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The Serious Side of Jump Rope *Conversational Practices and Social Organization in the Frame of Play*

TYPICALLY THE STUDY OF GAMES AND PLAY by folklorists and anthropologists alike has been directed toward examination of traditional "lore" or play *forms* to the exclusion of the social interaction that occurs within play.¹ As Schwartzman has argued, "The fact that play requires *active* engagement by players seems . . . obvious, and yet this criterion has frequently been overlooked by researchers who focus either on the collection and categorization of texts or the analysis of contexts" (Schwartzman 1978:327, emphasis in the original). The present study focuses explicitly upon texts of conversational activities occurring in the course of a game of jump rope, rather than upon its rhymes (Abrahams 1969) or social context.

By directing attention explicitly to analysis of social interaction occurring in the midst of games, it becomes possible to evaluate two alternative positions regarding the type of framing of experience that children's games provide. On the one hand, a number of influential researchers have posited that games set up particular *frames set apart from* ordinary experience (Piaget 1962, 1965 [1932]; Goffman 1967:269-270; Huizinga 1955; Caillois 1961; Opie and Opie 1969:3; Sutton-Smith 1966). From this perspective, as recently stated by Fine (1983:183), games allow one to cut "oneself off from other realms of experience" and "provide alternative social worlds in which individuals can become involved." In contrast to this position, researchers such as Hughes (1983:40), Denzin (1977:171-172), Schwartzman (1978:327), and Garvey (1974:179) maintain that continuity exists between games and ordinary experience. For example, Sacks (1980:324) and Speier (1976:181), who builds upon Sacks's 1968 analysis, have argued that contrary to the popular belief that games are divorced from everyday experience, children may in fact discover how social order works through game participation. The thrust of this paper will be to describe ways in which interaction occurring in the midst of a specific play activity, jump rope, is continuous with that outside the play frame. Conflict is as inherent in the games of girls as it is in their everyday dealings with one

another, and its patterning reflects specifically female rather than male ways of speaking.

Although rules for coordinating jump rope activity are highly patterned, the ways in which any particular game is played are open for negotiation on each occasion of its performance, not only prior to the game but also during its course. As Hughes has argued in her ethnographic investigation of girls' gaming, rules in games are much more open for debate than is commonly reported in the literature (1983:42-46). Despite Piaget's emphasis in his early study (1965[1932]) that conflict is an inherent feature of games, contemporary researchers, with few exceptions, (e.g., Knapp and Knapp 1976:17) argue that games once begun are governed by relatively unchangeable rules. For example, in a review article on play, Rubin, Fein, and Vandenberg state "For games . . . structural modifications are not allowed *unless* mutual agreement among all participants has been reached *before hand*" (1983:728; emphasis added).

Differences of opinion concerning the rules of the game of jump rope can develop throughout its course. Such differences can result in disputes that momentarily halt the ongoing activity of the moment (jumping rope) to initiate talk about it, thus having the character of "remedial exchanges" (Goffman 1971:138-148), "side sequences" (Jefferson 1972), or "interjected routines" (Roemer 1980). Contrary to Piaget's notion (1965[1932]:77) that girls lack interest in the legal aspect of games, girls display a keen sense of the rules of jump rope; they use these rules strategically in attempting to set up particular game outcomes and to restructure the occasion-specific identities of players. Arguments within girls' games are generally short-lived, however, in that the framing of the game provides constraints upon disputation. Thus, though it is a widely accepted belief (based on reports rather than field observation) that girls are incapable of engaging in dispute without stopping game activity (Lever 1976:482; Gilligan 1982:9-10), ethnographically based fieldwork such as that reported here reveals that girls demonstrate repeatedly their ability to deal with conflict expeditiously in the course of games.²

The present study analyzes texts of conversational activities used in the course of a game of jump rope and then compares these to forms of speech actions within other domains of experience. This work is based on ethnographic observation undertaken over a period of a year and a half in Philadelphia among a group of black, working-class, preadolescent girls in their neighborhood peer group, which for purposes of reference I will call the "Maple Street group." Girls who participate in the game include Priscilla, age 7, Michele, age 9, and Pam and Sharon, both age 12. In all, over 200 hours of transcribed tapes of conversational interaction form the corpus of the study from which examples are drawn.

