if it is generally regarded as a subject of study that is truly worthwhile. Unless students of play concern themselves with play therapy or other aspects of play that appear to have immediate, practical value, I think they are still generally faced with the need to justify their interests. In support of this statement, I shall note that the latest edition of *Encyclopedia Americana* contains only an article on play therapy among children. Nevertheless, in our roles as social scientists I think we are now both free to study play and increasingly willing to do so. As various of us have noted, however, our new-found interest has presented a curious dilemma: we must usually be serious in our study of play.

These remarks are not to say that the study of all forms of play were formerly disrespected or that it had been discouraged for other reasons. The realm of aesthetics has been a notable exception, although it has never been a major topic of anthropological study and it has not generally been regarded as play. Anthropologists did not ignore entirely other forms and aspects of play. If one searches through anthropological writings before the 1960's, some interest in one or another aspect of human play is evident from the time of Tylor, whose interest lay in games in their relation to the subject of cultural diffusion. Sports, games—at one time, notably the cat's cradle—and aesthetic activities of various kinds have often been dutifully described by anthropologists.

A vast amount of useful data on these and other forms of play may in fact be found in 19th and 20th century ethnological accounts, but many of these activities are not identified as play and they are often described under the heading

of religion. Physical anthropologists of the past have sometimes described the play of primates, and this interest continues today. A few vintage writings, such as the doctoral dissertation of Julian Steward and a subsequently published article summarizing it (Steward 1930), concern the topic of wit and humor, a subject about which anthropological understanding remains very small. But anthropologists of the past rarely concerned themselves with play as a generic subject. The most notable exception was A. L. Kroeber, whose textbook *Anthropology*, published in 1948, contains several pages on play as a general subject and on certain specific aspects of play, and who for years conducted graduate seminars at Berkeley that consisted of reading about and actually playing games of the Indians of the Great Plains and California. Margaret Mead has also shown an interest for many years in the general subject of play.

The upsurge in anthropological interest in human play has been very recent and sudden. To date it has resulted in a collection of writings covering a range of facets or sub-topics that includes such diverse subjects as the biological significance of human play, play and psychopathology, play elements in the liminoid stage of rites of passage, ritual humor, play as inverted behavior, and, of course, the play of children. An examination of the program of papers being delivered at this meeting gives evidence of a still broader range. No substantial general or comprehensive work has yet appeared, however, a circumstance that appears to reflect the pioneering stage of our research.

I think it is reasonable to describe the present anthropological attitude toward the subject of play as evincing both interest and encouragement: play should be studied. My view is stronger. Play is a conspicuously striking and universal kind of human behavior that is genetically based and culturally modified. If anthropology is to reach its objective of gaining an understanding of the human organism and its ways of life, I think that play must be studied. In my view, play should not be regarded as interlude in human behavior, a dispensable if refreshing indulgence, but as a vitally important activity of human life that in fact exists among the members of all human societies although its manifestations are sometimes masked by cultural conventions so that it is not readily obvious. As a field of study committed more strongly than other fields to cross-cultural or comparative observation, anthropology has perhaps an especially important role in the study of human play.

The roots of the anthropological interest in play, and of my own view of play, do not appear to be strongly or clearly evident in the history of anthropology. Rather, I suspect, they lie in other scholarly fields, biology, psychology, and, farther back in time, in philosophy, perhaps especially in some of the writings of Friedrich Schiller. One thing appears to be certain. One root lies in the writings of Johan Huizinga, who, in turn, undoubtedly drew some of his ideas from earlier scholars such as Schiller. This address honors Huizinga, a circumstance indicating that at least one group of anthropologists regards his writings as important in the anthropological study of play. This opinion seems to be well

founded; Huizinga's works contain much that is interesting and of potential value in the anthropological study of play.

