

Chapter 6

Boys Who Play Hopscotch: The Historical Divide of a Gendered Space

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As a child hops through a sketched diagram, shaped like a cross, an airplane, a snail, careful not to tread on the forbidden lines, to enter the dragon's teeth, or step foot in hell, does the hopping participant contemplate what this mere amusement means? As this child strives to take ownership of his or her own space, ultimately attaining a place called sky blue, heaven, or paradise, what symbolic path has this child just traversed, what cultural meanings has he or she just produced? Am I reading too much between the lines to suggest that the modern game of Hopscotch involves something more than mere amusement?

As the social practice of Hopscotch represents a singular form of recreation, I believe it worthwhile to ask what cultural systems of meaning are both re-created and created anew through such social activities. Do these chalked boundaries of space suggest a particular course of social action, even in a space seemingly divorced from adult authority? If childhood represents a context within which social trajectories are traced, with some doors open and others closed, what might this mere amusement tell us about the possibilities and constraints of social mobility? Are certain social spaces more open to boys than to girls, or vice versa? Is the gender order being re-created, or do traditional games offer the possibility of creating something innovative, even a new social order? As games represent dynamic social practice, then it is imperative that we situate these games within the context of social power and culture historically.

To understand the multiple meanings attached to a social practice within contemporary culture, I believe it necessary to chronicle its particular historical development. By analyzing a social practice historically, it may be possible to surmise the developing relations of cultural production as

groups and individuals construct meaning in their respective use of these practices. The traditional game of Hopscotch can therefore be characterized as a social practice, a habitable text of cultural constraint and possibility.¹ Weaving a path of cultural production, participants negotiate meaning across lines of social and physical space.² Once a game played predominantly by boys, Hopscotch has undergone a historical transformation in both the gender of player participants, as well as the subsequent cultural meanings attached to its gendered involvement. Thus, within the 20th century, the socially constructed space of the Hopscotch diagram has come to be marked as feminine, a cultural text inhabited primarily by preadolescent girls. Boys who play Hopscotch today run the risk of being deemed effeminate, a stigmatized marking in a patriarchal society.

This chapter illustrates how the simple lines of a children's game have served to separate boys from girls, institutionalizing the binary construction of gender and sexuality within the 20th century. As part of a larger historiographic study³ of Hopscotch, this chapter examines the cultural meanings of gender as a predominant theme played out in the historical transformation of a singular social practice. Initially, I discuss the ways in which traditional games, and the study of these games, intersect the social construction of gender and gender socialization. As these games are commonly classified in terms of the sex of their participants, research has tended to highlight the apparent differences between girls and boys. These differences have generally supported the reigning gender order. And yet, as a malleable text enacted in local contexts, the historical practice of Hopscotch likewise highlights the polysemic possibilities of gender production and meaning.

SEX DIFFERENCES AND GENDER SOCIALIZATION

Children experience themselves as belonging to distinct and dichotomous gender identities. These gender identities are based upon cultural systems of belief that generalize, and in turn naturalize, the appearance, behaviors, and thoughts of each sex. Children's play is but one of several interrelated activities that informs the cultural production of gender. By addressing the informal play of children, it is possible to witness the ways in which these active agents of culture participate in their own construction of gender.

According to Haraway (1991, p. 130),

"Gender" is at the heart of constructions and classifications of systems of difference. Complex differentiation and merging of terms for "sex" and "gender" are part of the political history of the words. Medical meanings related to "sex" accrue to "gender" in English progressively through the twentieth century.

However, the concept of gender appears to have developed in order to contest the naturalization of sexual difference and superiority. Thus, for Haraway, gender has the potential to both historicize and culturally relativize the analytical categories of sex or nature (p. 134). In this capacity, gender represents the semiotic production of sexual subjectivity, embodied in "the history, practices, and imbrication of meaning and experience" (De Lauretis, 1984, p. 167).

The situated practices of traditional games are often conceived of as a laboratory of social relationships (Knapp & Knapp, 1976; Sierra, 1995). As such, these games are thought to provide essential training in social interaction and development. But because traditional games are often categorized by the sex of the participant, numerous scholars have sought to differentiate between the sexes on the basis of their play preferences (Crosswell, 1898-1899; Erikson, 1950; Lehman & Witty, 1927; Lever, 1976, 1978; McGhee, 1900; Sutton-Smith & Rosenberg, 1961; Sutton-Smith, Rosenberg, & Morgan, 1963; Terman, 1926). Much of this literature has relied on a transmission model of socialization, in which adults teach children particular social skills and capacities. This conception of socialization rests on humanist discourses that view the individual as unique, fixed, and coherent (Harr, 1985; Davies; 1989; Weedon, 1987). Within this paradigm, children represent passive recipients of this socialization, as they are pressed into a relatively fixed form (Davies, 1989; Davies & Banks, 1992; Waksler, 1986). In a social world polarized around a male/female dualism, gender is conceived as primary to this essential form. As such, boys and girls enter into apparently discrete and noncontradictory categories of gender. As seen in the following section, the classification of traditional games by the sex of the participants has served to perpetuate this dualism, producing some troubling conclusions about the social construction of gender in modern society. And yet, as I demonstrate in the final section of this paper, this structured dualism likewise affords the possibility of cultural resistance and agency.

