Jørn Martin Steenhold

TOYS AND USERS

Translated by
Jane Stewart Sønderup and Jørn Martin Steenhold

Play with toys, things and implements is a kind of narrative in which the person-at play seeks to form something clear and categorical out of reality, fantasy and dreams.

But life and existence, reality and dreams are not categorical.

However, thought-provoking experiments and results occur when we analyse them as if they were.

Jørn Martin Steenhold

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Translated by Jane Stewart Sønderup

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By the same author:
Children's books:

1977	Binnerup
	Anne-Mette og bierne
1978	Helle og Lykke
	Bente og Bo
	Peter og hans mor
	Jan og hans far
1983	Lone laver verden om
	Min oldefars polypper
	Natten sover
	Nu er det morgen
1984	Part of "24 dage til jul": Mit Jesus-barn er en lille pige
1988	Pigen, hunden og fuglen
	Regnbuekrigeren

Anthologies:

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Teachers' Guides:

1975	Åben -plan
1975	Systembegreber
1978	Emne- og temaarbejde
1987	Multietnisk pædagogik

Contributions to the following books:

1977	Pædagogiske principper, metoder og organisationsformer in "Pædagogiske Teori og Praksis"
1987	Realistisk pædagogik in "Pædagogisk Grundsyn"

Books on Toy Research:

1989	Legetøj og leg
1990	Legetøjsudvikling
1993	Legetøj som klær legen
1993	Det legende spil

Toy Research Theses:

1994	Legetøj og leg, livsform og livsstil
1994	Toys, Play and Games. Lifestyle and Views of Humanity. Statistical Information
1997	For legetøjet

DEDICATION

For my family: Karen, Jens Martin, Mette Martine, Morten and Line.

Bryrup, Denmark, June 1999

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PREFACE

This book is about modern toys - and about the people who play with them! While research into play enjoys broad acceptance in scientific circles, research into modern toys has yet to achieve this status and respect. Toys as such are as old as mankind but accepting research into them remains problematic.

Whenever he presents his theories, a toy researcher can expect to be confronted with forbearance and condescension from the academic world. And whenever this happens, the toy researcher is something like "the ugly duckling" in Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale.

Andersen wrote:

"Towards evening, the Duck came to a little miserable peasant's hut. This hut was so dilapidated that it did not know onwhich side it should fall; and that's why it remained standing. The storm whistled round the duckling in such a way that the poor creature was obliged to sit down, to stand against it; and the tempest grew worse and worse. Then the Duckling noticed that one of the hinges of the door had given way, and the door hung so slanting that the Duckling could slip through the crack into the room; and it did so."

Anyone who knows the tale of the ugly duckling knows that the duckling was to be greeted only with scorn and derision by "the old woman", "the tom cat" and "the hen" in "the old hut". The duckling was ordered to lay eggs because the ability to produce eggs was most highly regarded in the world/house. The fairy tale continues:

"And so the Duckling was admitted on trial for three weeks; but no eggs came. And the Tom Cat was master of the house and the Hen was the lady, and always said "We and the world" for she thought they were half the world, and by far the better half. The Duckling thought one might have a different opinion, but the Hen would not allow it.
"Can you lay eggs?", she asked.
"No."
"Then you'll have the goodness to hold your tongue."
And the Tom Cat said, "Can you curve your back, and purr, and give out sparks?"
"No."
"Then you cannot have any opinion of your own when sensible people are speaking."

I cannot resist the temptation to compare the old hut with toy research - which remains standing because it doesn't know which way it should fall.

The old lady, the cat and the hen are just characters in a fairy tale, not to be compared with real people in the toy research hut. For this preface is just a game with a fairy tale and research - into toys.

This book is about my own and other people's research into toys. The themes and content are theoretical but the theory has both a narrative and an academic theoretical perspective. The book is written in order to describe toys, play with them and the readers' and the children's day-to-day life and existence with toys. The book is built on imaginative narrative, excerpts, epics, lyrics, models and tables, expert descriptions, statistical materials, etc.

This book is also written as an academic thesis and is based of one of my previous dissertations (in Danish). The English version is extensively revised in order to emphasise the myriad of opportunities to be found in toy research.

This book is, therefore, a narrative about toys, play and persons-at-play, narrated by me, an author whose great privilege it is to be able to play and write about play and toys.

I see the human being as a storyteller who constantly plays, eternally formulating stories about himself and his world. The process itself gives the stories life and the storyteller his identity.

Play is a narrative story and communicated messages. Toys as such are narrative stories - in addition to being implements from which new stories can be created.

For these reasons, I wish you, dear reader, many hours of pleasure playing and reading!

Jørn Martin Steenhold
Bryrup, Denmark: June 1999

PART I

PARADIGMS, TEXTS AND CODES

PART I PARADIGMS, TEXTS AND CODES

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PART I PARADIGMS, TEXTS AND CODES

This is a book for and about those who play with toys - about modern users, about their background and motivation for choosing certain toys to play with.

When I call them "modern", I do so because they belong to a generation which sees toys as consumer goods.

The user is therefore also a consumer who has some kind of consumer culture. This means that the individual consumer - through the toy - demonstrates and hands down his world image, values, morals, norms and behaviour to the next generation.

But this also means that some users distinguish themselves from other users in their preference for certain material and immaterial products (including toys) over others.

This should make the aim and meaning of the book clear.

The aim of the book is to define - to the extent that this is possible - *which toys children* and their parents *prefer to play with* in this final decade of the 20th century. It seems that certain things are more highly valued and more important to some to children than they are to others!

Toys are:

− copies of real objects
− copies of historical items and objects, but can also be
− imaginary things, based on both reality and imagination

A toy can also be:

− an analogue for an object about which the person-at-play seeks cognition, knowledge and experience through play - an analogy which in play replaces the object itself.

It is therefore well-known and broadly accepted that consumers view and react differently to different toy products - their responses are even different to the same products - so it might be a good idea to base an overview on the consumer segment on consumer elasticity.

However, this is difficult to carry out in practice because it involves measuring the very small and individual differences and similarities which are definitive for the mutual differences between consumer groups and the differences between consumers and products and which differ often only slightly from one version to another.

Despite these difficulties, it is possible to identify the significant differences in particular between different families' attitudes to their future and to children's toys and the games they play.

By means of analyses, it is possible to make the correlation between selection and non-selection of toys and play and certain patterns of behaviour and attitude which are common within certain lifestyles.

We end up, therefore, with interpretations which can help to explain differences and similarities in human behaviour and imagination. However, these are interpretations based solely on combinations of theory and empiricism.