Biography of Johan Huizinga

Johan Huizinga, a citizen of Holland, was born in Groningen in 1872 and died in 1945. His advanced education was gained at the universities of Groningen and Leipzig, where he was trained as a linguist, specializing in Sanskrit. Later, while serving as a high school teacher in Haarlem and as a teacher of Indic studies in Amsterdam, his interests turned to history. In 1905 he became a professor at Groningen and in 1915 was appointed professor at Leiden University, where he later once served as rector. Until recent years he was best known for his books on cultural history and essays on the philosophy of history, of which the most noted work was *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, first published in Dutch in 1919 and later translated into German and English. To those who are assembled here, his notable work is *Homo Ludens*, and I suspect that this book will in the future be regarded as his most distinguished writing. My remarks here will concern principally *Homo Ludens*, but I shall commend *The Waning of the Middle Ages* as also being valuable to those interested in the subject of human play and its course of history in Europe.

Huizinga's view of culture does not accord with conventional anthropological ideas, past or present. He defined culture as the state of a community "when the domination of nature in the material, moral and spiritual realms permits a state of existence which is higher and better than the given natural conditions", a state of "harmonious balance of material and social values" (Cheyette 1793:408; see also Weintraub 1966). Huizinga's definition of culture thus involves a value judgment and it closely resembles a traditional non-anthropological meaning of the term as being refinements of life or "civilization".

Huizinga is described by a biographer (ibid) as being a cultural conservative, strongly elitist, and in later years deeply despondent over the future of European civilization. Huizinga's concern over the future of civilization is strongly evident in his cultural history, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* and in *Homo Ludens*. He describes the Middle Ages as a time of violence, a period that carried the smell of both blood and roses. People sought refuge from the perils of the times by creating a life of fantasy, by idealizing knighthood, romantic love, and religious sensibilities, essentially as forms of play, and by rich development of play in the forms of aesthetics and bodily adornment. In *Homo Ludens* he describes the Middle Ages as a time of "joyous unbuttoned play" and sees in later times both a decline in play and a decline in the quality of civilization. In his view, a harmonious balance of play and "earnest", a word that he uses as a noun, are necessary for civilization to flourish, and that balance is achieved by the use of suitable play forms as vehicles for, and mediators of, the earnest. After the Middle Ages, Huizinga states, appropriate forms of play waned and disharmony grew.

Theoretical Approaches in The Study of Play

Much of Huizinga's pessimism over the future of European civilization appears to have stemmed from his observation of historic events in Europe in the 1920's and 1930's, including the rise of the Nazis, whose forms of play he regarded as being debased. A passage in *Homo Ludens* expressing disapproval of developments in Europe is easily recognizable as referring to Germany. Leiden University was closed by the Germans in 1941. As one of a group of professors of the university who were regarded as being unsympathetic with the German cause and uncooperative with German policies concerning the university, Huizinga was interned.¹ Later released from custody because of poor health, he died soon thereafter, in 1945.

Homo Ludens

Against the biographic background sketched above, the contents of *Homo Ludens* appear to me to take on greater meaning. In this book Huizinga first presents an elaborate definition of play, a subject to which I shall later return, and discusses the development of the linguistic concept of play, which he concludes is late in human history and well developed in Germanic or northern European languages but later in its development than the concept of work. I think it is still surprising for most of us to learn that various languages lack a generic term of play and lack a concept of work and play in binary opposition. The main focus of *Homo Ludens* is the question of the extent to which culture, as defined by its author, results from play. In Huizinga's own words, his goal is "to ascertain how far culture itself bears the character of play" (p. 4). This question is answered by an investigation of the extent to which culture expresses itself in the forms of play. Huizinga is careful to describe his work as concerning the play forms of culture rather than the play forms in culture, indicating that play is the vehicle for many activities known by other names. He examines ritual, law, war, politics, knowledge, poetry, imagery, philosophy, and various fields of aesthetics, and concludes (p. 173):

It has not been difficult to show that a certain play-factor was extremely active all through the culture process and that it produced many of the fundamental forms of social life. The spirit of playful competition is, as a social impulse, older than culture itself and pervades all life like a cultural ferment . . . We have to conclude, therefore, that civilization is in its earliest phases, played. It does not come from play like a babe detaching itself from the womb; it arises in and as play and never leaves it.

