

“Suzie is a nut,
She has a rubber butt,
And everytime she turns around
She goes putt-putt.”

In contrast, the authors do not deal with jokes and wit of extremely explicit sexual nature which any adult knows are indeed an integral part of childhood folklore. The issue is skirted by describing such things as bra-snapping, kissing games, and some discussion of sex roles in performance games.

The authors repeatedly emphasize that authoritarian adult supervision and interference destroy the value of such interaction for children in coping and becoming “a member of human society.” The point is well-made when cataloging such games as marbles and mother-may-I, where a parallel is obvious between children’s rules and adult rules, with the actual rules of action in marbles sometimes being kept from one or both parents. There is contradiction when the authors point out that in many games the rules can suddenly change completely, and that “the word ‘cheating’ doesn’t always mean the same thing to a child that it means to an adult” (p. 28). While this may be ample reason for the undesirability of adult presence, it is not explained how this helps the children become members of human society. The sanctity of children’s folklore is treated with such reverence that it seems to be somehow above analysis.

The book is primarily an anthology. Editing and analysis would be necessary for classroom use. The level of the writing makes easy reading, and as a nostalgic adventure it is delightful.

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