Jack and Jill at Play

In a popular nursery rhyme, Jack and Jill climb a hill together. In their effort to fetch a pail of water, they come tumbling down the hill, once again together. In describing children's games, however, young Jack and Jill are often separated.

Children's games have been categorized throughout history in terms of the sex of the participant. These games traditionally have been described as "the peculiar and particular property" of either boys or girls (Gomme, 1894). Two thousand years ago, Aristophanes mentions jacks as a game played by Greek girls, while Pollux describes an early form of Blind Man's Bluff played by Roman boys. Gomme classifies games of children into the

two broad categories of dramatic games and games of skill and chance, attributing the former to girls, the latter to boys. As a result of such classification schemes, Knapp and Knapp (1976) assert that girls' games generally require the mastery of extended, repetitive patterns of words and motions, while boys' games demand players to strategically improvise as the game progresses.

In general, then, the play of girls is often characterized as more passive and devoid of the elaborated structure inherent to boys' more strategic and complex forms of play (Lehman & Witty, 1927; Lever, 1978; Piaget, 1965; Sutton-Smith, 1972). Additionally, girls are said to demonstrate a more pragmatic and flexible orientation toward rules than are boys, who tend to be more competitive and less willing to alter the rules in the middle of the game (Gilligan, 1982; Piaget, 1965). In preparation for adulthood, boys' games have been said to ready young men for success in the competitive working world of modern society, while girls' games and toys may serve to prepare these participants for the private sphere of the home and their future roles as wives and mothers (Lever, 1976; Seiter, 1993). In her survey of girls' toy advertisements within the 20th century, Seiter (1993, p. 74) suggests that these toys represent an "institutionalized" form of play, replicating the specific historical forms of women's domestic labor. In one example, an advertisement for Tootsie toy dollhouse furniture states that "the child is taught to play house and do as mother does at the age when impressions begin to mean so much" (p. 79). Like toys, traditional games have been heralded as a means of developing particular social skills. Unfortunately, the common paradigm of contrasting girls' and boys' play forms has too often led scholars to categorize children into discrete and dichotomous sex roles, perpetuating the binary construction of an artificial gender divide. As the case of Hopscotch illustrates, traditional games cannot be said to belong exclusively to either male or female participants. Furthermore, as the work of Goodwin (1995) demonstrates, girls playing Hopscotch actively engage in complex enactments of social negotiation. As such, findings that report seemingly natural differences between the sexes based upon play preferences more likely reflect the cultural construction of gender at a particular historical moment.

THE CASE OF HOPSCOTCH: A TRADITIONAL GAME REPRODUCING "TRADITIONAL" GENDER VALUES

In the past decade, two children's magazines began publication in the United States: *Hopscotch: The Magazine for Girls* and *Quest: The Magazine for Boys*. Marketed for an audience of 6 to 12 year olds, "with youngsters eight, nine, and ten the specific target age," these magazines stress a gendered point of view. While one reviewer contends that "the writing is objec-

tive" and that there is no apparent religious or political slant to these magazines (Katz, 1991, p. 132), the very names of these periodicals articulate an ideology of gender.

In the current climate when "traditional values" are so fervently touted by a large sector of American society,⁴ the decision to adopt the traditional game of Hopscotch as signifying traditional femininity seems telling. The message is clear. Playing Hopscotch represents socially sanctioned (i.e., "normal" and "natural") behavior for preadolescent girls.⁵ Conversely, *Quest: The Magazine for Boys* suggests that masculine boys will exhibit a frontier mentality of exploration and bravery.

Of course, these magazine titles may merely reflect the play preferences of late 20th-century boys and girls. As discussed in the following section, Hopscotch has indeed come to be characterized as a "girls' game" today. Boys, who played this traditional game more freely in the past, appear to prefer other activities today, particularly those that exploit the wide open spaces of playing fields (Thorne, 1993). But these titles may likewise promote expectations of gender behavior. Like Seiter's assertion that toy advertisements institutionalize the historic forms of women's domestic labor, might not the traditional game of Hopscotch embody traditional values of male hegemony? As Goldenberg (1993, p. 263) suggests, "Could this elaborate use of small spaces be one way little girls train to make maximum use of the restricted social territory in which they have to move when they grow up?" This feminist interpretation of Hopscotch may well support the cultural meanings connected to this traditional game today, but how might this same game be interpreted when practiced by boys? As the following discussion attests, Hopscotch was once played almost exclusively by boys. Did the elaborate use of these small spaces by boys similarly reflect a limited social mobility for males, or have the gendered meanings of this social practice undergone a significant historical transformation?

