many things in common with the mortuary usages of other West African peoples, such as the Ashantis, the Fantis, the Kwahus, and the Ewes. These are the major tribes in the middle and southern parts of the Gold Coast. Further east, in Nigeria, funeral customs bearing close similarity to those of the tribes in the Gold Coast are found among the Ibibios, the Ibos, and the Yorubas. Also, among the Mende, the Mandingo, and the Vai peoples of Sierra Leone there is not much of a distinct difference between their funeral customs and those of other tribes in other parts of West Africa. This leads us to believe that there might have been a time when probably one broad common culture pervaded the whole of the western section of Africa. However, as a result of lack of communication facilities, intertribal intercourse was very difficult, and, probably, non-existent. The individual groups therefore became almost completely isolated from each other in time and place, and this situation brought about various modifications in the common culture to suit local circumstances. But the bathing of the dead before burial, weeping as a traditional custom, inhumation, visit to the graveside in the morning of the day immediately following a burial, and the custom of third week memorial celebrations are mortuary usages which are common among the major tribes in West Africa.

It is interesting to note that with the coming of Christianity many of the customs and traditional usages of the African tribes have changed considerably. In many instances, the customs of the Christian church have been readjusted to make Christian principles more practical to the natives. This is the policy which the church has adopted with regard to native institutions in recent times. The earlier policy of assimilation and association wrought a great havoc on the native institutions and tended to make the natives suspicious of the foreign culture. The mortuary usages of the natives are now duly respected by the church and these old institutions are improved to meet the demands of a changing civilized society, when and wherever necessary.

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CHILDREN'S GAMES AND RHYMES IN DUAU (NORMANBY ISLAND)

By GEZA ROHEIM

In 1930 I spent about nine months on Normanby Island (native name Duau, one of the D'Entrecasteaux group). Our house was on the fringe of two villages or village groups, Sipupu and Boasitoroba. The data recorded in this paper refer to these two villages whenever their place of origin is not specified. Some of my informants came from Dobu or other islands, and whatever information they gave on children's songs was analogous to those found on Normanby Island has been included in this paper.

This is what Sipeta, a Boasitoroba woman of about 40, remembers about her childhood and how they used to play.

She was ai pokara (engaged) at three to a boy of her age. "When we played they used to say 'your husband,' and I used to say 'I am the ionisagana,' i.e., he is mine, and beat them. Sometimes we played on the shore at folding a sagari." The boys would catch a quadeye (opossum), or bring their fathers' dog for the sagari. Then they would make a mwadare for her. Her father would joke about her husband and the "in-law relations." Her younger brother Mwadidja used to be her husband at the mwadare, and her elder brother Sako was in-in-law relation, i.e., he was the husband's brother. Ceropower her sister, was on her side acting as her sister. The pig had to be caught for the sagari and then they would sing:

To puwpwari
Yada to gweru rua
Yakehe lelelele
Mwagwuya konay
To puwari, to puwari.

The hunters
I shall make jens harp
I pay whistle
Mwagwuya I caught
the hunters.

Sipeta explains that the children in this song are mixing the idea of a hunt and that of courtship gwari. The jens harp and the whistle are used by the young men when they go courting. Mwagwuya is a small animal of some kind, called by them the pig of the myth people (myth people—kole kottero). They run about with a net pretending to catch something.

Stones were taken for yams at these sagaris (Lomenay). Then they would catch and divide flies, pretending that they are pgs. "If we found a pretty one we would carry it lelele (i.e., rock it like a baby), and take it to our sister and tell her, 'take our child and look after it.' Then the girls would pet it for a while and after that they would have enough of it, and throw it away. We, as fathers, would cry and bury the child and make a mortuary ceremony.

A sagari is any kind of food distribution ceremony.


Lomenay, the informant, is a middle aged married man of Mwatebu.
Or we would beat the girls and take their skirts off. When they cried, we ran away and hid the skirt."

Yaneone, a lame young man from the interior (Lomitawa), gives the following account of his childhood:

They used to play at making a sagari. Sometimes they would catch one of the little pigs in the village and eat them at their sagari. Then the grown-ups would chase them and beat them. One of the children played at being a pig. He did this frequently and he would squeal when he was caught. They would carry him on a pole and pass him to another group of boys. Then they make fire and mark the cuts on the body saying that now they eat this part, now the other, and so on. They would get old nets from father and as they grew they would always get better nets. They would ask their parents to give them some food and then would go out into the bush for two or three days. They made a clearing and a little village. A boy might live in one house with his brother and sister and cousin. A bigger boy would be the Taubada (chief) of the group and he would send them to hunt, to bring water, to play at war, or other games. They also played that they were married and they would feed a stone which was regarded as their child. Or they would say the child is crying and the girl would give it her breast. One of the boys is the husband, he goes into the garden and leaves his wife at home. Another boy comes and steals the wife. In these games they don't observe the adult marriage rules. They also play at coitus, doing it anyhow till they are told the proper way. If they hear that their father or mother has gone with another man or woman, they will imitate them. Or they play tug of war (eniusiura—pulling). At Wedona sometimes boys pull against the girls. This is usually the case if the girls have started the quarrel by cursing (elia) the boys. Another game is rolling a round piece of wood (noki) or swinging it (kuge). Older boys play at spearing each other with light spears and dodging.