Elsewhere (p. i), he summarizes this conclusion in the statement that "... civilization arises and unfolds in and as play."

If this book is examined from the viewpoint of its organization and mode

¹This information was given in personal conversation by the wife of a colleague of Huizinga at Leiden University, who stated that her husband was also one of a group of 17 professors disfavored by the occupying Germans.

of execution, its contents bear a number of resemblances to anthropological ideas and procedures, some of which are curiously modern. The entire work may be described as being organized around central themes that are reminiscent of the ideas of Ruth Benedict and other anthropologists concerning "configurations" or "patterns" and also resemble more recent anthropological concepts of binary opposition. Huizinga's master pattern in the growth of civilization consists of play forms. In the play forms he sees as the dominant and distinguishing motif the element of agonism or contest. This theme, in turn, relates to a larger idea of binary opposition, the balance between play and earnest. He describes play and earnest (or "seriousness") as the "two cardinal moods of life" of the Middle Ages, and holds that they must be in harmonious balance, a state which is achieved through the existence of appropriate forms of play. These involve agonism or contest, which means *regulated* contesting, bound by the rules of play. The competitive spirit, he holds, is innate among human beings, and, if expressed in play forms, it is permissively controlled in a way that fosters the development of culture.

Some of the roots of these ideas of Huizinga appear to be traceable to Friedrich Schiller, who also presents a view of human play expressed in a scheme that may be called binary opposition and who identifies play with aesthetics or beauty. In his series of essays of 1795 translated into English under the title *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, Schiller states that "... man plays only when he is in the fullest sense of the word a human being, and he is fully a human being only when he plays (1967:107)." Schiller sees human life as being governed by two drives operating by reciprocity, which, in turn, constitutes a third drive. He states, "The sense-drive demands that there shall be change and that time shall have content; the form-drive demands that time shall be annulled and that there shall be change. That drive, therefore, in which both the others work in concert . . . , the play drive, . . . would be directed towards annulling time within time, reconciling becoming with absolute being and change with identity (1967: 97)." These more or less shadowy ideas of Schiller are also reminiscent of 20th century anthropology, resembling views concerning structure and function as well as of balanced opposition.

Returning now to Huizinga, it is appropriate, and perhaps necessary, to observe that some of his ideas are not generally acceptable to modern anthropologists. Our definition of culture is very different from that of Huizinga, and it is doubtful that most of us find acceptable various of his other ideas; for example, the views that the cardinal trait of play is agonism, that human beings are innately competitive—he refers to "the human need to fight" (1950:61)—and that archaic society was founded upon contest or agonism (1950:58). The issue now turns to the question of the value of Huizinga's works to the modern anthropological study of play.

If the circumstances of Huizinga's intellectual and personal background are considered, so that his writings may be appropriately understood, his writings on

play constitute a heuristically rich contribution in a number of ways. Among these are his discussion of linguistic concepts of play, a subject about which our knowledge has not advanced since Huizinga's time; the organizing theme of his book, which, in anthropological eyes today, may well be regarded as an interpretation of human play in its relationship to the culture as a whole; and numerous suggestive ideas embodying the idea of binary opposition, which may have value in modern studies of symbolism and cognition and which bear a resemblance to the views of Victor Turner (e.g., Turner, 1974) concerning play, ritual and symbolism. Huizinga's broadening of the concept of play appears to me to be the contribution of greatest and most immediate importance to us.