In the course of the session being analyzed, disputes develop between two participants, Priscilla and Michele. During other play sessions in which they are together, Priscilla is frequently the youngest and subject to Michele's friends calling her names (such as "newsy Suzie") and other forms of mild

ridicule. Although Michele seldom initiates disputes with Priscilla, when they play house together, Priscilla addresses her as "Senorita" and tries to exclude her from the activity. My major concern, however, is not to focus on two individuals and their relationships, as conflict might arise between other girls as well. Rather I am interested in the continuity that exists between forms of interaction within game and non-game domains, a feature important for anyone participating in play.

To acquaint the reader with the particular group being investigated, a brief description of the girls' culture and social organization is presented first. In the second section of the paper I describe the game of jump rope as a "situated activity system" or "focused gathering" (Goffman 1961), outlining the rules of play within this frame. These opening sections provide background for understanding how participants in jump rope make bids for particular ways of structuring the activity and argue about specific happenings within it, subjects of the next section of the paper. In the last part of the paper I compare processes of negotiation within jump rope with disputing that occurs within other domains and argue that girls' procedures for organizing activities reflect their particular cultural concerns.

The Girls' Group

For the girls of Maple Street, jumping rope is among the most popular play activities, aside from "house" and "school." Unlike the boys, girls do not have games that result in ranking and thereby provide objective criteria for differentiating group members.³ Rather, they compare one another with respect to physical appearance, demeanor, and alliances they maintain with others, especially older females and boys. Often they employ criteria that seem to exist as much in the mind of the observer as in the actions of the observed as they criticize girls who "think they cute" or "better" than someone else. While boys are quite open to allowing anyone to play in their group, girls tend to be somewhat more exclusive with respect to who can play with them. They tend to play in small groups of three or four girls. Indeed one way that they establish relative positions among group members is by barring certain girls from play and by creating coalitions of "two against one."⁴ Boys and girls also differ with respect to the display of "aggravation" (Labov and Fanshel 1977:84-86) or directness in their speech actions; while boys are quite straightforward in issuing directives, insults, accusations, or complaints, girls use more modulated actions and frequently employ embedded forms that soften the force of their speech (Goodwin 1980a; Goodwin and Goodwin 1983).

Jump Rope as a Situated Activity System

The game of jump rope can be described as a form of focused gathering or encounter, that is, a "type of social arrangement that occurs when persons are in one another's immediate physical presence" (Goffman 1961:17). For the

participants this involves such things as "a single visual and cognitive focus of attention, a heightened mutual relevance of acts, and an eye-to-eye ecological huddle that maximizes each participant's opportunity to perceive the other participants' monitoring of him" (Goffman 1961:18). In the game of jump rope, there is an expected pattern of orientation of players toward one another. Two parties, called "enders," hold opposite ends of a rope and turn it for a third player, who jumps when the rope hits the ground. Generally the rope is doubled and enders turn one part and then the other successively in a version called "double dutch." Using a single rope in a version of jump rope called "Irish" is much less common among the group I observed. The rope is usually turned to a jump rope rhyme with four beats per line that is similar in its metrics to rhymes used for counting out or clapping games (Burling 1966).

Units Making up a Turn at Jump Rope. The system for taking turns at jumping over a rope can be described in terms of (1) a series of units making up one turn at jumping, and (2) a set of rules for rotating the position of jumper. A girl is entitled to continue jumping over a rope until she fails to complete a jump successfully; this failure should be caused by the jumper herself. If upon a miss both jumper and turners agree that the error was the fault of the turner rather than the jumper, a jumper is entitled to continue jumping or to "take it over." When an external force causes someone to miss, it is said that the jumper gets "continuations." The number of unfailed continuous jump opportunities per turn is generally not specified until the first player of the game makes a miss. There is, however, a general practice of allowing two units of continuous jumping per turn when the number of players does not exceed three and one unit when the size of the group exceeds four.