In all these games we have either what seems to be the pure joy of muscular activity or the well-known motive of imitation. Children play at being grown up; they imitate their fathers and mothers. In many other games, however, we find a certain formal element that reminds us of the traditional games of European children. For instance: Two children hold their hands while the others run between them and they sing

**Binama gaga**

Another version of the same game is called kuyabu (birds' net). Two children join hands and a third runs underneath on all fours; then they catch him and he is the bird in the net. A third version of the archway type contains an additional variation. The two children are supposed to catch the others who pass under the archway in a net. They sing:

**Binama ga go!**

Hornbills sing

**To binama momsonena yasikellekeheura**

What hornbill with his wife they go in couples

Hornbill go go!

The binama (hornbill) is always followed by its wife. The children are hornbills caught in the net.

We find the same formal element of passing under an archway in children's games far and near. Stolz describes a game called "kate kate gok, gok." Two little girls stand opposite to each other holding their hands high. The others pass under the archway holding each other and skipping and singing. By sinking their arms, the two girls separate the last little girl from the group and make her sit down. The proceeding is repeated till all the girls are detached from the moving group and form a new sitting group. 4

The Kiwai game is slightly different. One of the players posts himself on the beach with closed arms, underneath which another passes his right hand holding it on his playmate's chest. His left hand is taken by somebody else, and all the players join hands in a long line. They wind themselves around the one standing in the centre who stands immovable, shouting "Doro po darimidi doro po darimidi." When the spiral is closed, all at a given signal shout "Ibubu sogare" and open the windings again by running round in the opposite direction, calling out all the while "Doro po iwout, doro po iwout." Doro po means body, darimidi to tie, iwout to unfasten, so that the game is about tying up the body and unfastening it. Ibubu sogare refers to a folk-tale about a banana tree in which a swarm of bees have made their nest (bees — sogare). As soon as all form a straight line, the boy next to the end relaxes his hand and places it on the head of each of the others in turn, asking every time, "What is your name?" The boys reply by giving the names of animals or things they like, and squatting down on the ground. 6

The meaning of this game would perhaps be clearer if we had the folk-tale in question. At any rate, it seems probable that the bees are the boys themselves, and the whole thing has evidently something to do with the tying and the liberation of the body. In the geographically more remote European versions, the children pass under an archway, the last child is separated from the group till the old group disappears and a new group is formed. 7

In the Ba-Ilav version of the game, two boys form an archway with their arms while the others form in file and march around. As they go, the boys


5 Not given by the author.


7 Cf. W. Mannhardt, *Das Brückenspiel* (Zeitschrift für Deutsche Mythologie, 1859, IV).
“My children make a circling movement in the forest.” The last boy who is trapped sings: “The little quail scratches about among the herd boys.”

Other African games resemble the Kiwa variant with the immovable boy in the centre and the others wriggling round. The common element in the following games is the existence of a group of players from which the individuals are separated one by one, till a new group is formed.

The Sipupu game called *puasi*/*play*/*saura*/*happy*/*is connected with gardening.

Kemisay/yayyayyda/ina/begura/  
Ibagora/goyna/gidaridari  
simakaratuto/ma/loi/begura/  
inula/hinawa/iskakahari  
ituguna/zwobo/babo/  
Kakaraonaoma  
*Puasi saura*/*puasi saura*  
Kebua/iyagaha/kodi/needa  
yaloobeguri/yaalawa

The other children sit in a group, they represent the taro. “The thief” comes and takes them one by one. Whenever the “thief” marches away with one child, the “owner” comes from the other direction and says:

*Ta*/*my garden/ 
*Sit*/*your garden/* 
*Ta*/*my garden/ 
*I plant/* 
*I hit* everywhere/*the ground/* 
*Sing*/*play happy/*play happy/* 
*Then/their*/*taror* 
*I plant/*I go/*

And the children, that is the remaining children, reply “Kika,” using the word as if it were the thief’s name. However, this is the spirit word, and means “nothing” or “nobody.” The last child is the *simana* (mother) or the *Katepuka* (growing trunk) of the taro. Then the owner says: “Kika be kika” (I’ll give you nothing). Then the “owner” says to the “thief,” “Why have you been stealing from my garden,” and then all stand in a group and say:

*Karowukiahita/sopire/kutheia/*  
Sopire/* 

The lice are *ona semalimo*/*symbolic* for the children. They always say this last line if the game is played at night. In the daytime this is taboo, it would make their hair white.

The next game, Keley (*kangaroo*) game in Sipupu and Bositoroba, has also something to do with stealing.