The difficulties mentioned are further complicated by the inherent limitations of the value of interpretation in any kind of description of reality simply because reality in relativistic terms can never be categorical. Even so, interpretation can give thought-provoking results when it is analysed as if it were categorical.

I decided to illuminate this in this book by relating two of the classical, traditional basic segments.

The book includes:

1. A positioning study of toys and communication of this by describing:

   - the use of toys in play
   - toy preferences
   - toys' benefits/advantages.

I regard the position of **any given toy** as the consumers' understanding of the image of the toy - which has been formed on the basis of the toy's objective and subjective characteristics or attributes - relative to the consumers' attitude to the image of directly competing and similar competitor products.

2. A description of the users' general understanding of the toy market's products where a variety of user groupings:

   - indicate the desired benefits/advantages of the toy
   - express the needs associated with acquisition of the toy
   - demonstrate a pattern of loyalty in relation to certain toys.

Product positioning is based on an understanding of **how users and consumers view and collect information about toys** and how this information is stored in **consumer consciousness**. We assume that, in a situation where he has to choose, the user's evaluation of any given toy is based on:

   - prior knowledge of the toy in question
   - other factors which can satisfy the current need

    − associations to the situations in which he can imagine the toy could be utilised.

There is, therefore, a clear connection between the social and psychological background on the one hand and product positioning on the other - which is solely due to the consumers' individual background for handling information leading to a decision about their choice of toy.

This book touches only sporadically on other traditional forms of segmentation - and only when this is deemed necessary for the sake of outline and unity.

These other traditional forms of segmentation are those for:

− brand new toy products/concepts
− price decisions
− advertising decisions and
− distribution decisions.

Introduction

Philosophical considerations

> **All life processes are narrative accounts targeted to the processes occurring in the immediate environment.**
>
> **Events and processes are signs or a myriad of signs which together give us an understanding of the development, complexity and living beauty of the sequences!**
>
> **This is why Man's ability and need to empathise through senses are inseparable from the signs, the semiotic existence.**
>
> **If the human being eradicates communication, he eradicates himself.**
>
> **Play is therefore both a narrative and an informative action containing visible and invisible pieces of information which can be interpreted and for which a use can be determined.**

Narrative and information are described in this book as play or as some other kind of activity which is most often creative and aesthetic.

Play is an activity which takes place for its own sake.

Play can either be an imitation of an earlier action, a new constructive action or a repetition of a sequence of events, which occurs either individually or in groups - and for which identification is usually characteristic.

Toys' marginal environment - the circumstances within which the actions or play occurs - are time, space, persons who are part of the sequence of events and the situation or occasion giving rise to the actions and play.

Play is subject to the same environment as those which enfold society, the family group, socio-economic market conditions (toy and media markets), technology and Art.

Articles used in a sequence of actions or in play can be toys per se, instruments and definable/indefinable items and objects.

The fact that aspects of philosophical anthropology play a central role in this book is, therefore, not wholly coincidental. My personal background and comprehension of existential reality with my practical background of research experience on play and toys together form the ethos of the book.

Where philosophy is concerned, the philosopher Martin Buber (1878-1965), his essays "Dialogue" (Zweisprache, 1923), "I and Thou" (1923) and his many "myths" have been a strong influence, although none of these publications make any specific reference to toys and play. Buber himself characterised his philosophies as philosophical anthropology because he intended them to be a study of what is unique about a human being as a human being.

On the basis of these philosophical anthropological directions, the relationships between the terms *play* and *life* are a recurrent theme throughout this book. If communication and empathy in the form of play and life are not identical, then neither play nor life is evident.

I interpret Buber's description of human ego as one category of life's history where the ego has command over a form of communicative recollected consciousness ", built up on the basis of experiences and cognition.

According to Buber, the basic human situation is in fact dissociation (because the human individual is conscious of his solitude and separateness from the rest of the world and he knows that the world continues after his death). But another particularly human characteristic is the ability to identify, i.e. empathise with the condition of other human beings, animals, ecosystems, etc. "The phenomenological lack of dissociation of the emotions and the human vagaries are universal", states K.E. Løgstrup (1984), referring to his metaphysics.

According to Buber, the basic human facility is, therefore, *the ability to establish relationships* or contact. The human being can use this facility in the same way as he can turn a light switch on or off. Relationship or contact makes a human being what he is, while the establishment of contact confirms

that another person is relevant, is, exists. This kind of confirmation can only come from one human being to another.

The confirmation itself occurs on the basis of openness, spontaneity, mutuality and intimacy with sense and self-possession. However, confirmation is only possible if the conditions mentioned are present.

I   Distanced from…….   IT   or   THOU
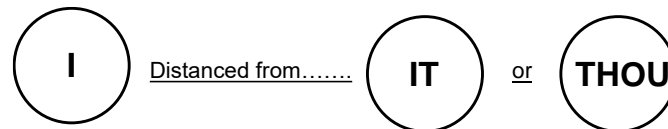
In relation: (on the basis of openness, mutuality,
                    immediacy and intimacy) to the
                    phenomenological lack of distance
                    between sensory experiences

But what do we mean by *confirmation between human beings*?
Buber writes about *one* basic principle in personal human relationships, i.e. achieving proximity. It happens incompletely when human beings meet, but it occurs fully when:

(Quote) "a human being imagines "*reality*", uses his ability to imagine it as another person feels, comprehends, thinks it at this very moment - not as a separate entity but as *a living process*.

And this *achieving proximity increases* until it becomes a paradox in the soul where I and the other are enfolded in a *shared life situation* and (say) the pain I inflict on the other, wells up in me, revealing the deep recesses of life's contradictions between human beings. At this moment, something comes into being which cannot materialise in any other way." (My italics, end quote)(Buber, 1965)

These elements mean that play and life - via communicable signs - become identical.

Children and adults play, sometimes individually and alone, sometimes with others and with a myriad of objects or piles of toys. Two different forms of play express the radical differences in relationships, i.e. the difference between the individual and the social and the difference between playing with another person and with a thing, an object (a toy).

Thus confronted with the physical things, instruments and objects in our surroundings, the human being or "person-at-play" is merely a mechanical instrument or processor. However, when confronted with another person through play, dialogue or conversation, cause and effect possibilities arise which can result in empathic consciousness which forms the essence of mankind's being.

In the experience of *confrontation* or *encounter*, the human being's recognition and comprehension is expanded.

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Relationships and dialogics

Martin Buber (1923, 1967) outlines three decisive basis relationships I to I, I to Thou, and I to It. Buber makes no clear distinction between Thou and It (Philosophy calls both "substance") because the difference will always depend on I's willingness/unwillingness or desire/non-desire either to distance himself or to form a relationship with Thou (a person) or It (something).