The Rotation of Participants. Following the completion of one party's turn there is a fixed order of rotation for participants, depending upon their positions in the game. Following the jumper's jump, first ender goes, then second ender, then onlooker or "pretty doll." These game-specific identities are decided competitively at the beginning of the game, when participants call out their ordering. The first person to yell "first" gets the most valued position, jumper.

Following a complete round of rotation of participants, the jumper with the highest number of jumps jumps first, followed by second highest jumper, and so on. Deciding who is best jumper is easiest when the rhyme "One, Two, Three Footsies" is used; each slapping of the rope on the ground co-occurs with counting by tens. However, participants may just as well know who "beats" another when traditional rhymes are used, in that for each party's turn in a particular round the same sequence of rhymes is used. The ordering of rhymes to be used is decided in the course of the game by parties reciting the rhymes. When a player thinks that a tie has been reached she yells "out" to attempt to cancel the tie. The first person to yell "out" in the case of what is decided to have been a legitimate tie is considered to have won that round of jumps.

After a jumper has failed a unit of continuous jumping, the turner speaks the last words of the rhyme jumped to in one of two types of intonations. If the words are repeated in falling-rising (312) intonation (Gunter 1974:61) (or list-like intonation), this indicates that the jumper is entitled to a *second part* of her turn. The falling rising intonation repetition of the last phrase allows the jumper to warm up for entry into the next part of her jump. By way of contrast, the *completion* of a party's turn is signaled by falling intonation on the last two words recited as the miss occurs. The completion of a jump, the end of a turn, or an interference provide natural junctures in the activity, places where verbal interaction is likely to occur.

In general, the fixed pattern of the activity designates rotation of participants. However, as with the turntaking system in conversation (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974:727), participants themselves make local decisions about the flow of rhymes; the first party who begins reciting a rhyme as the rope is turned generally decides what rhyme will be recited. There is a built-in motivation to turn the rope fairly for players. If one turns too fast or not in synchrony with the beat, then there is a chance that when the jumper next "gets the ends" she will do the same for the previous offender.

Negotiation Within the Game

Although jump rope is not an inherently competitive game and requires the cooperation of all participants to function smoothly, proposals for action regarding particular features of the game made during its course may engender disagreement. In the course of the game a host of decisions must be made regarding how to proceed. Girls must decide, for example, how the positions of jumper or ender are to be selected, what roles newcomers are to take, what rhymes will be used and in what sequence, what moves are required by a jumper in keeping with the rhyme selected, whether a girl receives one or two chances at jumping during her turn, how the interference of a vehicle on the street or an ender's ineptitude will affect a jumper's turn, and so on. Many features of the activity cannot easily be decided in terms of clearly objective criteria and therefore lead to more extended sequences. In contrast to many children's disputes that can terminate without a resolution being reached (Goodwin 1982:87), argument relating to the playing of jump rope is treated as requiring some form of settlement so that players may proceed to a next stage of the activity. The analyst is thus provided with a way of examining how participants negotiate dispute outcomes.

Generally, commentary about the game (including questions, imperatives, and announcements) occurs at its onset, when aspects of the game are being decided, or at junctures in the activity, either during the silent period preceding a participant's second part of her turn or following a player's completed turn.⁵ However, comments on players' activities may also be made in the midst of reciting a rhyme, as when complimenting performance or calling for correction of the ongoing activity (as occurs in examples 2 and 5 which fol-

low).⁶ Such actions are not treated as interruptive but rather as appropriate to the ongoing task of evaluating or correcting interaction in its course.