Keley/keleg/nau/kwoteya/ukwakari/  
Kangaroo/kangaroo/*your*/*yam you take/  
Ukwakari/poroporo/* 
You carry, like pig (*i.e., carrying it on shoulder)*/*

Now they sit down, stretch their legs out straight, and rub them against each other. They repeat the song and, when they rise, the absence of cracking is a proof of being a *werabana* (witch). The *werabana* hear all other people’s joints cracking at night, but their joints don’t crack. The explanation given for the lines “father shaking, mother shaking,” is that mother and father shake their child when they teach it, when they tell it to do this or avoid that. The “mother’s way and father’s way,” Maa, my head boy, added, is the “witches’ way and sorcerers’ way.”

In the village of Bwasitoroba, the children play *mare-mare yapaa* (*turtles’ eggs*). They make a line on the beach, and then they rub one boy’s back and sing:

*Maremareya/pou*/*turtle’s eggs/ *pou/gie gie/bwawbaru/sili/sili*/ *egg/very many/calling/sizzling*/

Then the boy runs to the line, and the others ran after him. He turns round and catches the others, one by one, and takes them as captives to his place. When he has taken them all, the game is finished.

Another Sipupu version of the separation game is called *kasiture* (*plucking from a bunch,* i.e., *plucking bananas from a bunch, or children from a group*). They sit down in a group and push each others’ heels, scraping the ground.
Then they squat down, slap their knees and stand up straight. If the knee of one of the children does not crack, he or she is put into the *werabana* group, if it cracks, into the sorcerer's group. This division is called plucking. While doing this, they say the following rhyme: *Segili nyanayi sazawe* (Sharp thing white ants cut it off).11

Now the *werabana* sit down in a group, they are cooking food. One of them says, "Igu *ima yonu sideya*," (I forgot my scraper!). They play at being *werabana*; they all "grab" and "eat" each other. The "barau" forms a separate group, while the *werabana* rush up and down "eating" each other.

This ends the list of games of the "separation" type. Certain elements that occur in the content of separation games we find also independently as basic elements of other children's rhymes and games. One of these is the "up and down" motive. The following ball game is played at Sipupu and Quanaura. Girls throw oranges up rhythmically at the end of each line, and then catch them again.

**Toaines/Bekunopita
Youau/pilikilimaya
Rasiana/lekwanya
Uo/kenatingya
Nigeria/bahemibina11
Gurumweowa/bubentyo
Bebe/ko/yaityasi
Bebe/si/yaityasi
Kapwe/ute/emple
Kau/dedora/Mwaniku**

A similar game in which they throw anything that can be used as a ball from one hand to the other is accompanied by the following verses:

**Toaines/igamwaya
Ilechawa/igamwaya
Nigeria/bebe nupumo
Gurumweowa/bubentiyo
Bebe/ko/yaityasi
Bebe/si/yaityasi
Tabunu/okukubekun
Tabata/ura/huuro
Bole boli/Taytu tiyu**

What/woman/became pregnant
"Brought me back"/got pregnant
Not/food for you at all
Sea stone/yam for you
Yam/foot/stretch out
Yam/hand/stretch out
Ball playing/we play
My/crying/Mwaniku14

A similar game in which they throw anything that can be used as a ball from one hand to the other is accompanied by the following verses:

**Toaines/igamwaya
Ilechawa/igamwaya
Nigeria/bebe nupumo
Gurumweowa/bubentiyo
Bebe/ko/yaityasi
Bebe/si/yaityasi
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Tabunu/okukubekun
Tabata/ura/huuro
Bole boli/Taytu tiyu**

The witches are supposed to walk about with their drums, making their *doe* (dance) for the human flesh they are about to receive.

It is interesting to note that these games strikingly confirm the abreaction theory of play with the transition from passivity to activity. In throwing things up and down, the children are repeating what was done to them by their mothers. The mother when carrying the baby actually throws it up and down, singing the following *kara ona ona*:

**Sinagu/kaena/mwauna
Tamagu/kaena/mwauna
Kar/mwabaya mwabuya
Kar/dodohedoki**

A similar game in which they throw anything that can be used as a ball from one hand to the other is accompanied by the following verses:

**Toaines/igamwaya
Ilechawa/igamwaya
Nigeria/bebe nupumo
Gurumweowa/bubentiyo
Bebe/ko/yaityasi
Bebe/si/yaityasi
Tabunu/okukubekun
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Bebe/ko/yaityasi
Bebe/si/yaityasi
Tabunu/okukubekun
Tabata/ura/huuro
Bole boli/Taytu tiyu**

Another group of games hinges on the concepts of "chopping a tree." In Sipupu, two children have their fingers hooked together. One of them keeps hitting his own arm with the edge of his palms (like chopping wood).

**To kivu/to kivu/to agayo
Kilimo/kilimo/to agayo
Toyon/kobere/bobere**

Then all the children bend forward and say:

**To kiro/to kiro/tausiria
Tauditoro/tausirayo**

When they say the line, "what axe we sharpen," they pretend that their hands are axes which they "sharpen" on their buttocks. After having fin-

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10 This is repeated. The white ant bite everything to pieces.
12 Rasiana is a shore at Quanaura.
ished the text, there is a scuffle, and they poke each other in the ribs with their fingers. This time the finger is the axe.