Rugged Boys and Sissies

The traditional game of Hopscotch was once played primarily, if not exclusively, by boys. Pliny describes a Roman game much like round Hopscotch played by the boys of his day. Kiliaan (1574) reports that the game was generally known in the 16th century, played by Dutch boys. The game is featured in the 16th/17th-century literary works of Rabelais (1925), Fischart (1963), and Basile (1943), played by a male protagonist. In one of the earliest references to Hopscotch found in England, there is mention in *Poor Robin's Almanack* (1667), of "the time when school-boys should play at Scotchhoppers." Nearly two centuries later, Kennedy (1862) describes a Wexford (Irish) variant of Hopscotch, asserting that "Rustic boys had a like game, which they called Heck-a-Beds." The idea of Hopscotch representing a practice engaged in by rustic boys seems to be reinforced by

Guts Muths (1802), who includes hopping on one leg as one of the gymnastic activities promoted within his practical guide to healthful and amusing exercises. He argues that hopping serves particularly to strengthen the lower limbs, as well as to give elasticity to the entire frame. The resolution to jump over obstacles such as brooks and ditches was thought to enhance the character of rugged boys as they matured into virile and virtuous men. Guts Muths makes no mention of this gymnastic exercise practiced by girls. Perhaps this connection between hopping and rugged boys has most to do with Guts Muths's assertion that this "simple exercise ranks among the most violent." In highlighting the physical challenge of hopping on one leg, he writes that "the inexpert frequently cannot advance above the little distance of thirty steps: on the other hand, I have frequently seen robust, experienced boys hop on above eight hundred steps, over hillocks, holes, and wheel-ruts" (p. 199).

By the late 19th and early 20th century, however, a shift in game production seems to take place. Hopscotch becomes a social practice popular among both boys and girls. Culin (1891, p. 229) suggests that "two distinct ways of playing this game exist among the children of Brooklyn: one common among boys and girls called 'Kick the Stone Out,' and another, said to be exclusively played by girls, called 'Pick the Stone Up.'"⁵ Similarly, Feilberg (1895, p. 362) reports that Hopscotch in Denmark "seems common in the country too, played equally by boys and girls." Sometimes together and sometimes separated, both boys and girls begin to participate in this social practice. De Vries (1957, p. 3) asserts that "Boys as well as girls take part in this game," but adds immediately that "it appears to me that girls have remained more interested in the game than have boys."

In fact, the increased popularity of this game among girls during this historical period is striking. In their "Sixty Years of Historical Change in the Game Preferences of American Children," Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg (1961, p. 32) contrast the results of four large-scale studies of children's games and find, among other things, that Hopscotch gained in popularity with girls from 14th place in 1896, to 7th in 1921, and finally to 5th in 1959. Similar shifts in game preference seem to have occurred worldwide. In Japan, for example, the popularity of Hopscotch among girls gained from 39th position during the early Meiji period (1868-1883) to 6th during the late Shōwa period (1946-1973).⁶ Thus, by the 20th century, the widespread practice of Hopscotch begins to be described specifically as a girls' game (Barnouw, 1956; Frashëri, 1929; Maclagan, 1901, 1905; Parsons, 1936, 1945; Plath, 1986; Salas, 1947; Scheffler, 1976; Sutton-Smith, 1959; Sutton-Smith & Rosenberg, 1961; Vanoverbergh, 1927), an activity perhaps no longer belittling rugged boys of the past.

These characterizations of Hopscotch as distinctly feminine have altered the meaning of this widespread practice within the 20th century. Once a game played by rugged boys, modern boys who cross the lines of the Hop-

scotch grid run the risk today of being called "sissies" (derived from sister), or some cultural equivalent connoting effeminacy. These designations, deemed culturally derogatory, have been reported from nearly every continent (De Vries, 1957; Manilerd, 1986; Menéndez, 1963; Sutton-Smith, 1959; Sutton-Smith & Rosenberg, 1961) within the 20th century.⁷ In his analysis of Argentinean Hopscotch or Rayuela, Menéndez (1963, p. 137) asserts that "With respect to the differentiation of the sexes, in some places Hopscotch is played exclusively by girls; in others it is mixed. Never is it exclusively masculine, and in certain places, to play it is considered an 'effeminate' act." Such labels of contempt alert boys to the fact that only certain actions are socially sanctioned as appropriately "masculine," negatively reinforcing any deviation from such gendered practices. These same labels suggest to girls that those cultural productions deemed feminine become socially marked and marginalized.