Frequently, when a player makes an assertion about her view of the activity, it may conflict with an objective set of circumstances. Such disagreements are generally short-lived and resemble repair sequences (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977; Goodwin 1983:662-665). In the following, for example, upon missing a jump after having reached "160," Pam yells "OUT!", a convention the girls employ to try to break what they consider a tie for highest number of jumps completed. However, as Sharon indicates with "*Uh uh*. She got one seventy," someone else (Michele) had reached a higher score, Pam's claim is annulled, and Pam accepts the repair:⁷

(1) 10/20/70/70

((Pam is in the midst of jumping rope and reaches a score (160) which she thinks is equivalent to that of Michele, who had actually reached 170.))

Pam:

OUT!

Sharon:

Uh uh. She got one seventy.

Pam:

Oh.

Participants with contradictory claims concerning an event may even resolve their conflict *in the midst* of a jump rope rhyme as in the following:

(2) 10/20/70/67

((Michele begins her jump))

1 Michele:

Jack be nimble, Jack be quick, Jack

2

jump // over

3 Pam:

Over the candle stick.

[[

4 Priscilla:

Over the candle stick.

5 Priscilla:

All around // alimbo

6 Pam:

Do it fast, do it quick

7 Priscilla:

NO! Around the limbo rock,

8 Priscilla:

Hey let's do the limbo rock.

[[

9 Pam:

Hey let's do the limbo rock.

One phrase after Priscilla corrects Pam with "NO! Around the limbo rock," (line 7) Pam joins Priscilla in Priscilla's version of the next verse. Thus there is relatively little disruption of the ongoing activity. In examples 1 and 2 participants quickly resolve their differences of opinion. In the following, however, participants vie for who has claims on the decision making of the moment in a more elaborated sequence.⁸ This fragment occurs at the onset of jump rope:

(3) 10/20/70/51

((Priscilla is holding a rope))
 1 *Michele:* First. First Priscilla!
 2 *Priscilla:* NO! I- I just wanted to jump. I
 3 ain't gonna play.
 4 ((Michele goes over to Priscilla
 5 and starts to jump while Priscilla
 6 is jumping in the same rope.))
 7 *Michele:* All right. First let me get my jump.
 8 ((chanting)) Gypsy, gypsy,
 9 *Priscilla:* heh heh! Ah: you got that all,
 10 *Michele:* Let that go and I'll give you a
 11 turn. Let go!
 12 *Priscilla:* ((cajolingly to Pam)) Wanna play
 13 some rope?
 14 *Pam:* M kay. First!
 15 *Michele:* Second. Second to highest!
 ||
 16 *Priscilla:* Second. Second to highest!
 17 *Priscilla:* All around the gooseberry bush. I
 18 called it.
 19 *Pam:* Don't play in the water.
 20 ((Pam begins to jump))

In this sequence Michele makes several verbal as well as nonvocal attempts to get Priscilla to play rope with her. She initially approaches Priscilla in line 1 stating "First. First Priscilla!" Although Michele proposes that the activity be joint, Priscilla maintains an alternative version of the event—she wants to continue jumping rope by herself (lines 2–3). Michele, however, persists in her attempts to make the activity a collaborative rather than a solitary one (lines 4–8, 10–11) and begins jumping in the rope Priscilla is playing with. In response, Priscilla criticizes Michele's chanting (line 9); and as a way of escaping the trajectory that Michele has set up Priscilla then turns to another girl (Pam) and asks if she would like to play rope with her (lines 12–13). Pam agrees and the girls then make bids for who will be first jumper. When Priscilla and Michele call "Second to highest" at the same time (lines 15–16), Priscilla is able to win the contest for second jumper by yelling "All around the gooseberry bush," (lines 17–18), which cancels the tie, and the girls then proceed to jump rope. The onset of the game, as this segment shows, allows for various negotiations.

In the particular session of jump rope being analyzed, Priscilla repeatedly criticizes Michele and attempts to structure sequences so that Michele's position in the event shows her to be at a disadvantage. The sole instance of a negative statement about another's jumping performance during the day comes when Priscilla comments on Michele's luck in not having reached a particular point in the rhyme underway, implying that she would be incapable of executing an upcoming move in that rhyme sequence.