Another version of the same game has the following lines:

To nis/to nis/takorikori/
Which coconut/which coconut/we scrape it/
Nis yaku/18 nis yaku/takorikori/
Coconut pink/coconut pink/we scrape it/
Me Dobua/takoradobu/me Dobua/takoradobu/
People of Dobua/we walk across to them/people of Dobua/we cross to them/
Sinadobu/kadi/mawakawakensau/
Our mothers/their/food/tit-bits/
Sakusakubu/dudwane/
Put it/underneath.

The Dobu version of the same song is this:

Kori/magagaiya
Scrape/magagaiya shell
Buway/sinadobu
They are/our mothers
Buway/samadobu
They are/our fathers
Kadi/nabakeshobu/nakononi
Their food/carried on head/we have eaten
Mwanakobu/takoradobu/mawakawakensau
Mwanakobu people/we turn to them/we turn to them
Nima/kubusawaya/sakusakubu
Hand/its underneath/put it in.

Many boys play this, holding their palms on one another. One of them hits his palm with his fist and says:

Kasawu/iditid/bu/iditidiyowa
Mango/flowers/and/flowers all over
Swikio/iditid/bu/iditidiyowa
Mawakiko/flowers/and/flowers all over
Raku/iditid/bu/iditidiyowa
Raku/fruit/flowers/and/flowers all over
Daewa/iditid/bu/iditidiyowa
Breadfruit/flowers/and/flowers all over

Then he finishes with this line:

Gwaraiti/iditi/iditidiyowa
Gwarauto/flowers/and/flowers all over.

Then they make a noise like brrrr! brrrr! with their mouths, imitating thunder.

Sometimes the following verses and action are added:

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18 Two boys have their hands interlocked; at the end of the verses they open their hands and pretend to look for something that is underneath.

19 A reef flower, visible at the season of thunderstorms.

---
When they lift their hands up they shout:

_Tobuwa/TOBEWA/amu doe_

and when they bring their hands down:

_Bareu/bareu/amu/ure!

_In one of the separation games we have described, we find a reference to flatulation. A rather unique group of verses is connected with defecation. In Dobu (village Murisioa) they have special lines for defecation. An old woman sings as follows when she sits down:

_Iwa! lokorakajdiana/Lalala_

_It comes/Rat/its belly/coming out_

_Bwadue/dianalolo_

_Wallaby/belly/coming out_

_Me Bwebweso/diadi/lolo_

_People of Bwebweso/their belly/learning out (the dead)_

_If dust gets into the child's eyes, the child holds its eyelids with its fingers, pulls them, and moving them up and down, it says:

_Keley/busa/ina/da mane_

_Kangaroo/excrement/its drop out (or drop into sea)_

_Uwuwa/busa/ina/da mane_

_Crocodile/excrement/its drop out_

_Kokoraka/busa/ina/da mane_

_Rat/excrement/its drop out_

_Bwaebwa/busa/ina/da mane_

_Lizard/excrement/its drop out._

_In Dobu, the children say the following verses in the same situation:

_Kepa lepa_

_Pear tree_

_Weyatu_

_Darae_

_A game and song from Muraa (Woodlark) imitates excretion:

_Mwagili/tawetawe_

_Tetete/wawebukoko_

_Kinego/gooda_

_Anguis/i/'wa rou_

_Tweswa/nimagu_

_Boring/creeping_

_Walking/platform_

_I see/children_

_Cabbage/defecating_

_Urinating/my hand._

_At/its belly/coming out *

_Earth/under.*

_The fruit of the pili pili tree has the shape of a top, about three inches high. This is used in the game. For top games cf. Holmes, op. cit._

While singing this, they shake their hands as if they were shaking urine and excrements off their fingers. The following games refer to hide and seek or to hiding and finding things.

_In Sipupu, the universal hide (kedawana) and seek of children is played as follows: One group hides and the other looks for them. They sing the following karauna, when they are looking for the others.

_Kado/kudi/bayarina/shavoy_

_Kaykayhili/koa/koa/koa!_

_They play with the spear and throw it at a tree, saying:

_Bwawawatu/el_

_Igw/gila/bukotpwaire_

_Kane/mweane/yakepwaire_

_The following is the Dobu version of the same song:

_Tobuwa/ina/gila/musara/aposonema_

_Grand parents hol/Our/spear/you throw/it comes out_

_Abo/hawayi ami/urena_

_If not perhaps/your/pots_

_Be/ami/gaba/seasapiari_

_And your/wooden dishes/we break into pieces!

_The grand parents are the iokwato koway, the spirits. They think the spirits have hidden the spear because they don't like the children if they are too noisy. The spirits may also make the child sick for the same reason. A reference to the "grandparents" is also contained in a game with tops. Bebe (Sawaiyoya of Boasitorba), says that when the children played at hiding and they whistled, the old people used to get angry and say "Wanawoma (you come), sahena (do not) lohigwana (you whistle) Yaraya rura (ghosts' sikewatayagem) (they will come and hide you)."