And yet, as this brief historical analysis illustrates, the traditional game of Hopscotch belongs neither to boys nor girls exclusively. As a dynamic social practice, Hopscotch has become, within the 20th century, a highly gendered space, a socially sanctioned space of femininity.⁸ Thus, within the binary construction of the gender order, boys participating in purportedly "girls' game" become socially stigmatized. For as Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg (1961, p. 41) suggest, it was "much more deviant behavior for a modern boy to play at, say Dolls, Hopscotch, Jacks, Houses, Schools, Cooking, Jump rope, Musical chairs, Simon says, and Singing games than it was for a boy to play at these things in earlier historical periods." It seems evident that this behavior is deemed "deviant" within the 20th century because these particular practices have become culturally feminized. For those stigmatized as sissies, the adage that "boys will be boys" takes on a coercive twist. The expression becomes an imperative rather than a statement signifying future perfection. Thus, the gendered space of the Hopscotch grid simultaneously sanctions the cultural production of femininity while questioning the masculine development of its male participants.

In a marked attempt to separate male from female, the active production of children's social worlds strongly discourages boys from engaging in practices perceived even remotely feminine. As such, boys distance themselves from any games or activities that come to be equated with girls. In this way, children respond to the social pressure of conforming to the cultural definitions of appropriate and dichotomous gender roles by producing boundaries for their own social activities. In order to escape the apparent stigma attached to playing Hopscotch, then, 20th-century boys have drawn further away from this social practice (De Vries, 1957; Knapp & Knapp, 1976; Sutton-Smith, 1959; Sutton-Smith & Rosenberg, 1961; Thorne, 1993).

As this historical sketch illustrates, the traditional game of Hopscotch has come to be viewed today as a feminine form of action. As girls began to

enter social spaces previously inhabited by young men within the 19th and 20th centuries, boys appear to have distanced themselves from these previously male preserves. While the historical evolution of this traditional game is perhaps noteworthy, it tells us little about the potential factors that underlie the changing meanings of gender and sexuality within the 20th century. In the following section, then, I examine broadly the ways in which this singular practice has helped to reify gender as a binary social construction within the 20th century. Focusing in particular on American forms of Hopscotch, I address two sociological developments of the modern era that I believe have served to institutionalize the physical and social structure of the game today.

SOCIOLOGICAL TRENDS WITHIN 20TH-CENTURY AMERICA

In the context of the United States, the rise of modern sport and the incorporation of recreation under greater institutional control has significantly altered the meaning of this traditional game. Both of these developments have led to an increased formalization of game structure as well as a more rigid separation of game participants by gender.

Men and the Sporting Culture

Modern sport may well represent one of the last strongholds of male power and superiority over—and separation from—the perceived “feminization” of American culture (Horowitz, 1987; Messner, 1987). The closing of the frontier, changes in the workplace, the family, and the educational system have all been cited as factors eroding the traditional bases of male privilege within the United States (Filene, 1975). In this context, organized sports have become a “primary masculinity-validating experience” (Dubert, 1979, p. 164). Besides becoming a medium for adult male production and consumption, boys are often directed toward organized sports and other activities that articulate cultural definitions of masculinity. The creation of the Boy Scouts of America, Little League baseball, and Pop Warner football exemplify the way in which modern boys have been institutionally segregated from girls so as to develop a distinctly male gender identity.

As *Quest: The Magazine for Boys* suggests, modern American boys are expected to explore and conquer a competitive world, perhaps opening new markets and opportunities. The sporting world provides a symbolic arena within which boys may prepare and practice for adult forays into this competitive culture. Thus, institutionalized games such as baseball and football offer a cultural medium through which developing masculinity might further be validated. In this regard, sport serves to reinforce rigid defini-

tions of masculinity and femininity as well as to rationalize male domination. Like boys who are stigmatized as sissies for playing Hopscotch, girls entering the arena of modern sport within the 20th century have had to deflect accusations of lesbianism. For as Lenskyj asserts (1993, p. 280), “Athleticism is so clearly defined as a male attribute that its presence in women is automatically assumed to ‘masculinize’ her, if she was not ‘masculine’ at the outset.” Ironically, a girl traversing a Hopscotch diagram today, leaping over restricted boxes while balancing a marker upon the back of her hand, must demonstrate tremendous athleticism. However, this display of unquestioned athleticism in girls is seldom perceived as masculine.