There will of course always be a limit to the desire to transgress but the basic tenet is that I meets Thou in It, where these are other than I. Buber (1964) describes how the I is constructed in the simple and original culture of the infant on the basis of the child's dependency on its mother. This occurs through the construction of "I's relationship to Thou". There is order in the world which exists before the individual's order in the world full of things, instruments and objects, "all kinds of Its" - dependent on the family history (phylogenesis) and the individual's history (ontogenesis). Origins and pre-existence have a fundamental effect on the child's play and existence.

In the relationship between I and Thou (for example when two children play together), we say there is a relationship between two subjects. They are in principle equals. The one must not view the other as an object which by means of open or concealed power can be made an object for manipulation or subdued in order to achieve a goal. Both children at play must try to understand each other's separateness through their play, through being in each other's company, through conversation and through mutual influence.

In the I to It relationship, the I (for example, a child at play) confronts an object, a thing or a toy and the I's recognition of the object is one he adopts on the basis of his own abilities and pre-dispositions. A sensible treatment or manipulation of the object/toy will be achieved only if the child in question is equipped to define the object/thing/toy's reactions or uses.

Thus, the I to Thou relationship involves two equal parties who are attracted by each other's separateness - whilst the I to It relationship is conditional on the I achieving mastery, a position of power (hegemony), over the other person or the other thing, e.g. a toy.

It is therefore important that we distinguish between the relationship between people (I to Thou) and the relationship to things (I to It).

To encounter
effect
recognition

I/me _____ **Thou/it**

TRANSFORMATION
play/action
dialogue/conversation   mastery
action/play   effect
conversation/dialogue   power

I/me _____ **Thou/it**

testing
control, power
mastery

The question is: Is a human being able to realise a complete I to Thou relationship? It is hardly possible methodically to maintain an I to Thou relationship to another person as the relationship will be something over which the person concerned will gain control or "power". Openness and spontaneity in terms of impromptu development, effect and recognition will then cease to be characteristic of the relationship.

The human being's existence is conditional upon constant possession of or possibility to develop the instruments required.

When an instrument is invented or constructed, regardless of whether it is physical or intangible, there are five conditions for the marginal environment of the invention/construction:

1. There must be a finite EVENT (cause) behind it.
2. There have to be RESOURCES and energy sufficient to bring it about.
3. HEREDITY (most often inherited experience) forms the basis.
4. TIME itself and the ERA in which the instrument is invented are contributory factors to the quality and appearance of the invention.
5. TECHNOLOGY is an important factor, particularly where physical or material instruments are concerned.

The instrument (be it physical or intangible) makes it possible for the human being to survive but, at the same time, the situation involves the risk that the human being becomes "It-oriented" and power fixated.

Wivestad (1991) expresses it in a commentary and critique of a variety of Buber interpretations:

"The danger is that the "It-world" loses contact with its supporting foundation, the "Thou-world", if the "It-world" isn't constantly illuminated and fertilised by additives from the "Thou-world". If it isn't, then the world is an evil place to live in, an enforced rule where we can do nothing other than try to adapt ourselves to our biological fate (a free-for-all), our psychological fate (instincts) and our social fate (arbitrary developments in society)."

It is via the unconditioned addition of play and playing with toys, the use of instruments and manipulation of objects that the child acquires the ability to adopt or obtain cognition, recognition and experience in the balancing act between the unconditioned qualities in the "It-world" on the one hand and the "Thou-world" on the other.

It is therefore logical to regard play and playing as a set of communicative and action-oriented processes for which the following are marginal environmental conditions:

1. The participating person or persons with their individual PERSONALITIES.
2. The EVENT or reason why the play/action occurs as it does.
3. The play or action process is decided by the ERA in which it takes place and the TIME it takes to unfold.
4. The SPACE in which the play or action takes place (free space, outdoors, restricted area, etc.)
5. The instruments or toys (physical or intangible) - here called REIFICATION - which can be used to optimise the play or action.

There are thus marginal preconditions for both the instruments/toys and the play/actions.

Such marginal conditions are indicative of a natural historical pattern which applied at their creation, right from the start!

Time

Things, in the form of toys, and *that which is elementary for the text and context of play* will be outlined in the chapters of this book whilst the concept of time relative to play is tacitly understood.

Time is a dual concept because time, objects and space are all parts (in extremely different ways) of what will be described as the users' impression of time and environment.

Time is a natural method by which we make certain that everything doesn't happen all at once. Time sorts actions and episodes, some of which have already occurred and some of which have yet to occur.

Time is understood as something *subjective* (experienced time) and *objective (measurable on a clock face).* Time has been part and parcel of our way of thinking since Ancient Greece. The Greeks spoke of *kairos*, subjectively experienced time, and *chronos*, objectively measurable time.

Where measurable time is concerned, Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity refuted the possibility that time could be measured objectively but this has no influence on the ordinary understanding of time.

According to Boscolo & Bertrando (1993), life unfolds in the subjective time dimension, although we are always conscious of objectively measurable time. Modern man comprehends his existence within three time perspectives: the past, the present and the future. This understanding of ourselves in time is probably not universal as different cultures have different attitudes to time.

The verbs in the language of the Hopi Indians cannot be conjugated into past, present and future - their language has only the one tense! This does not, however, mean that they have no concept of their past.

According to Whitrow (1989), in modern European culture we are placed in the past, the present and the future. Subjectively experienced time always includes this time perspective despite the fact that we are in reality always in the present. It is from a position in the present (as opposed e.g. to a specified period of the past) that we measure the past and the future.

Boscolo & Bertrando (1993) state that St. Augustin described this as early as the 8th Century. St. Augustin wrote that neither the past nor the future exists and that these two tenses are experienced subjectively in the human mind.

St. Augustin expressed the view that there are three subjective dimensions of time:

- A past *remembered* in the present
- A present *experienced* in the present and
- A future *expected* in the present.

Very recent events in the past, intense experiences which have already happened, can be recalled as if they are happening this very moment - even though they are images from the past.

The true image of the past flashes by and interests us in the here and now. But the past can only be captured as an image which is revealed for a brief moment where it is remembered and then disappears, never to be seen again.

We experience in the present. It is in the present that we think about the past, the present and the future. It is in the present that we make decisions and act upon them.

Small children experience things and act in the same way - in the present, literally "in the now of the existing moment". Children are not conscious of the past and the future until they reach the age of about six and even then these are somewhat fuzzy terms.

Time, seen as the pragmatic way in which we correlate and regulate different periods, can either be circular or linear. In free play and in life, time is both circular and linear, depending on what the children find most practical. Children have a very flexible or accommodating approach to time in their own world in contrast to the adult world's checking and measuring of periods in modern "digital time".