_Another version of the top game is a kind of dramatized myth. When the girls turn their tops, they sing:

_Pili pili/pili pili/koda/bwaka (twice)_

_Kodo/bwaka/mi mihome (twice)_

_Bwakwaduduna (twice)_

_The bwakwa duduna are the numu people, the dwellers of the underworld, and the real owners of the fertile soil. Kasabwaibwala's children played this in the sky. They made a hole in the sky with the top and this is how they saw his mother's village, that is, their grandmother's village, and effected the_
reunion of Kasabwai-waiweta with his mother. These mythical children are then supposed to have made the following song.

Koda/bwaha, koda/bwaha
Tamagou/ma/kasa
Bokunopita/debanahaho/ilo/loho

The tree is supposed to have its roots in Kasabwai-waiweta’s home village, and its crown in the sky where Kasabwai-waiweta lived in the land of women. According to Sine Durey of Quayaiya, there are three Bokunopita trees—one in the country of the numu, one connected with Kasabwai-waiweta, and the third connected with Kekewagei, the woman who receives the ghosts at Mount Bwebweso.

Now this gets more complicated because we are told that the sky dwellers call the inhabitants of the earth, the numu people. We also know that the numu are a kind of other world, just like the other world proper on Mount Bwebweso.

To return, however, to the story as given by Sine Durey:

When Kasabwai-waiweta’s children had made the hole, they saw through to the numu, and a boy called Bokunopita went down to his mother (or perhaps wife)—she says. The mother’s (or wife’s) name was Tau Gabilele, and her mother was Beibeiko, her brother Tau Gegeurani. When she saw his wife and her people, he went through the sky to the trunk of the tree. Here he was received by his mother-in-law She embraced him and told him back and sat on the tree till the people came home from the garden. She (Beibeiko) said “Bubura (ground mat wahay you spread) ma (and) igu (my) nilonoboana (spirit) yahemva (I bring) suganwey (out).”

When the people came home, she called up to him, all embraced him and cried. He married his wife again and stayed there.

When they play the top game, they tell this story and dramatize it. For instance, they spread leaves cut, and these represent the mother-in-law’s mat. The essential thing is that the game is connected with the mythical theme of separation and reunion.

What is the meaning of these games? Why is it that the children of Duau play these games? Is there any intrinsic connection between acts and words? If so, what is the latent meaning and function of these games?

In trying to answer these questions, we remember the fact that small children are very fond of dramatizing the loss and re-appearance of an object. Freud describes how a child of eighteen months used to play at throwing things away. It would catch hold of anything that came handy, throw it into a corner of the room, and exclaim “oolo!” which meant “gone.” One day,

when the mother had been absent for several hours, she was received by the child with the information “baby oolo.” The child had been looking into the mirror, and there it caught sight of another baby. The child invented a game which consisted of making “baby” (the reflection in the mirror), disappear, by ducking down and then finding baby again by standing up. The child attached a reel to a string, and would play at throwing the reel out of its bed and then pulling it back again. Freud says “After this, it was easy to find the meaning of these games.” It was connected with the great “cultural” achievement of the child with the amount of capacity for tolerating deprivation which it had evolved, viz., with the capacity to tolerate the absence of the mother. The infant found consolation in dramatizing disappearance and re-appearance with the aid of the object which came within its reach.

Now there is some evidence to show that, in what we may call the “central” group of the games we have been considering, the latent theme is a dramatization and abstraction of the primal danger, the danger of object loss. In the game called puvuri susa (play happy) (cf. above), the separation of the children from a group is enacted, and the child who is the last to be taken away, i.e., from whom the others are separated, is actually called the mother of the other children.

An English game is strikingly similar. One of the children is the mother, the others are the days of the week, one child is their guardian, and one of the children is the witch. The witch lights her pipe, spits on the earth, and runs away with the child called Sunday. The “guardian” rushes to the “mother” and tells her that “the pot boils over.” The mother tells the guardian to put her head in the pot and to do various other things, and finally comes to the rescue, but it is too late. The witch steals all the children.

Returning to Normanby Island, we find that: the typical ending line “lice” means children, and also indicates the same content, i.e., the separation of the lice (children), from the body of the mother. In the game “turtles’ eggs,” the eggs are the children, and evidently therefore, the turtle the mother. A game played in Gazaland dramatizes the concept of the child clinging to its mother. A boy goes down on hands and knees and two children sit down on the ground, one on either side of him, facing one another. They then put their legs over the back of the boy who is kneeling, and grasp one another firmly by the hand. The boy then rises with these two children clinging firmly to his back, the other children get very excited, and sing out “The catterpillar and its child.”

28 S. Freud, Gesammelte Schriften VI, p. 201. (Jenseits des Lustprinzips.)
29 The disappearance of the children being connected with a pot into which somebody should put her head suggests “body destruction” phantasies as latent content of the game. In one case, the mother’s feet are to be cut off and her blood is to run over the threshold. See Gomme, The Traditional Games of England, Scotland and Ireland (I, 1904), pp. 396–401. Cf. also Kis, Magyar Gyermekjatek Gyufitalma, p. 86. 30 Dudley Kidd, Savage Childhood (1900), p. 177.
A description of children’s games at Bougainville is especially convincing. Blackwood says:

They tie all kinds of creatures to a string, and like Nelly Bly let them go a little and then pull them back again. I have seen them treat in this manner iguanas, bats, opossums, birds, and also various kinds of insects, including stag-beetles. They like to get hold of a mother with its young, perhaps a flying fox or an opossum, and tease both by letting the young one grip its mother and then pulling it away.

