



Not Just Child's Play: Emerging Tradition and the Lost Boys of Sudan

Felicia R. McMahon

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Felicia R. McMahon breaks new ground in the presentation and analysis of emerging traditions of the "Lost Boys," a group of parentless youths who fled Sudan under tragic circumstances in the 1990s. With compelling insight, McMahon analyzes the oral traditions of the DiDinga Lost Boys, about whom very little is known. Her vibrant ethnography provides intriguing details about the performances and conversations of the young DiDinga in Syracuse, New York. It also offers important insights to scholars and others who work with refugee groups.

The author argues that the playful traditions she describes constitute a strategy by which these young men proudly position themselves as pre-servers of DiDinga culture and as harbingers of social change rather than as victims of war. Drawing ideas from folklore, linguistics, drama, and play theory, the author documents the danced songs of this unique group. Her inclusion of original song lyrics translated by the singers and descriptions of conversations convey the voices of the young men. Well researched and carefully developed, this book makes an original contribution to our understanding of refugee populations and tells a compelling story at the same time.

Felicia R. McMahon is a research professor in anthropology at Syracuse University. A former Fulbright Scholar, she has published in several folklore journals and is the coeditor of *Children's Folklore: A Sourcebook*, which won an American Folklore Society Opie Prize for Best Edited Book.

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