The progression of linear time has neither a beginning nor an end. Situations and episodes, situations and ages come and go more or less without warning, happen and then disappear, never to come again.

From time to time circular time situations occur where a feeling of repetition becomes evident. Repeated events or episodes can pile up and die out only to come back again. They are remembered because they are existential and intense and appear in the form of prosperity/adversity, beginnings/endings, hope/despair, love/rejection.

More detached time situations like the end of time, time lapses and time accelerations occur within both circular and linear time. They can be regulated and organised but what most often happens is that they occur spontaneously without prior warning or prediction.

Common time can occur, especially where several people administer a common progression together, which can even be checked. This is why being together in common time is often experienced with frustration because it must normally be regulated in relation to several common times. It can sometimes be experienced as a happy occasion when participants can confirm one another in a form of concurrence.

Time is suspended in concurrence or in the present tense (now). To recognise the present is identical with a pragmatic acceptance of "that's just the way things are"!

Eternity (time stands still - takes ages!) is the experience of time standing still - which can't happen as static situations are not static but circular.

Where the various narrative forms and ways by which to account for play are concerned, all the above mentioned definitions of time are used. The narrative of play and play with toys is expressed and interpreted in time or *times* which - in addition to functioning in the real experiences of the persons-at-play as individuals - can be interpreted in many different ways.

According to Scannell (1988), these stories and functions, e.g. in play, are set in motion and timed in relation to the sequence of their contents. This makes it possible for both "players" and observers to understand the story and the

content of the functions collectively, to set the content in relation to individual experience and possibly relate it to everyday events which can be recalled and exchanged with others.

Scannell defines:

– Everyday time, which is the structure of experience for day-to-day life
– Remembered time, which is the individual structure of experience
– Historic time, which is the collective structure of experience.

The imagination and stage of development reached by the child at play are of course decisive factors in determining how recognition of these definitions of time are expressed. But, regardless of what takes place in a progression, it must always be seen in relation to something else.

Generally, however, *times are mixed* in all imaginable combinations, transitional and overlapping situations and are part of many different situations, both planned and spontaneous. Even so, the child experiences a differentiated approach to time in recognition of values and world pictures.

Relativity and logic

For Martin Buber, the I to Thou relationship between people in a constantly changing world is inseparable from the human being's relationship to God and divinity.

"Thou encounters" are approaches and primary signs which occur spontaneously all the time throughout life but which the human being is not constantly receptive to or maybe just simply not aware of. An I to Thou relationship is therefore not a constant feeling which continues to be in the I. The relationship occurs and develops *between* the I and the Thou and this is where deep emotions arise - but emotions alone are not the content of the encounter.

According to Buber, love, for example, should not just be understood as a wonderful feeling but also as the I's willingness to demonstrate *responsibility* for the Thou.

This responsibility will be expressed by the readiness of the I to receive and unconditionally contribute to a dialogue with the Thou with no guarantee that this will have consequences. Buber explains this as "living on a knife edge", living in insecurity, encounter Life's events and contradictions in such a way as to allow for anything to happen, to let what is apparently good and what is apparently evil coexist in the firm belief that the ways of Good are past all understanding and can appear at any time - both as fleeting glimpses and in permanent states of being as deep and lasting interpersonal connections.

In the question of conflicts and crises, Buber sees mankind's crises as crises of confidence which occur due to a failure in communication and dialogue.

Communicative crises are closely connected to loss of confidence - "for I can only talk to someone in the truest sense of the word, if I expect that he will accept my word as genuine." (1953)

Dialogue, communication, play and common action are therefore a question of trust, openness, mutual respect, spontaneity and intimacy.

In Buber's dialogic, questions concerning observation and interpretation - as well as respect for children's play and experimenting with the balance between the "Thou" and the "It worlds" - are highly relevant as these can often develop into a clash with the traditions of educational and psychological theory whose point of origin and current standpoint are in the "It" world.

These theoretical traditions interpret the different forms of play as preparation for later life in the "correct - realistic - real" world, i.e. the adult world.

In this ethnological research tradition (as presented by e.g. Piaget and Kohlberg), children's play, upbringing, identity, sociality, etc. are seen as a kind of preparation and socialisation for the moral, norm and role sets of the adult world.

As Åm (1989) so clearly and precisely describes in her book "The Hunt for the Child's Perspective", the explanations for this are for the most part built up on theoretical material, the substance of which is to be found "outside the child's own perspective". The weight of the argument therefore rests on the reproductive aspect of children's play, actions and forming relationships.

While it is important to recognise the existence of these reproductive aspects and functional elements, there is a danger that one-sided observations and interpretations can be coloured by the "adult perspective" alone, thus leaving little room for respecting the child's experimentation through play which is that aspect of play which contains elements for creating dialogue and communication I to Thou and I to It.

CHAPTER 1 DIALOGICS AND COMMUNICATION

Control and Consciousness

The credit for having placed dialogics on a metaphysical level and thereby naturally giving it a strongly religious bias must go to Buber. Other concepts within dialogics have also been the subject of experiments on other levels.

At an early and decisive stage in the development of his anthropological philosophy, Buber without doubt became acquainted with Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914). We are concerned with two tenets of Peirce's philosophy:

1. The fundamental categories (also called "the universal categories") within the pragmatic maxims
2. The triad system within a variety of spheres of research and investigation.

1. Re universal categories

− The three fundamental categories are naturally and logically called *firstness, secondness and thirdness*.

Seen as an entity and including the three instances as Peirce defined them, the categories are ontologically placed at "the level of thirdness", where all symbolic phenomenon are to be found.

− Toys and play are symbolic.

Peirce disposes the categories in opposition to other philosophers (including Aristotle) and every being can be categorised here. These were therefore ontological categories.

Peirce's categories are based on the *construction of these phenomena* (not on the "matter" of the phenomena alone) so that it is not only the visible world Peirce classifies but also the *world of phenomena* as seen "in the mind's eye".

To return to *firstness, secondness and thirdness* in Peirce's system, a brief outline:

Firstness
A special form of consciousness without self-awareness where the I experiments - as all other egos (the mechanical, rootless and timeless) do - and learns about phenomena through being and using the senses.

Secondness is experience with an It corresponding to or challenging the I which is gained on the basis of both negative and positive confrontations with the external world, regardless of whether this "foreign or different" phenomenon is familiar or unfamiliar to the I, physically present or an idea/representation or thought.