We believe therefore, that the functional significance of games which dramatize the separation from a group, and the formation of a new group, is similar to the repetition compulsion in war shocks. The trauma is overcome by repetition. A new element is of course added, and this is the tendency to substitute formation. The loss of the mother is not an irretrievable loss, for in the group the playing child finds a substitute for the absent mother. Thus the theme of the game would be the separation of the child from one group and the aggregation to another (rôle de passage). In a very interesting analysis of the play activity, Buijtenijk adheres to this explanation. In the light of Hermann’s findings on the grasping reflex of clinging to the mother, and the tendency to find substitutes to cling to, we gain further insight into the motives underlying these games. The drama of separation from the mother is also enacted in a group of symptomatic actions such as clawing (separating a whole into parts), or pinching or tearing something from the surface of the skin or binding, and loosening.24

In games of the “tree chopping” type, we have two children with fingers interlocked, then a sudden separation, and a release of aggressions. The element of abreacting anxiety is typically manifested in the games when children play at being sorcerers or witches, and the origin of these anxiety objects from the parental images is made pretty clear by the informant’s remark that the witch’s way is the mother’s way, and the sorcerer’s way is the father’s way.

In the ball throwing game, we find that a witch or a mythological personage has been delivered, and that there is no food for the new-born baby or for the mother. The obvious interpretation is the hostile attitude of the child with regard to the mother and the new rival. If children throwing things out of the window are playing at getting rid of their brothers and sisters, it would seem plausible to interpret this ball game with the accompanying verse, as a

way of working through sibling hostility. They are throwing their brothers away and then catching them again.

Following Hermann’s views, we believe that pinching in these games is a kind of grasping and separation. The reference to the turtle (mother) and its egg (child) in the game called *kurumodo* (turtle), confirms this view. At Bougainville, we find the game in which each of the child’s fingers is touched or pinched in turn, beginning with the little finger, and ending with the mother running her finger lightly up the baby’s arm.25 The Kai have a game that must be very similar to the pinching games found in Sipwpu, and also the games of the “tree chopping” type26 in which children represent ants and pinch each other’s hands.

We shall now consider the lullabies sung to infants in our area. In Boisitobora, if the mother has gone to the garden to work and the baby cries because it is hungry, the elder child will keep it quiet by saying, “I will dream of her,” and later on, “I dreamed she is coming.” If they are still waiting in vain and the baby goes on crying, they will sing:

**Molu/usu/sidi**

Eyes/hairs/their

They hold the baby and say:

**Sinugu/sinugu/ia/scheh/iraturata**

My mother/my mother/and/where/she came out

**Durukuya/durukuya/pana**

From the cave/from the cave/whether

**Iratut/gol**

She comes out/go!

Then they pull the eyelash, and if it come out the mother is coming, and they blow it away and say:

**Kuatuay/kedoe**

You go/you fetch her.

Here we find the link between separation of a part of the body (pinching, tearing out eyelashes), and the absence of the mother.

The next lullaby conforms to the universal human form of lullabies, which consists in promising to give the child something good to eat, usually in connection with the return of the father:

**Leleleu**

Woman/hullaby

**Sidine/leleleu**

Your father/went away

**Tamayo/irajuga**

Bath/on the hill

**Dumunsme/kumuaya**

Flesh food/he hunts

**Houhimo/duadiuru**

You stop quiet/we stop quiet.

**Kumiau sofa/itsa/kumiah**


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This is a lullaby, sung by the mother to her child. The following songs are sung to children at Boasitoroba when they cry. While singing this, the elder sister will pick the infant up and carry it:

### Kunagura/sinadalkana
- You stop crying/our mother/here
- Sasagwaiyega/tamada
- Sasagwaiyega (kind of sugar cane)/our father
- Tangebareya
- We lie to him.

That is, they will cheat the father and give all the sugar cane to the mother.

For a boy, the song goes the other way round:

### Kuagura/tamada/kanajlouyega
- You stop/our father/his/sugar cane with

### Sinada/tagebareya
- Our mother/we cheat her.

This is from Murua for the little children whom they are petting:

### Karobwe/mosadi/bebeba
- We decorate we/calit ourselves/the centre of dancing place
- Imesege/iz/wamudamuda
- We come/they/the people
- Iqueenisa/rara/mamurabay
- You cut/the flower/of the mamurabay tree
- Ageu/soi/soi-dili
- My/sugar cane/dili cane
- Ageu/sanka/kuninisigru
- My/line/kuninisegu taror
- Nubegu/age/mora/sinasini
- My cousin/my/hunger/sinasiditaro

The child is going to his cousin’s dance where he will get good things; they jump about and dance while singing this.