(4) 10/20/70/54

((Girls are jumping to "Madison Town," which requires turning while jumping on the word "Berlin"; Michele misses her jump on the word just before "Berlin."))

Priscilla: You oughta be glad you didn't get "Berlin" cuz you have to do "Berlin."

Michele: I know. I know how to do it.

An even more striking attempt to put Michele in her place is shown by Priscilla's actions when she mistakenly calls "out" on Pam's behalf, arguing that Pam has tied with Michele for the highest score in a round of rope.

(5) 10/20/70/66

((Pam jumps to "One, Two, Three Footsies"))

1 *Pam:* ((chanting)) Ten twenty thirty forty
 2 *Sharon:* Fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty // nine
 3 one ten twenty
 4 *Priscilla:* Nine one- What you get?
 5 *Sharon:* thirty forty fifty sixty seventy eighty
 6 ninety // Two ten twenty thirty forty
 7 fifty sixty seventy eighty
 8 *Priscilla:* Oh she got six something.
 9 *Sharon:* ninety three ten twenty thirty forty
 10 fifty sixty seventy eighty nine four
 11 ten twenty thirty // forty fifty sixty
 12 *Priscilla:* What she get.
 13 *Sharon:* seventy eighty nine five ten twenty
 14 thirty forty fifty
 [[
 15 *Pam:* I don't know. She got six forty. Seven
 16 forty heh!
 17 *Priscilla:* Out. Called out!
 18 *Pam:* Out out out out!
 19 *Michele:* I had seven forty.
 20 *Priscilla:* Well anyway she got another jump.
 21 *Sharon:* Uh uh. Now it's only one jump with
 22 four people.
 23 *Michele:* ()
 24 *Priscilla:* Yes you do.
 25 *Sharon:* Uh uh. She got seven forty. Pam got
 26 six forty.
 27 *Pam:* ((gruffly)) I got- Y'all jump too-
 28 Y'all turn fast.
 29 *Sharon:* That's the way you have to // put some
 30 life in that rope.
 31 *Michele:* Go ahead.
 32 *Priscilla:* I'm gonna go first. Enders go first.
 [[
 33 *Pam:* Enders go first so

34 Sharon: Put some life in that rope.
 35 ((Jump rope resumes))

In a previous example, 1, when it was noted that someone had erred in indicating that there was a tie, the dispute was resolved in rather short order; the preceding, however, produces more extended debate. In several ways in this fragment Priscilla tries to diminish Michele's accomplishment by taking up Pam's side. Priscilla goes out of her way to point out differences between Michele and another girl (Pam) by entering a dispute in which initially she (Priscilla) had not been a principal character. She calls "out" on Pam's behalf (line 17), and in line 20 she tries to provide a statement of the rules that would apply, allowing Pam's jump number to exceed Michele's: "Well anyway she got another jump." The presence of other girls, however, allows for a negotiation of this perspective as well as rapid movement to another topic. Priscilla's move is initially countered by Sharon's statement (lines 21-22) that with four people there is only one jump per turn and a restatement (lines 25-26) that Pam's score was lower than Michele's. The party whose position is in dispute, Pam, herself switches topic in lines 27-28 by initiating an argumentative action with girls other than Michele (and in fact including Priscilla); she criticizes them by stating that they turn the rope too fast. This is then met with another counter, as Sharon (lines 29-30) describes the turning activity from a positive game standpoint, that is, as "putting life" into the rope. Pam and Sharon thus succeed in directing attention away from criticism of Michele, and the game then proceeds to allow another player a jump.

In this sequence Priscilla has once again attempted to establish Michele's relative position as weaker than that of others present. Previously (example 4) Michele herself had countered Priscilla's implied criticism. This time Priscilla's putdown is offset by Pam's successful shift in topic (lines 27-28), by Sharon's redefinition of the game format (lines 29-30), and several minutes later by praise from Pam of Michele's turning: "I like the way you turn Michele!" By not aligning themselves with Priscilla's position vis-à-vis Michele, the girls work to avoid a situation in which differences between players are accentuated.