Thirdness has three trigonoms which contain three aspects: firstness' recognisable sensing of the phenomena and unconsidered action, secondness' experiences with familiar and unfamiliar phenomena, melted together in a synthesis, based on the I's cogitation, conscious and self-aware conclusion or judgement and a self-aware action.

```
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Firstness/deduction          │
│ conclusion based on necessity│
└─────────────────────────────┘
              ╲
               ╲        ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                ╲───────│ Thirdness/abduction           │
                ╱       │ conclusion based on necessity,│
               ╱        │ existence and probability     │
              ╱         └──────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Secondness/induction         │
│ conclusion based on necessity│
│ and existence                │
└─────────────────────────────┘
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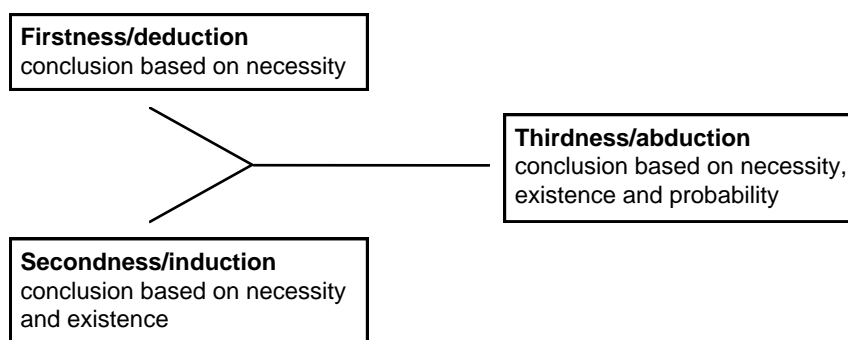
The categories contain the elements deduction, induction and abduction.

The categories describe three forms of reasoning - three different ways in which to reason in order to find out whether a statement is correct:

– Deduction decides that, on the basis of information, a statement *is "necessarily"* correct.
– Induction *draws the conclusion* that a statement - due to parallel information and results - is *correct on the basis of "existence".*
– Abduction *draws the conclusion* that a statement, due to many parallel results and principles, *is correct on the basis of the many "possibilities".*

These fundamental categories are preconditions for Peirce's triadic sign concept which will be outlined in the later section on "Evaluation of the Play Object" about the "primary sign, object/case and interpretation".

2. Re the triad system within spheres of investigation

The various research and investigative spheres within physics, biology, physiology, psychology, logic and metaphysics each contain several triads.

The triads within spheres of research and investigation are exactly the same elements as those which are a natural part of the play of any person-at-play but are always dependent upon environmental conditions, gender, age, abilities/predisposition and stage of development reached.

Within metaphysics (which is particularly relevant in connection with this project), Peirce lists, for example, five fundamental triads, which Buber has also used and which are therefore also part of Buber's anthropological philosophy and dialogics, viz.:

I - It - Thou!
Spirit - Matter - Evolution!
Origin - End - Mediation (Betweenness)
Pluralism - Dualism - Monism!
Mind - Matter - God!

The concepts express *realism* because they must be seen as eternally existing, relevant, logical phenomena. They are not at all nominalistic as they must in no way be seen as human constructions or fictions.

The concept relationships are in addition absolutely universally pragmatic as their meaning is determined by their practical usage. For example, if we were to enter into an understanding of a person's or an object's being and value, we would have to investigate via experience, through proximity, dialogue and experimentation, how the person or object behaved and what purely factual consequences one could expect from his/its behaviour.

These concepts will be discussed in detail later in this book - on the assumption that investigation (in Peirce's terminology) is in fact play at a high level.

On the origins of consciousness and of the I

Throughout his studies, Julian Jaynes (1976) has been very well-acquainted with Buber's dialogics and especially with Peirce's structural categories. He analyses the origins of consciousness and the I in his book "The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind".

Consciousness is the human being's (the body's) spatial and action-oriented interpretation of his own existential surroundings.

According to Jaynes, consciousness is, however, not that necessary for a person's function. Consciousness is a relatively new invention bound by history.

The concept of I is one part of the historical product which is consciousness and therefore both consciousness and the concept of the I are creations of history and can be changed in history.

Jaynes presents a long list of historical examples and evidence to show how consciousness and the I have developed step-by-step down through history. (Some of these "facts" seem obvious, others fantastic and others still utopian. However, I have chosen to use the sum of these historical "facts" in the literature as "theory".)

Until the present day, consciousness and the I have developed through three phases:

1. Human feelings, instincts, decisions and actions were recognised 3 - 5000 years ago as being caused by "divine" intervention, i.e. the work of the Gods through Man.

At that time, human beings had no free will and were not conscious in the same way as modern Western Man is today. That is why human beings were then not responsible for their actions because their actions were carried out in response to messages and orders from the Gods.

Jaynes justifies this with a reference to the two halves of the human brain. All the non-linguistic activity in the right side of the brain is signalled by the left side of the brain in the form of voices (which were later materialised in the form of gods and amulets), "messages and information from the Gods" who spoke inside people's heads.

Incidentally, the majority of people function most of the time without an ego-consciousness. We are not aware of it because we are not conscious of it whilst we are doing it. If we were, we wouldn't then be unconscious of it - because we cannot be conscious of what we aren't conscious of, simply because the conscious *is* conscious.

2. Jaynes describes, by means of reference to analyses and quotations from the classics of Greek literature and especially from the Old Testament, how people in the Middle Eastern cultures in the second century BC were faced with change. Through the failure of their environment, the migration of the peoples with the consequent confrontations, wars, natural disasters and social collapse, people learned about other cultures. As language began to appear in writing, the power and magic of the spoken word and storytelling was weakened. *The Gods could no longer speak* - or at least they stopped speaking to people. (God has forsaken me!) Confrontations and conflict tempted people to regress and return to their gods, to let the gods shoulder responsibility or to put the blame on them for all the misery in the world when the conflicts became too violent to bear, or to interpret their misery as *God's anger.*

These situations are not only described in the Old Testament but also in the stories of the Greek heroes. The world had become ambivalent and people - described via the reactions of the judges, the prophets and the Greek heroes - had to come to terms with division and ambiguity. They had to make personal choices where the subject, the I, became conscious of his own free will to choose.

As the I confronted its surroundings (and vice versa), the monotheistic God emerged, together with problems of morality and conscience. The human being began to view himself from outside himself and was obliged to consider how the conscious self ought to behave in relation to himself and to others in certain concrete situations.

Jaynes coolly sets an historical data for the origin of consciousness: i.e. when Solon of Athens introduced democracy around the year 500 BC.