The next lullaby is typical of this culture area. It refers to the food division (sagori), “modesty” formula of not claiming to be a great chief, of not claiming to have given a particularly grand feast.

Sipeta sang this when she used to carry her little brother:

### Kiyagwao/sinamiyao/siheumegemia
- Friends/your mothers/they sucked you
### Tauma/kene/pespeso
- We are/dropping water.

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**Notes:**

1. The canoe.
2. For a dance.
3. “Line” means the lines in the garden. He has kuninisegu taro in his garden.
4. Cf. “Murru, the infant’s mother’s brother, was master of ceremonies, and stood by the pile of coconuts and made a short speech saying that these coconuts and taro were for the new infant, that this was only a small distribution of food but that later they would have a much bigger feast.” Powdermaker, *Life in Leus*, p. 66.
5. A Boasitoroba woman.

This means; other children have better mothers; they get milk, we drink only water.

The mothers of Normanby Island have a peculiar custom in connection with these lullabies. The child is at the breast being nursed. The mother sings a lullaby or some other song, and rocks the child in accordance with the rhythm. At the end of each line, the infant is forcibly torn away from the nipple and permitted to take it again immediately afterwards. It is obvious that such a proceeding is a continuous repetition of the separation trauma. I believe it helps to explain the games of the separation aggregation type and also constitutes a typical trauma of this area, which is sublimated in a culture built up on the gift counter-gift model. The person who has had the nipple so often withdrawn is particularly anxious to receive gifts of food and to appear in the light of an *esaesa* (a generous giver), thereby denying his anxiety that that nipple will be taken away again.

This peculiar proceeding is called *menunu*, which means to pet the child and shake it at the same time. That is, the shaking is done not only when the child has the nipple. While doing this they sing the following lullaby:

### Leleleu/leleleu/leleleu/leleleu
- (No meaning)
### Kumwanoie/kumwanoie/kumwanoie
- Stop crying/stop crying/stop crying
### Metabwai/enolno/metabwai/enolno
- Eyes get/sleep, sleep/eyes get/sleep, sleep
### Lulubeko/koiyay/leleleu
- River breeze/ from the hill/leleleu
### Lulubeko/koiyay/leleleu
- River breeze/ from the hill/leleleu.

Sine Durey, who tells me about this lullaby and the custom of *menunu*, has really come to me to relate a dream in which her mother who died five months ago calls her to come and join her in the other world, but finally, when she refuses, leaves her again.

The theme of the game and the dream is the separation from the mother. The person who really spoke the words spoken by her mother in the dream was her husband, later her husband, Taseni, thus revealing, of course, the mother as the first love object. She talks about the last hours of her mother, how her mother told her to cook one more meal for her because it will be the last meal she will eat.

The following group of rhymes are on the border line between rhyme and magic.

The children have been bathing; they are shivering and they want the sun to shine:

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42 A middle-aged woman of Quayaiya.
Kuhara/kedikedi/digama
Dobu/koyure
Tubuda/kuowana
Kaharipinipari

You shine/strong on us
Dobu/ours only
Our grandfather/testicles
You shine break them

Mwaileta, a woman of Weyana, a village in the Kelologeya district, used to sing the following "kara ona ona" to make the sun shine after a bath:

Siwagwa/siromana/jidaria
Ikamana/Tubuda/awana
Kharipinipari/pisi

Big one/come down/small one
Grandfather/ancient one
Shining it breaks/pii

Lastly we have the kara ona ona (talking) a separate category of native folk lore which is not real lyric, like the warri, and yet more than a children's rhyme. They are more the songs of young girls than of children.

Neclesi, a Bunama woman of the village of Hihinara, used to sing the following lo warri (kara ona ona) when she walked about with the other girls:

Leworthy/Yagoyogoye/yadofredo
Loiya/loiyani/leulele

Walking about/I go down/went down
Loiya/loiyani/walking about alone

or in simpler form when walking about alone:

Aileleu/awadee (3 times)

I walk about/on the road.

The next one is a more complicated version:

Kara/ona ona
Idi/djimwa/gurewana
Gurewana/humia
Kaykayera
Damaonu
Yalegegwa
Gureguere/kemari
Yevasagofia
Sarere/Kurumwadawa
Siwaga/magabwauto
Siwellisweliswelis

Using/talking
Our/stone/stone turtle
Stone turtle/you stop
Real
Beside you
I walk around
Gureguere (place name)/young boys
Fetch them together
Went down to/Kurumwadawa (mine on Woodlark Island)
They walk/walk about
They sail sail about

This song obtained from Gimwagimwaryea in the Nadinadia dialect is sung by big girls walking on the beach.

The next song is a Sipupu kara ona ona:

Tauma/jib/mawenana
Igabi/hilemaya
Tutubwana/peyo peyo peyo

Himself/’his wife
He burns her/’pay back”
Tutubwana wood/turning

A man was angry with his wife (pay back). He burnt her with firewood and she writes in pain (burning). Children sing this when they go for a walk.