Conclusion

The game of jump rope, with the numerous decisions that have to be made in its course, thus provides for disputes about how the activity should be conducted. This gives players the opportunity to attempt to create differences between one another, as illustrated by Priscilla's interactions with Michele. Although arguments may take place, however, they can be interrupted by third parties' counter moves or re-engagement in the game, thus cancelling out protracted debate. In addition, negative evaluations of a player's skills may be offset by complimentary remarks of others.

Arguments by girls in the midst of play are thus strikingly divergent from the prolonged disputes that occur among boys in similar domains (Goodwin

1982; Goodwin and Goodwin 1983). In boys' games and constructive play activity, coordinated largely through a leader's imperatives (e.g., "Get off my steps!"), players create hierarchical distinctions among themselves (Goodwin 1980a:158-165). They make use of what Labov and Fanshel (1977:84-86) have identified as "aggravated" or unmodulated types of action, which contrast with more "mitigated" or modulated ways of saying things and can generate lengthy contests.

Girls, by way of contrast, use more mitigated types of speech actions. For example, girls calling for the start of a new rhyme may make a mitigated request by stating "Hey um let's do 'Old Bastard Grandmom.' " or "Let's play 'One Two Three Footsies.' " Such actions *propose* rather than demand that a new rhyme be started up and include the speaker as well as recipients as relevant agents in the action on the floor; thus they are consistent with the egalitarian types of actions that I have found to organize girls' constructive play or task activities (Goodwin 1980a:165-170). Other actions that express mitigation in the frame of jump rope include requests of various forms:

- (6) 10/20/70/65
Sharon: Can I play? Can I play?
- (7) 10/20/70/69
Sharon: Could I take your turn?
- (8) 10/20/70/71
Michele: Don't she got the ends?
- (9) 10/20/70/56
Priscilla: Oh. I gotta start over?

In contrast to these forms, phrased as either proposals for the entire group or as requests for information, other directives may be stated as imperatives:

- (10) 10/20/70/70
Pam: Go ahead Michele.
- (11) 10/20/70/51
Pam: Don't play in the water!
- (12) 10/20/70/67
Sharon: Put some life in it! ((about rope turning style))
- (13) 10/20/70/63
Pam: Watch out! ((as car comes))

Such actions are similar to assertions about the future course of activity. For example, in the following an initial assertion about how the rope should be turned (line 1) is subsequently restated as an imperative by a next speaker (line 2):

- (14) 10/20/70/73
 1 *Pam:* You shouldn't do no turnin y'all.

- 2 *Hannah:* No don't do no turnin.
 3 *Sharon:* Okay.

It should be noted that these imperatives and assertions take an aggravated or direct form, which is not unlike actions boys use to organize their activities. However, they deal with actions advancing the game that benefit the entire group and thus stand in contrast to imperatives among boys, which generally emphasize personal desires of the speaker ("PL:IERS. I WANT THE PLIERS!") (Goodwin 1980a:160) and the boys' notions of hierarchy.

Vying for relative positioning may in fact consume the larger part of boys' play activity. By contrast, when used among girls, imperatives speak to requirements of the game rather than a leader's mandates, as asserting one's will is viewed as counter to the egalitarian ethos the girls profess. Though the girls can activate an elaborate debate forum for sanctioning the most serious violators of their cultural norms (Goodwin 1980b), within the game framework, as within task activities (Goodwin 1980a), disputing among girls is typically short-lived rather than protracted. Differences of opinion regarding a game feature may be handled in the midst of reciting a rhyme (example 2); and in fact even when parties are disputing matters unrelated directly to playing jump rope, as in the next example (15), the frame of the moment ("This is jump rope") can itself be invoked as a boundary on dispute activity. In the following example girls argue whether or not the rope they are playing with, which was borrowed by Michele from Venezuelan neighbors, belongs to a "Spanish" or "Portarrican" family:

(15) 10/20/70/65

- 1 *Sharon:* Can I play? Can I play?
 2 *Priscilla:* Okay. First watcher.
 3 *Sharon:* Who- whose rope.
 4 *Priscilla:* Um Michele- oh those people. Those
 5 *Spanish* people.
 6 *Sharon:* Pam those Spanish people gonna tell on
 7 *y(h)ou(h)!*
 8 *Pam:* They ain't Spanish. They Portariccan.
 9 *Sharon:* How ya know they Portariccan.
 10 *(0.7)*
 11 *Pam:* They TALK PORTariccan.
 12 *Sharon:* AH YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW PORTARICCAN
 13 *people talk*. So shut up.
 14 *Pam:* Yes they um- yes they are Portariccan.
 15 *Priscilla:* [
 16 *Stop.*
 17 *Pam:* I don't know what they-
 18 *Priscilla:* Okay. You got your other jump.
 19 *Sharon:* [
 20 *I don't know what they are but I know*

19 they not Portariccan.
 20 ((Girls begin turning rope for Pam
 21 to "One, Two, Three Footsies"))
 22 Pam: Ten twenty thirty forty

In this sequence there is no clear winner or loser, as argumentative talk between Pam and Sharon terminates when girls reinvoke the game of jump rope. Thus although jump rope necessitates the making of a series of decisions the outcomes of which define whose perspective has the most authority, like other types of interactive events such as stories (Goodwin 1982:88–91) it also provides an ongoing focus to which participants may return. Disputes within girls' games are generally short-lived and resemble remedial exchanges (Goodwin 1983:662–665). Future possible arguments are intercepted by players who want to move on to the next stage of the activity. The framing of the jump rope game permits negotiation among group members while providing constraints upon disputation occurring within this realm. Thus, contrary to widely popular notions about girls' inability to engage in dispute without terminating a game (Lever 1976:482; Gilligan 1982:9–10), girls are quite able to handle conflict without disruption of the ongoing interaction, as examples 15 as well as 5 show.

In this paper I have described jump rope as a type of "situated activity system" of occasion-specific roles with its own rules for appropriate conduct. Within the game, however, participants argue about alternative courses of action and continue disputes that typify their everyday interaction. By focusing quite precisely on the linguistic character of processes of dispute within play, it is possible to specify how children, in the most ordinary of their everyday play encounters, create and recreate their social order from moment to moment, making use of culturally appropriate dispute procedures. This research thus supports Denzin's (1977:173) notion that children's worlds of play are "not just given or handed down; rather they are constructed worlds that are interpreted, negotiated, argued over, debated about, compromised." Close documentation of interactive sequences within games and play activity can provide a basis for comparative studies of how members of different societies utilize play as a framework for the negotiation of important dimensions of their lives.

Appendix. Transcription Symbols

Sequencing

// Double obliques indicate the point at which a current speaker's talk is overlapped with the talk of another.
 P: THAT LADY GONNA BEAT YOUR // BUTT!
 S: I WANT-

- { { Two speakers beginning to talk simultaneously is indicated by double brackets.
P: Yes they um- yes they are Portariccan.
 { {
B: Stop.
- (0.5) Numbers in parentheses indicate elapsed time in tenths of seconds.
A: Donchu got a bike Sharon.
 (0.3)
B: Yes.
- Sound Production*
- ? , . Punctuation markers are not used as grammatical symbols, but for intonation. A period indicates falling intonation. A comma is used for falling-rising intonation. Question marks are used for rising intonation.
A: Oh what's his name.
C: Is Johnny's bike orange,
- : Colons indicate that the prior syllable is prolonged. Multiple colons indicate a more prolonged syllable.
C: You was up there r:unnin,
D: Gol::d.
- underscoring Underscoring indicates various forms of emphasis, which may involve changes in pitch and/or volume.
P: They ain't Spanish.
- The dash indicates a cut-off of current word or sound.
C: And we was- (0.5) and wh- wh- what was he doin,
- CAPITALS Capitals indicate increased volume.
P: They TALK PORTariccan.
- (hh) The letter "h" within parentheses indicates explosive aspiration, either laughter or breathlessness.
C: So you would spend twenty five cents fo(hh)r so(hh)me grits,
- Reader's Guides*
- () Single parentheses indicate transcribers are not certain about word contained therein.
P: (take my place)
- (()) Materials in double parentheses indicate features of the audio materials other than actual verbalizations.
D: ((chanting)) Two against- Two against two we won,