3. Jaynes' analyses suggest three phases in this historical development:

Firstly: a pre-conscious phase, where people had no free will and acted spontaneously and directly on the commands of their many gods, the inner voices.

Secondly, a socially conscious phase, where free will is regulated by conflict, confrontation and social contacts. Social norms and laws (based on the Ten Commandments formulated by God and delivered by a striking personality) determine the framework for the community which is defined through appeals, warnings, stage performances and ceremonies.

In the third phase, *the personally conscious phase*, the relationship between God and Man is again internalised (as it was in the pre-conscious phase) but now there is a balance between the conscious and the unconscious, although from time to time the I has great difficulty confirming itself when consciousness insists on the absence of unconsciousness. Thought and action have become one and the same thing as Man's free will and personal, individual choice involves the possibility for breaking the Commandments/laws - for sinning in *both* thought and deed.

The triad concept

Peirce's structural categories are a triad concept. Buber's three fundamental relations in his dialogics are too.

Jaynes' analyses of the origins of consciousness and the I's control system reflect this. In the following, I take the liberty of comparing Peirce's three structural categories, Buber's three fundamental relations and Jaynes' analyses. This is based on the following hypothesis:

Firstness - the I (which is really "me") is pure quality, pure being or sensing, "consciousness without self-awareness". The I/me imagines a consciousness which includes recognition of shape and colour, heat and cold, attention and distraction, etc. It is controlled by the emotions and by inner voices which means that the person acts on the basis of arbitrariness and proximity and where the action is spontaneous in relation to any given situation.

Secondness - Thou/It ensures that the I can deal with experience, to the encounter or rather the confrontation with the world around him, to the Thou or the It, with contrasts, opposites and contradictions, the decisive active-passive constellation.

Events or encounters turn up or occur completely irregularly (and, as such, cannot be planned in advance). The environment with all its Thous and Its exists if for no other reason then because the *I* actually bangs into them and

thus registers the I and/or that which is not I in a conscious and self-aware form.

Thirdness - It/Thou is the situation, the knot which ties life's loose ends together forming a loop of comprehension, conclusion or a symbol of what has occurred.

In Peirce's system (within the logical investigative sphere) there is legitimate development from icon via index to symbol. Thirdness is a triad, an "intentionality", an awakening, where a sign stands for an object which stands for an interpretant.

Peirce (1.369, 5.358) states laconically that Man does not like to study logic because anyone at all can think that he is clever at reasoning - but this will seemingly be reasoning which limits itself to one's own thoughts and not to others' opinions.

The comparison between Peirce's structural categories, Buber's dialogics and Jaynes' theory converted to a theory of play will hereafter be examined as the following possible construction: a play triad.

A play triad

In play - in *firstness* - things are sensed and experienced within the time play occurs. Experimentation with and exploration of things become logical *events* which exist per se, irrespective of what the person-at-play thinks of them. Events, things and instruments are treated mechanically and are thought of as if they were governed by real laws, even when these laws have unknown causes.
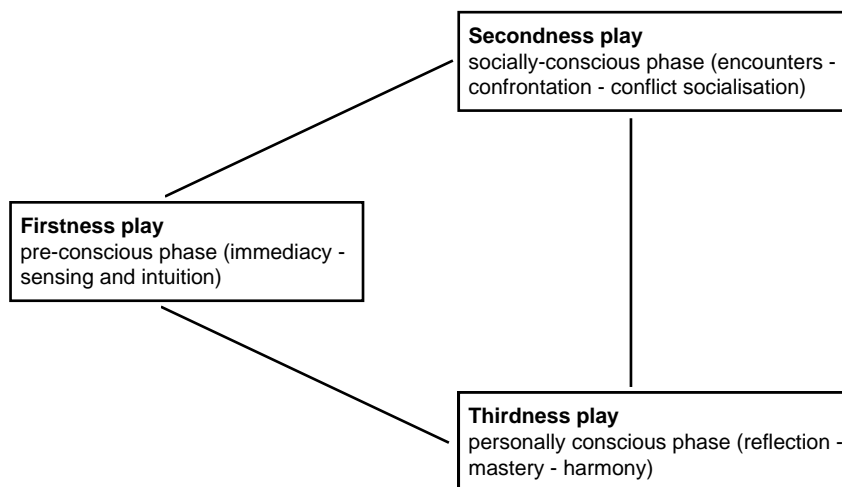
Firstness play - has many existential and expressive forms which for the most part are unconscious. These are first and foremost the child's early play as the infant does not gain an ego-consciousness until the age of 3. Until then, the child is one with his mother (or the person who looks after the child), one with "his gods" whose messages and reactions dominate the child's entire life, decisive for situations and episodes of daily life which include the whole environment.

Firstness play is, however, also the older child's and the adult-at-play's spontaneous way of acting and reacting on sensations, intuition and "inner voices".

Play in firstness is simply participation or execution without a specific reason for why one plays or participates, with no special or particular intention either to fulfil special needs or to attain personal gratification.

The person-at-play knows precisely what *events (encounters)* are - but never really knows when or in what order they will occur, nor is he able to give an exact description of the laws which govern them or give a logical explanation for what happens.

Secondness play is the great personal or existential moments when, through play, action or the encounter with another person or thing, the person-at-play is confronted with aspects of himself and the other party which correspond and therefore strengthen his understanding, confirmation, openness and self reflection. Social consciousness is created in secondness play.

The person-at-play will then normally regress to firstness play, partly because it takes time to adjust to the encounter, partly because understanding, confirmation and recognition of new openness demand a long time for reflection, experimentation and experience with the newly acquired recognition and cognition. Development in play possibly continues into thirdness.

The transition to thirdness' legality concerning the event which has occurred (encounter) consists of the possibility of foreseeing that someone or something will, under certain thinkable circumstances, behave in a certain way.

The ego-consciousness, the way in which to behave, will bear the mark of self-awareness.

Thirdness play is characterised by personal consciousness, harmony and balance, totality and mastery of situations and episodes, instruments and objects. The person-at-play evaluates and reflects on his surroundings harmoniously and solidly, puts his knowledge on public exhibition and manifests understanding, tolerance and openness (often built on a creative and deeply personal foundation) to his surroundings.

Thirdness play (which in itself is something divine) does not occur very often but is on the other hand very easy to spot!

CHAPTER 2 EVALUATION OF THE PLAY OBJECT

Toys

Toys are traditionally thought of more or less as a stimulus and that nothing more of value or importance can be said of them.

Two prominent psychological researchers in particular, Berlyne and Piaget, represent this view. Their intention was to indicate that toys and play are locked in either:

− stimulating characteristics, or
− previously existing mental operations.

Where toys are concerned, the characteristics enable them rather:

− to provoke creative thoughts and actions and
− to be seen from a semiotic point of view.

This begs the question: What does the user, the person-at-play, think is the most exciting or interesting aspect of play or manipulation with the toy in order to feel power, to gain mastery over things and thoughts - whilst simultaneously having potential to use his senses and emotions in a stimulating way?

What kind of image comes closest to that the person-at-play would prefer to see?

What criteria for truth ought to be chosen in order to ensure legitimacy?