As modern anthropologists interested in the subject of human play, we are all concerned with play as a concept. We thus face the problem of defining it—and, to my knowledge, no consensus exists in its definition. For the most part, we have proceeded in our studies without defining play, assuming that everyone knows its meaning. An examination of such definitions as do exist shows disagreement. For example, Kroeber (1948) includes all of science in play; Huizinga and others do not. I think it appropriate to include in the category of play the entire realm of aesthetics, as Huizinga does, but others do not think so.

Huizinga defines and redefines play, discussing a large variety of traits that he sees as distinguishing it. The terms of description he uses include the following, which, for convenience, I have sometimes paraphrased:

- voluntary, free freedom
 - may be deferred or suspended at any time
 - not a task, not ordinary, not real
 - essentially unserious in its goals although often seriously executed
 - outside the immediate satisfaction of wants and appetite and the individual satisfaction of biological needs
 - a temporary activity satisfying in itself, an intermezzo or interlude, but an integral part of life and a necessity
 - distinct in locality and duration
 - repetitive
 - closely linked with beauty in many ways but not identical with it
 - creates order and is order; has rules, rhythm, and harmony
 - often related to wit and humor but not synonymous with them
 - has elements of tension, uncertainty, chanciness
 - casts a spell over us, is enchanting, captivating, intensely and utterly absorbing, joyous, has illusion
 - older than civilization or culture, it sub-serves culture and becomes culture
 - outside the antitheses of wisdom and folly, truth and falsehood, good and evil, vice and virtue, has no moral function
- Whether or not all of these traits and additional characteristics which Huizinga discusses will turn out eventually to be useful in formulating an appropriate

working definition of play is unpredictable. Huizinga has, however, provided a richer working base for such a formulation than may be found elsewhere.

As a culture historian, Huizinga does not concern himself with the biological significance of play as a trait of the species *Homo sapiens*, a subject that is better handled by physical anthropology and the biological sciences. Directly or indirectly, however, he deals with most of the major topics of the modern study of play in cultural and social anthropology. These include the relationships between play and other elements of culture (that is, play as related to values, ideals, war, law, politics, ritual, and the like); human play and its cultural expression; the functional significance of play in a cultural sense, and the relationship between work and play. Our modern concern with the therapeutic value of play is also clearly evident in *Homo Ludens*, appearing as an important but largely implicit theme that concerns the health or welfare of European civilization.

Huizinga's treatment of aesthetics as forms of play merits special attention. I think it invites our entry into a large realm of investigation into which we have so far scarcely ventured. I shall select here only one example, his treatment of bodily adornment, that is, clothing and hairdress. This is a subject about which anthropology has been notably silent. The only well known writing on this subject is the aging work of A. L. Kroeber and Jane Richardson (1940) on European dress styles, which principally concerns patterns discernible in trends of fashion. We learn from introductory textbooks in anthropology that all peoples have aesthetic impulses and adorn their bodies within a varied but nevertheless limited range of ways. We have rarely dealt with fashions, however, and we have not regarded hair and clothing styles as forms of play that relate to other elements of culture beyond social statuses and, perhaps, traits of personality. Huizinga does so interestingly and informatively. I suggest that, following the lines of Huizinga's thinking, the tracing in an anthropological context of modes of bodily adornment in our nation during the past several decades would also be informative.

Another feature of Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* merits special attention, his view that the quality of culture or civilization is declining. As we all know, this opinion is a popular view today that we hear expressed frequently. In this context, Huizinga writes of the decline of play after the Middle Ages and its heightened decline in modern times. Referring to modern social life and politics, he sees the existence of false play, calling it "Puerilism", "a blend of adolescence and barbarity" (p. 205). Referring to sports and athletics, he speaks of "play stiffening into seriousness but still being felt as play . . . (1950:199)." Sport, he states, has become a thing *sui generis*, neither play nor earnest (ibid). He sees other play forms as having changed similarly: for example, war is no longer a noble game; the play element in art has waned; the modes of dress have become similarly serious. Stating that civilization is rooted in "noble play", he cautions that we cannot afford to neglect the play element (1950:210), particularly in international relations.