Thus, as boys entered the male preserve of modern sport, girls appear to have taken primary ownership of the Hopscotch diagram. As sport was perceived as culturally masculine, the social and physical space of the Hopscotch diagram became readily identified as feminine. The spatial parameters of these very games could be said to reinforce these cultural meanings. While most sports require a larger expanse—a wide open terrain of fields, courts, and diamonds—the traditional game of Hopscotch is played within a confined space. Given these requirements of physical space, sports tend to be played further from the home or school site than a game such as Hopscotch, which is generally played in earshot of these physical structures. The physical mapping of these diverse activities suggests a similar mapping of social structure, particularly as it relates to a hegemonic gender order. Men are afforded greater social mobility than women, while women continue to be culturally positioned (and in turn, position themselves) in closer proximity to the home. Thus, this modern reading of Hopscotch as feminine practice appears to be supported by its physical and social structure.

The names often given to the compartments of this traditional game seem to lend support to the argument that playing Hopscotch prepares participants for domestic life, training modern girls to gain a certain mastery within this confined space. Particular compartments within the diagram are often referred to as rooms (Brewster, 1945, 1953; Sutton-Smith, 1972). The skillful player moves from one room to the next, obeying the responsibilities and restrictions associated with each room. In other cases, the small spaces of the Hopscotch diagram are actually called houses (Bancroft, 1937; Hurgronje, 1906; Lankford, 1992; Winslow, 1966), where the ultimate goal is to take ownership of one’s own house. A girl becomes the master of her own house, a housewife, only after she has demonstrated skill and proficiency within this feminine course of action. This gendered interpretation makes sense in describing modern forms of women’s domestic labor, but does this same game train boys to become domestically skilled and/or confined? How might we explain boys’ use and control of these symbolic spaces within previous centuries? Perhaps this shift in game preference highlights another shift in domestic control, where women are understood within the sexual division of labor to represent the modern masters of the house.

Institutionalizing Game Form and the Gender Order on the School Playground

The structural equivalence created between Hopscotch and femininity has been further reinforced by the incorporation of recreation into the American education system. This development toward institutionalized play and "the taming of the playground" (Sutton-Smith, 1972, p. 13) within the 20th century has changed the context within which traditional games are produced. Previously referred to as a street or sidewalk game (Culin, 1891; Douglas, 1931; Fraser, 1975; Salas, 1947), the depiction of a painted Hopscotch diagram onto the school playground has appeared to formalize both its physical and social structure.

Based on participant observation of 9- to 11-year-old children in four elementary schools, Thorne and Luria (1986) found that gender segregation is central to the daily lives of American school children. So central, in fact, is this segregation that these authors speak of separate boys' and girls' worlds. This separation by gender seems even more pronounced on the playground, where adults are less able to exert control and children are relatively free to choose their own activities and companions. This tendency to select gender-specific games on the school playground has similarly been reported elsewhere (Eifermann, 1968; Finnan, 1982; Hughes, 1993; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1987; Thorne, 1993). In a study of Thai children's games, Anderson (1973) found that games deemed exclusively feminine or masculine were played much more frequently at school than in the home neighborhood. Thus, in the United States as well as abroad, it appears that girls and boys play together much more readily away from the school setting, and seem willing to play games at home or in their neighborhoods which their same-sex peers would preclude at school. Thus, the incorporation of recreation into the schoolday beginning in the late 19th and early 20th centuries has appeared to segregate the sexes in their play activities, contributing to the social construction of a gender divide.

The fact that playgrounds have "a more fixed geography of gender" (Thorne, 1993, p. 44) suggests that children actively participate in the production of their own gender identities. And yet, the playground itself remains a school-sanctioned space. As such, schools have formalized the physical fields of play available to children. While many of these decisions rest on the limitations of real estate and the desire for functional order, these decisions significantly alter the cultural production of children. Concerning the traditional game of Hopscotch, school authorities these days commonly paint a diagram (or perhaps a few of the same diagram) on the playground blacktop. Presented as the basic form of this polymorphous practice, this painted and semipermanent diagram represents a design repossessed from children by adult authority, a painted form that potentially limits the freedom of children's play and innovation. This process of incor-

porating an informal game into the more formalized school setting has led many children around the world to refer to the game of Hopscotch today as "school" or "classes" (Byleeva & Grigoriev, 1985; Duran, 1995; Vsevolodskii-Gerngross, 1987). In Russia, for example, Gorbunov, Efimov, and Efimova (1994, p. 101) report that the name of classes, given to certain versions of the game of Hopscotch, only appears after the 1930s. Thus, the incorporation of this traditional game into the school setting within the 20th century appears to have altered the names that children attribute to this social practice.

The painting of a relatively fixed form on the school playground may in fact discourage children from participating in this traditional game altogether. In discussing the play of Scottish children, Nielsen and Roberts (1995, p. 34) report that "perhaps as a matter of policy linked to the Best Kept School award, the only hopscotch beds in today's playgrounds have been painted by benevolent authority. 'Beddies' is not much played in Aberdeen now: pre-decorated playground surfaces do not interest children for long." As their own production is stripped from them, children are expected to passively consume the games offered to them by school authorities. However, children are not merely passive recipients of adult socialization. As skillful social agents, children may ignore these adult designs or they may reassert their own productive and creative capabilities.