Just as the toy's stimulating characteristics comprise both hegemony and emotion, there are both hegemony and emotion in the child's own personal imaginative creativity, through which all kinds of barriers are crossed - suggests Schäfer (1986: 251 - 289) in his dissertation on the development of imagination through play.

It is of course important to point out that children's use of toys is also generally an expression of their creativity. Play with toys is not only determined by the automatic stimuli related to the type and physical appearance of the toy but other completely invisible factors, "the inner reality" as opposed to the external one, "the inner catastrophe", etc. which, amongst other things, Schäfer investigates and describes.

Therefore, these descriptions of:

− How toys are positioned by the person-at-play, the user,
− How the characteristics of toys provoke creative thoughts and actions,
− How the characteristics of toys can be seen from a semiotic point of view
    which describes how the person-at-play investigates through play to a
    recognition of the toy's position.

How do we position toys?

There is, unfortunately, no ideal method for measuring *a product's*, in this case a toy's, *position in consumer consciousness*. The choice of data collection and analysis methods must therefore always spring from the analyst's or the researcher's own weighing of the strengths and weaknesses of the individual methods when they are used to measure a product's position.

A definition:

A toy's *position* is the person-at-play's, the consumer's, understanding of the toy's image, formed from the toy's subjective and objective aspects (attributes, signs) and the consumer's attitude to the image of directly and generically similar/corresponding toys.

Positioning is therefore based on comprehension of how the person-at-play, the consumer, understands, collects and receives information, messages and signs about the toy and how these pieces of information are assimilated into the consumer's consciousness.

This is because in a choice situation, the consumer has to evaluate the toy from the perspective of previous experience or possibly some kind of previous knowledge about this and other similar toys, and associations indicating imaginable uses for the toy.

Knowledge about all this is of course mandatory to an understanding of why a toy product is positioned in consumer consciousness. The desire to gain this knowledge has resulted in research into the connection between consumer psychology and product positioning. Most often traditional data collection and analytic methods have been employed - but more open qualitative methods can also be used. There is therefore a clear discrepancy between the definition of *a toy's position* and *the way in which this is measured*.

How do toys' characteristics provoke creative thoughts and actions?

The child can convert toys into toy stories (both linguistically retold and/or thought out in the imagination) which can contain or represent all possible creative fantasies about play with the toy. Of course, this does not confirm that the toy alone contributes to this just because e.g. it is a good toy and looks interesting.

Sutton-Smith's research (1986) which is used as examples in this section of the book was inspired by Pellegrini & Yawkey (1984).

The research topic was favourite games of 75 children aged between three and 13 years. 80% of the children mentioned that a toy/toys were a significant and important part of their favourite game.

By observing the children's games with toys and then interviewing them about them, it was established that, in 90% of their games, the children (regardless of whether they were boys or girls) spent time on their own internal fantasies about themselves or about the toys and on chatting, conversing and relating what they wanted to do with them. (They were not hypnotised by the toys' special characteristics as such.)

The children used such terms as "imagine, imagining" or accounted for the game they had played by narrating stories about what they made, did and said - without mentioning the toys themselves to any significant degree.

In the remaining 10% of games, where the children described the toys or actions with the toys without any form of direct dialogue or narrative, we can conclude that the children probably had stories or dialogues in their minds. There is no difference between the way the boys and the way the girls accounted for the extent of their stories and dialogues during the game.

The girls
The degree of importance of the narrative factors in the children's games were, however, clearly gender-specific, relative to certain types of toys as the girls' favourite roles and reactions were associated with dolls, soft toys, office, family, home, school and doctor play. The girls also assumed most often the role of adult in their games with the toys.

Where the older girls were concerned (aged six and over), the adult role was part of play whether toys were part of the game or not, e.g. being older or grown-up, having children, making a home, being an animal or looking after animals, being the teacher or running away!

With only very few exceptions, these family-home-school games were reported by girls exclusively. Despite the fact that the games reflect the traditional gender-specific interests of girls (in approx. 60% of cases), girls at play (who are still subject to gender-specific traditions) also had to negotiate or in some original way account for their own experiences of home, i.e. life style, the family's specific or creative everyday programme.

Only when the games included certain types of toys, e.g. LEGO bricks, machines or construction systems, was the narrative reaction less abundant - probably because the children spent a lot of time keeping track of or maintaining order in the systems or the technicalities of the toys.

The boys
In 60% of cases, where boys were concerned, they played traditional gender-specific interests and games with the toys which comprised cars, planes, trains, rockets and larger construction systems, toy "battles" with wars and manhunts between action dolls and horses and competitions.

The boys dominated the girls in dialogues, as mentioned above, but only when certain specially "complicated" toys were used by boys and girls together.

From Sutton-Smith's (1986) research, we find that *children's descriptions of their favourite games are dominated by their gender-created and gender-specific narrative play traditions rather than being specified primarily by the stimulating characteristics of the toys.*

Both James & McCain (1982) and Jessen (1991) draw similar conclusions concerning the influence of e.g. TV programmes on children's play: that the programmes deliver "scenes", which (when copied in play) are summarised or mixed with the traditional patterns in children's play. Seen relative to children's play with traditional and experimental toys, this shows that:

− The more familiar and well-known the thing is, the more familiar and well-known the recognition will be and

− The older things are, the more the toys will be subject to the traditions of group play which are deeply affected by the social and cultural tradition.

It is thus *the creative role in play* which is most apparent *as opposed to* the stimulating characteristics of/in the children's play with toys.