Notes

The fieldwork constituting the basis for this study was made possible by a National Institute of Mental Health research grant (17216-01), administered through the Center for Urban Ethnography, University of

Pennsylvania. I am indebted to Erving Goffman, William Labov, Charles Goodwin, Danielle Roemer, and especially to Linda Hughes for comments on an earlier version of this paper. A previous version of this paper was given at the 1984 Annual Meeting of The Association for the Anthropological Study of Play.

¹The following researchers within the fields of folklore (Goldstein 1971; Hughes 1983; Schwartzman 1978; von Glasco 1980), psychology (Garvey 1974, 1977), and sociology (Denzin 1977; Fine 1983; Sacks 1966; Speier 1976) have directed analysis toward the interaction which occurs in the midst of texts of play.

²See also Hughes 1983.

³The structure of black girls' games, as of their dramatic play (Brady 1975), tends to promote the feeling of solidarity rather than competition. Features found in both jump rope and dramatic play include a common focus of attention, turn-taking at being the central figure, clapping or slapping the rope to provide a basic rhythm, and singing or chanting in unison.

⁴Eder and Hallinan (1978) found that exclusive types of social organization were more characteristic of girls' than of boys' groups.

⁵Interjected routines in the children's storytelling episodes described by Roemer (1980:13) also occur during periods of silence, although these do not occur at natural junctures but rather during pauses and verbal hesitations of the speaker. Such actions are interpreted by an audience member as displays of "failing competence" and thus a " 'space,' an opportunity, in which to insert his speech without an extensive overlapping of the storyteller's discourse."

⁶By way of contrast, criticisms of stories tend to be clustered near the story's beginning (Roemer 1980:11-12), a place where an audience member may make a bid for the storyteller role.

⁷Data are transcribed according to the system developed by Jefferson and described in Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974:731-733). A simplified version of this transcription system appears in the Appendix. The principal features I am concerned with capturing are shifts in sound production, as such features are important for the coordination of interaction within the activity. Stress on particular syllables is displayed through underlining; prolongation of sounds is indicated by a colon or colons, and intonation contours are indicated by punctuation marks signaling rising (?), falling (.), or falling-rising (,) shifts. I have attempted to limit respellings of words to differences at the morphological level; I am in agreement with Preston (1982) that a transcriber's attempts to show phonological differences frequently leads to inaccurate or unnecessary representations of one's informants. The citation after each example gives the date of the conversation and the transcript page from which the example is taken.

⁸In a similar structural locale, at the beginning of an interactive event, elaborated bidding also takes place during storytelling (Roemer 1980:12-14). However, while the issue of whose telling is more competent is at stake during storytelling, in initial jump rope negotiations children are concerned with determining who can define the situation.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: NEW JAF EDITORS

Bruce Jackson has been named editor of the *Journal of American Folklore* to succeed Richard Bauman, whose editorship will end with the last issue of 1985. Jackson will assume his editorial duties with the first issue of volume 99, January-March 1986. Accordingly, all materials submitted for publication in *JAF* should now be sent to Jackson at the following address: Bruce Jackson, Editor, *Journal of American Folklore*, Center for Studies in American Culture, 608 Samuel Clemens Hall, State University of New York, Buffalo, NY 14260.

New book and record review editors will also assume their duties with the first issue of 1986. Henceforth, correspondence regarding book reviews should be addressed to Charles L. Perdue, Jr., Star Route 5, Box 345, Madison, VA 22727. Record review correspondence should be addressed to Norm Cohen, 7833 Truxton Avenue, Westchester, CA 90045.

Finally, Thomas A. Green will continue for another term as film review editor.