Thus, the structural constraints placed on these games by adults may be actively resisted. It is not uncommon for children to add to the painted diagram, or bypass the school-sponsored form and draw their own Hopscotch diagram.⁹ In this way, children produce their own structure for play. By not playing within the school-sanctioned Hopscotch diagram, simultaneously defacing school property in order to assert an alternative identity, children risk getting into trouble with adults. Ritchie (1965, p. 109) reports one child's concerns about drawing Hopscotch ("Peevers" or "Beddies" in Scotland) diagrams at school: "In ma last school ye got the belt for drawin' peever beds in the playground. Fae the heidmaister tae! . . . At Abbeyhill ye could play peevers in the playground but the jannie was a moanin.'" Despite these risks and threats of corporal punishment, children continue to produce their own possibilities for play. In active resistance to adult authority, children sketch their own creations of this traditional game on the blacktop surface. It should be added, however, that these acts of resistance against the school-sanctioned game diagram or physical structure is a different kind of resistance than children challenging the social structure embedded within this particular practice. Children may produce their own Hopscotch design as an act of cultural resistance while simultaneously reproducing the binary and hierarchical construction of gender.

This does not mean that the social structure embedded within these social practices cannot also be challenged. In fact, boys continue to play the game of Hopscotch today, despite incriminations against entering into this

stigmatized space.¹⁰ Thus, even within late 20th-century America, the feminized practice of Hopscotch should not be labeled a "girls' game." However, in order to examine more fully how both boys and girls interpret their production within, and distance from, this particular practice, children must be made the living units of analysis. In order to accomplish this task, however, we must merge culturally textured studies, such as this, with ethnographically grounded studies of both girls' and boys' play (Goodwin, 1995; Hughes, 1993; Thorne, 1993). One possible means of adopting this ethnographic approach in relation to the present work would be to focus on those boys who continue to engage in this social practice despite its gendered marking. While these boys may be labeled sissies for their social action, they likewise serve a critical role in validating the masculinity of their male critics. In a sense, then, their very presence on the playground helps to perpetuate the gender order, while highlighting the tenuousness of these social constructions. And yet, these same boys awaken the promise of cultural possibility, a release from structural constraint. The contradiction of their cultural production suggests that gender is clearly marked within the confines of this traditional game. As a dynamic social practice, Hopscotch embodies these cultural and physical markings. For while the lines of the game diagram compartmentalize physical space, the social structure of the game tends to reproduce the binary construction of gender within the 20th century, simultaneously affording room for social resistance.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

In tracing the cultural and historical transformation of Hopscotch, this chapter has illustrated how a traditional game, once played primarily by boys, has come to signify a feminine course of action within the 20th century. A game traditionally played by rugged boys, Hopscotch has become today a stigmatized space, where manly boys dare not tread. Thus, by creating the structural parameters of a Hopscotch diagram, negotiating the method and tenor of play, children actively participate in their own construction of gender. For as children divide their environment into chalked boxes for apparent amusement, they likewise divide the sexes into cultural categories of gender. In this regard, this historic-geographic analysis of Hopscotch demonstrates that social practices in the form of children's games are indeed malleable and porous texts and that gender remains a predominant theme running through these porous practices.

As children enter into the marked and confined space of the Hopscotch diagram, they face a divided landscape of gendered terrain. At play, these children work through these socially constructed confines, confronting other cultural possibilities of game and gender form. Thus, there is space within these traditional games to play with social divisions, to resist the im-

position of social structure. In order to investigate these new forms of cultural production, however, it is imperative to view children as active social agents. On a daily basis, on school blacktops and in their own backyards, children (re)create culture. As adults, we need to keep these blacktops and backyards open, free from the bias of a grown-up perspective. By celebrating, rather than controlling, the range of youthful production, we learn from children not only about our own rich histories but also about a future of endless possibilities.

