

Dansk Bornefolklore

The Committee for Danish Children's Folklore was founded in 1978 on the initiative of the author cand. psych. Jens Sigsgaard. The committee consists of social anthropologists, folklorists, educationalists, psychologists and others with a knowledge on children's folklore (children's traditional culture), and the committee has the following aims

- to promote the knowledge on Danish children's folklore
- to inspire and if possible assist at collecting, research, exhibitions, meetings etc. concerning children's folklore.
- to cooperate with interested persons and organizations at home and abroad.

Since its foundations the committee for instance has procured materials for a UNESCO exhibition on traditional games and primitive (handmade) toys. Some of the members of the committee have also assisted with preparation (elaboration) of the annotated bibliography *History of Civilisation of the Child in the North* (Denmark, Finland, The Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) (1980) and The Addenda to it (1985).

In cooperation with The University Extension (Open University), the committee has arranged five (public) lectures on children's traditional culture.

Jens Sigsgaard, the founder of the committee, has written a number of books, some of them based children's rhymes, some of them fictions. The most famous "Palle Alone in the World" has been translated to most European languages and in some Asiatic too — Chinese and Japanese for instance. Perhaps this book is known in U.S.A. as well.

In 1988 the committee arranged a course of lectures on the following subjects: 1. Danish Children's Folklore in an International Perspective, 2. Traditional Songs Among Children, 3. The Joke on Jokes (On Children's jokes and riddles), 4. Children's Play (Games) and Toys in a Historical Perspective, 5. Children's Pictures. All lectures took place at The Danish Teacher's Highschool — a kind of teacher's university for their further studies.

Of late — October 1989 — we arranged a seminar on children's tales and jokes at Danish Teachers' Highschool with litterateurs,

psychologists, folklorists and educators. We hope to be able to arrange a similar conference on children's singing.

In many ways children still have their own culture, which is handed down from one generation of children to the next one. The girls have their singing games, in which boys seldom participate, but today they (the girls) often prefer the new clapping songs with complicated clapping movements at a rapid pace. And both boys and girls know rude (dirty) songs and rebellious ditties and tell stories, jokes and chillers (ghosts stories), which give them community and fine experiences.

Still the conditions on this field are not as positive as they used to be. In many countries well-informed research workers believe that this varied, humane and valuable culture is pressed.

The reasons are quite a few. Children's life is organized and planned. Sports have for instance acquired an enormous prestige through television and especially the football game occupies leisure for ten thousands of boys.

Passivating entertainment and media culture fill increasingly the life of the children. The play has a low prestige also in children's own world. To sing and play yourself is no more something quite natural, and the group games where you quite simply need and 'use' one another are not so common as they used to be. But in spite of all the games are still important not least to the development of the child.

What grown-ups can do is primarily to give children possibility for and time to play and improve their abilities on this field.

We are willing to participate in discussions and seminars on subjects concerning children's folklore and children's culture on the whole.

We also want — to a certain extent and in cooperation with other — assist with ideas for play-days, — festivals and similar arrangements. But we do not possess economic means for our disposals. This should however not refrain any interested to contact us.

Erik Kaas Neilsen
Rypevaenget 16
2600 - Glostrup
DENMARK

C. W. Sullivan III, Editor
Children's Folklore Review
Department of English
East Carolina University
Greenville, N.C. 27858-4353

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