The following two kara ona ona are for smaller children:

Mwatoiyo/mawata/ina
Dibebeya/mawata/ina

Where/snake/totat
Dibebeya/snake/that

Disima/sicomwena
Ya mata/kayakaya
Bwebwo/kitakakini
Dib/woodyawowena
Tada/loanoany
Rasiana/kilakay
Karaya/kausoere
Daɓara/apili
Epi/yayeoyoko

Stones that really look like turtle at low water.
Shoing the modern origin of this part of the song.

The next song brings in the spirits or mwedi.

Sili/panowa/powana/feona
Waiki/bakana/kako barauna
Tubi/tubi/garuna
Guru/kotopwoina
Sitok ona/yaua/yawena
Tombomodi/Pwina

Sili/tiik/crack/dry
Mango/its roots/root barau us
Tubi tree/its top
Top/broke
Its hot temperature/heat heat

Mwedi catcher/Pwina

Finally our last kara ona ona takes us out of childhood into the love life of Sipupu.

Tuna kono karahonahona

"Jews harp” its song.

The “Jews harp” or flute, is an instrument of lovemaking. Nevertheless they call these line karahonahona, like the others which are sung by children.

Loilidii/manyawo
Yahawena/takeno
Nunyawo/yahire

Calling for/(if) you want
I go up/we lie
(If) you want/I go back.

6 The other world. 7 Village near Dibhibeya.
8 There are so many people running about on the beach that the sand gives way under their weight—a frequent phrase in incantations.
9 Many people mean happiness in the sagari incantations.
10 The sili in question is a stone, but it is regarded as the makamokayek (shadow) or semalimali (symbol) of the real sili (clitoris).
11 The name (mango tree) is the kelemia (place of staying of the mwedi (spirits).
12 The tree has flowers in the hot season.
13 Pwina “broken branch hanging down.” He is one of the mwedi but also a “mwedi catcher.”
Then the girl will say, “Come up and we shall sleep together. Don’t go back. It is dark, a tree might fall on you.”

The following boys’ song is really something half-way between a folk-tale and a song. It is a story the boys like to dramatize. They run around the village and sing the verses:

Wahine (woman) kagye (one) ikenatuna (gave birth) natuna (child) ina (that) tamana (father) ibiway (ate) imoe (all). Tuta (time) kagye (one) waine (woman) ina (that) igawwa (got pregnant) ilaw (went) horay (sea) soi (for) igeda (shellfish) to (and) ikenatuna (she gave birth). Natuna (child) ina (that) ika akua (she carried) sumuwan (shell) kowina (to it) ttaguguya (she put in) ma (and) sumuwan (shell) hawa (that) ikomwanweya (petted it) koinega (so) ihewaniska (he grew up) ma (and) inwawura (it sang.)

This is the part the boys sing when they run round the village:

Kiyawu (Friends) sinamizo (your mothers) siheuweregema (they sucked you) iau (myself) sumuwan (shell) natuna (its child) kool kool

Now the narrative continues:

Yoweray (he sang) iwasuwaya (he went) wakana (uncle) ina hada (his house) ibawakwahane (he shouted up) tasima hada ibiway hakena (brother his house he shouted up) tipipimasa (he jumped down) ma (and) tasina (brother) ina (that) ikenohekewey (he held embraced) ma gawma ina (and child that) igway (said) Oka kiwanae (you let me go) kowina iau (not I person). Ma (And) tamana inao (his father came) igway (he said): O natuugu yau wedel (O my child I am sorry). E Sinamiso igway (And mother said): O yautsiwana (You gave birth; suhaykeyana (you ate them all) la (and) beko (this) gawma (child) ina (that) yabe natune (I gave birth) ilaw (it went) sumuwan (shell) ika manweya (nursed it). Kiraka (It become a young man). Bagura (Garden) siwuya (they went) siruguya (they went in) kana (his) bora (taro) sitelena (they made a mona). Siko eyawawawasia (They his life feast).

Singing the song and running round the village evidently means an unconscious identification with the hero of the story. Now the story itself is a typical “family romance of the neurotic.” The returned child says “I am not a normal but a supernatural being, the child of a shell.” We know since Rank that the basis of the family romance is the idealization of the parents, which again in its turn is derived from the Oedipus complex. We have but to invert the order in time, and the same underlying latent content appears in our story. First the child is “petted” by the shell; a typical vagina symbol of this area, and then or therefore, it is eaten by the father. By the life feast, the tension imminent in the Oedipus situation is overcome, and the boy becomes a member of society.

Beside this interpretation in terms of a universal psychology, a more specific local and cultural interpretation is also possible, and indeed strikingly significant.

The verse sung by the boys is analogous to the lullaby quoted above: “Friends, your mothers gave you milk, we get only water.”

The technique used by the mothers while singing this lullaby justifies its contente, for they withdraw the nipple while rocking the child. The child has a right to complain about the sort of nursing he got. At the same time, we notice what happens on the father’s side. In this narrative, the father is represented as eating the children, and this is actually the typical paternal trauma of this area, that the father takes the child’s genital into his mouth and pretends to eat it.

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[64] A meal given to those who return home is yawan seurina (= life feast).