NOTES

1. This notion of viewing games as habitable texts challenges the fixed nature of games as socializing agents, where the structure of the game itself determines player personnel and strategy. In this sense, the subjective reading of Hopscotch as a habitable text returns the cultural production of meaning to the player him/herself. Simultaneously, however, the structural imposition of meaning on a particular reading likewise affects player experience and production. The idea of an "open" text (Eco, 1989) has been the subject of considerable interest within literary criticism. Of note here is Julio Cortázar's revolutionary 1963 publication of *Rayuela* (translated as *Hopscotch* in 1966), in which he encourages the reader to participate in the production of the novel. Cortázar suggests two possible ways of reading the novel. The first, which he associates with the "female reader," is to read the novel in the normal or passive fashion from beginning to end. The second, which he attributes to the "male reader," takes control (as led by Cortázar himself) of the novel's order by reading chapters in alternative sequence. As might be expected, Cortázar's sexist imposition of just what constitutes a male and female reading drew a great deal of criticism. In an interview with Evelyn Picon Garfield, he responds to this criticism with an apology to women worldwide:

I ask pardon of the women of the world for the fact that I used such a "machista" expression so typical of Latin American underdevelopment. . . . I did it innocently and I have no excuse. But when I began to hear the opinions of my friends, women readers who heartily insulted me, I realized that I had done something foolish. I should have put "passive reader" and not "female reader" because there's no reason for believing that females are continually passive. They are in certain circumstances and are not in others, the same as males (1975, p. 108).

While Cortázar's terminology is reflective of a sexist gender ideology, the suggestion that men and women, boys and girls, may read themselves into a cultural text differently provides an interesting point of departure for this paper, as the cultural production of Hopscotch varies in time, place, and game participant.

2. Space refers here both to the physical plane as well as the social relations existing within and across that physical plane. I borrow here from the work of Bourdieu (1990), Massey (1984), and Lefebvre (1991) in my own understanding of space. In discussing the connection between social and physical space,

Massey (1991, p. 12) contends that "Social relations always have a spatial form and spatial content, they exist necessarily both in space (i.e., in local relations to other social phenomena) and across space. And it is the vast complexity of the interlocking and articulating nets of social relations which is social space." In terms of this paper, I am particularly interested in Lefebvre's notion of social space. He writes that "Social space is the outcome of past actions that permit fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others while prohibiting yet others" (p. 73).

3. The historic-geographic method, often referred to as the Finnish comparative method or simply the comparative method in folklore, involves a lengthy process of three essential steps: (1) the collection of as many versions or cultural texts as possible; (2) the division of these texts into distinct elements or traits; and (3) the comparison of all collected versions by trait in order to deduce a basic form or prototype. By analyzing and contrasting the essential characteristics of this singular social practice, it becomes possible to propose the geographical point of origin, as well as the process of cultural diffusion. Although these fundamental principles of geographic and historical analysis suggest a hypothetical origin, the method inherent to this comparative approach rarely ascertain a specific source of cultural invention. Nonetheless, the historic-geographic methodology has yielded the most thorough techniques for tracing a cultural text through time and space. While these structural techniques do not specifically call for interpretive analysis, this comparative methodology provides the critical framework on which a contextualized interpretation of cultural production and historical worldview may be constructed. This chapter adopts the gender of player participant as a distinct theme or element of historical and cultural analysis.

4. In a telling article titled "The Hopscotch Girl," Patricia Foster (1996) provides a personal narrative of her own troubled childhood. The abstract for this article states that "Her resurfacing desire is to see herself as a natural hopscotch-playing, carefree girl." The connection between "natural" femininity and playing Hopscotch provides yet another glimpse into the use of this practice within literature and popular culture as signifying "traditional" girlhood.

5. Within the folklore archives at the University of California at Berkeley, our informant, Joseph Young (as collected in 1969 by his daughter, Irene Young of Los Angeles, California) recalls playing Hopscotch in New York City during the 1930s, suggesting that boys played Hopscotch while girls played a similar game they called Potsie (Potsy). Young remembers that girls and boys played this similar game separately. Another informant, Barbara Altman (as collected in 1994 by her daughter, Gail Altman, of Huntington Beach, California), recalls playing the game with other girls in her neighborhood in the Bronx, New York, stating that "boys never played potsy." Thus, it appears that certain versions were more commonly played by girls while others were more likely practiced by boys, or boys and girls together. From the above references, it seems as if Culin's description of Pick the Stone Up might be related in some way to Potsy, versions of the game which appear to be almost exclusively played by New York City girls.

6. The game preferences of Japanese children is chronicled in the *Encyclopedia Nipponica* (1984, pp. 352-353).

7. This similarity has been reported by numerous informants within folklore archives worldwide. Informant Samuel Lewis reports that this game came into his life early in San Francisco, California, circa 1910, through a girl a few years older than he and his friends. Lewis adds, however, that "we regarded it as a sissy's game." Another informant, Diane Canning (Sunnyvale, California), states that she asked her brother if he knew what Hopscotch was and if he ever played the game. He said, "Are you kiddin'? That's for girls!" This notion that Hopscotch was popular among girls and avoided by boys has been reported worldwide, with reports from Norway (Tom Arne Lunne, Oslo, 1950), Taiwan (Robert Huang, Tai Chung, ca. 1952; Helen Chan, 1975), France (Anouch Chanazarian, 1957), Pakistan (Taki Tejami, Karachi, 1948), Israel (Tiva Pelter, 1965), and Ethiopia (Daniel Taruku, Dessie, 1970).

The use of designations such as sissy, fag, or queer is relatively common in the informal play activities of children within the 20th century. In the popular game of Smear the Queer, also known in the United States as Bag the Fag, Tag the Fag, Cream the Queen, and so on, a player throws or kicks a ball into the air and everyone chases and tackles whoever catches it. The brave child who picks up the ball and runs from the others is purportedly the "queer." Ironically, however, the longer this player can last without being tackled and mauled by the other boys, the more masculine the queer is deemed to be. This game tends to be most popular among elementary and junior high school boys, a game played at roughly the same ages as Hopscotch is played by girls today. Thus, peer socialization around issues of gender and sexuality appear particularly pronounced among preadolescent children. For an interesting discussion of how the game of Smear the Queer fits into an underlying cultural paradigm of ritualized homosexual behavior evident in male-to-male sports and games, see Dundes, 1987.

8. I borrow from Lenskyj (1987, p. 381) here in defining femininity as "the socially constructed components of female identity: behavior, attitudes and practices, which, by focusing on sex differences, serve as outward and visible signs of women's sexual, social and economic subordination to men." This social subordination may in part explain why low-status boys within all-male peer groups are sometimes called girls or sissies.

9. Several informants to the University of California at Berkeley folklore archives have discussed the marking of their own Hopscotch diagrams onto the school playground. Karen Kresich Davis (Berkeley, California, 1975) reports of her sister's (informant Joan Kresich Icanberry) play during the 1950s: "My sister remembers that there were some hopscotch looking games painted on the playground at school. These were not right for the game she played, however, so she had to draw her own game." Nancy Mitchell (Redwood City, California, 1982) reports that "a certain number of hopscotch squares were painted on the cement at the school, but sometimes girls would bring chalk to draw more." Gilda Fong (Oakland, California, 1956) states that "if the hopscotch squares were in use at the playground, then we would draw our own squares with white chalk on the ground." Other informants report adding to the school-sponsored Hopscotch diagram. One fourth grader (collected from V. Silverton, 1969) adds that "the greatest part of the Hopscotch

figure is painted on the playground, with the numbers. The girls take dust and draw a circle at the end (of the diagram) and number it 10." It should be noted here that the game of Hopscotch still appears to be played by boys in some cultures without this apparent stigma. Sierra (1995) reports, for example, that the game is primarily played by boys in the Tarascan and Zapotec cultures of Mexico. In Ireland, Brady (1984, p. 153) reports that "the number of boys to be seen playing Beds has increased considerably lately; a few years ago only the girls played Beds." These cases are interesting as they seem to contradict the cultural feminization of this widespread children's game within the 20th century. These cases similarly suggest that this particular practice possesses an inherent connection to one sex or the other, and that the gendered meanings associated with the game of Hopscotch shift both historically and crossculturally. Nonetheless, these cases seem to be the exception rather than the rule of practice. From Australia to Argentina, from Thailand to Holland, from Korea to California, the social practice of Hopscotch has generally become associated with girls today. I am most interested here in how children both reproduce and resist the gender order, as embodied in this dynamic social practice.

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Chapter 7

The Interaction of Gender and Play Style in the Development of Gender Segregation

Julie Tietz

Stephanie Shine

The tendency for preschool-age children to segregate themselves into play groups according to gender has been observed in many studies (e.g., Fishbein & Imai, 1993; Jacklin & Maccoby, 1978; Lederberg, Chapin, Rosenblatt, & Vandell, 1986; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1987; Serbin, Moller, Gulko, Powlishta, & Colburne, 1994). In their longitudinal study of 96 children, for example, Maccoby and Jacklin calculated that up to 49% of 4 1/2-year-old boys' play intervals were spent with other boys, while up to 60% of girls' play intervals were spent with other girls; by age 6 1/2, up to 68% of boys' free play time and up to 73% of girls' free time was spent with same-sex peers. The average age for the appearance of this phenomenon appears to be about 3 years, although female children may segregate earlier from male children than male children from female children (La Freniere, Strayer, & Gauthier, 1984; Langlois, Gottfried, & Seay, 1973; Powlishta, Serbin, & Moller, 1993). Maccoby and Jacklin conclude, after a review of research on gender segregation, that it is a widespread, robust phenomenon of substantial magnitude that occurs whenever children are able to make choices about their playmates.

Separating into single-gender groups may have important implications for children's social, emotional, and intellectual development. The composition and activities of play groups varies, as has been summarized by Maccoby (1985): Boys play in groups that are larger, in more public places, and further from adults; girls engage more in turn-taking and have more intensive friendships. Boys use speech to attract an audience and assert themselves, while girls use speech to create relationships and to criticize others