When children are small or they find themselves in unfamiliar surroundings with unfamiliar things, it can be expected that the toys' stimulating characteristics will later influence their activities. With reference, however, to the regrettably few investigations of this (especially Pellegrini (1984)) supported by the children's own imaginative narratives and accounts of toys, research seems to indicate that:

− For many children toys are motivating factors to creative development which always rests on traditions.

How can toys' characteristics be viewed from a semiotic perspective?

− Peirce emphasises that a sign always means something *to somebody*, even though this somebody is not necessarily a person or a consciousness!

Sutton-Smith (1984) relates that a toy can be regarded as *a sign of the time in which it is produced* with an accompanying description of the attitudes and opinions characteristic of the particular era, which naturally are based on earlier or inherited comprehension and traditions.

From these observations, it is possible to analyse toys' characteristics and meaning for play - but from a semiotic perspective.

Signs or things (here the example is toys) do not necessarily have to be characterised on the basis of conventional meanings.

A characteristic of a toy's role, value, intention, etc., can easily *flow freely and assume any meaning at all*, as it so often does in our imagination, imaginary pictures and daydreams. After all, a child will often play that a pebble is a cow, a doll is a baby, etc.

A sign includes:

◄─► **"space for interpretation"**
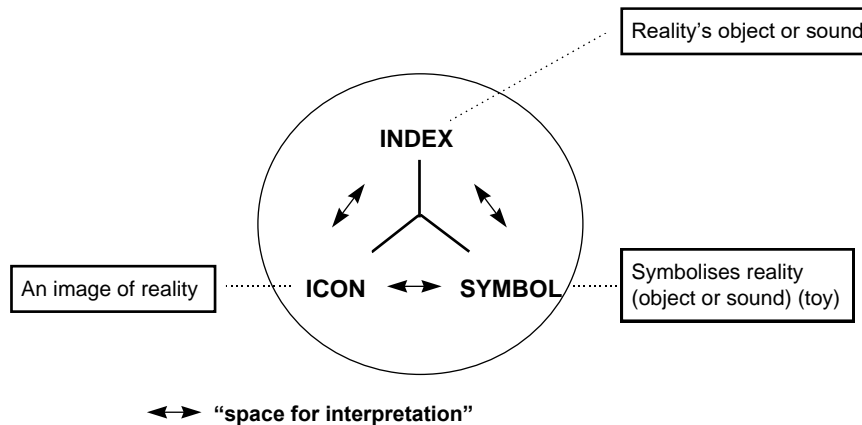
Between index, icon and symbol, there is "space for interpretation" which makes it possible for us to use diffuse and abstract ideas about the three phenomena's internal relationship - provided that imagination is present.

index   (the real/actual) = a cow, a baby

icon   (the imaginary) = imagination, imaginary picture, etc.

symbol   (the symbolic/sign) = toys (cow figure, baby doll)

(Incidentally, there is a problem with toys that, when the index (cows and babies) change "appearance" - in accordance with the era, needs and fashions - there is the risk that the symbol or toy will, a few years later, no longer be modern - but antique.)

Derrida (1970) explained that "there is distance between a sign's "symbol" and its "index". There is space for interpretation between them and in this space or area there is plenty of opportunity for the interpretant to play and to experiment mentally, form creative imaginary pictures, something fantastic - icons.

(It is in fact only because we apparently lack the ability to express ourselves clearly enough verbally that we believe that the symbol or sign concerned must necessarily assume the same meaning as its index.)

In his analysis, Saussure (1974) believes that words in language are an expression of "signs or symbols" (which have a potential meaning in addition to a meaning for the connection to reality). Saussure's analysis is thus a mirror image of Derrida's explanation.

One can, therefore, regard toys as sign systems which provoke a variety of alternative fantasies, opinions and attitudes because understanding of the index is different for each individual person - and that some people maybe also have a reduced capacity for using their imagination.

Sutton-Smith's idea (1984,a) on this matter seems particularly relevant as toys are normally produced "as if" (an icon with a special meaning). In our imaginations, toys should represent a baby, cow, car, plane, house, tool, etc. On the other hand, closer observation of the toys reveals that there is an ambivalent relationship to the index it represents. A doll is meant to symbolise and not to symbolise a baby.

The importance of play becomes paradoxical because a toy is both what we say it is and is not: The doll must indicate that it is a baby - but also that it isn't a baby! There must be some connection! Apart from being very small, a doll has far fewer baby-like details than a real baby. It doesn't move quite like a baby does, if it can move at all.

It doesn't make the same sounds (or makes no sounds at all). It doesn't produce dirty diapers and doesn't feel like a real baby - as it is naturally made most often of synthetic materials.

But despite all these negative signs and examples within the general linguistic framework, the "baby" is even so a baby in some way. The various signs merely distort the meaning of the symbol "baby" and baby's index. It is therefore possible to state that children see toys thus:

− The most apparent signs, e.g. play with the baby doll, are sensed "negatively" (as play with the baby doll communicates that it is not what it is meant to be)
− The sign, in the form of the toy as a baby doll, is distorted (because synthetic materials are used which alter things so much that there is no doubt that this is a variation, a template of a baby) - but
− even so, the sign, in the form of the baby doll, is also positive because it is called Baby

This is why "baby" in play as an idealised form (in the form of a baby doll) can be and is a sign for many different things:

It can be:

− An expression of folly
− Lies and deception
− Childishness
− A joke shop novelty

- Pretence
- Play idealisation for small girls (who will later become mothers)
- Human projection, or
- "Baby" is present in today's game. . .

Hegemony and creative play

As earlier mentioned, Piaget and Berlyne's thoughts on toy objects as object stimulus were narrow.

When writing about toys and their importance for children's play, most authors have turned as a matter of course to Piaget for inspiration and instruction. This is obvious because, as Piaget (1951) points out:

- The very small child's "*sensory motor operations*" in the form of manipulation with objects - within which the child moves from primary via secondary to tertiary circular reactions with things or objects - precede language.

    Inspired by this, e.g. Karniol (1989) sets up schematic manipulative and active patterns, putting them in order and puts forward a chronological overview of the stages in a small child's development. Similarly, Garon (1985) presents her own system of toys and play on the basis of Piaget's directions.

    This is why parents/consumers can read in the toy manufacturers' instructions for the so-called "activity centres" for infants (the importance of which has absolutely nothing to do with reality) that the child by using the activity centre learns visual and motor skills, experiences visual images and sounds, trains basic and fine motor manipulation skills, optical co-ordination, the ability to track, spatial perception and the cause and effect relationship, to name but a few of the concepts mentioned.

    (In the consumer instructions for other/similar diffuse or abstract toys for slightly older children, the concepts are simply explained in more detail and supplemented with technical and educational superlatives and terminology.)

    The toy (activity centre) is described in the instructions from its distorted meanings. If Thou look at the toy itself, the story is completely different.

    With reference to hegemony in the child's own creativity, we can also ask what a toy does *not* allow the person-at-play to do:

        What does the sign/symbol (the toy) *not* do which its status as an icon suggests it ought to be able to do as an index?

By confronting what the child does with the toy with what the child does with the real thing (the index) which the sign/symbol (toy) tries to copy or presume

to be, we can begin to form hypotheses about how the child is able to tell us what is play and what is not play - and thus give us linguistic signs/symbols for the child's creative thoughts and actions.

With these totally diffuse things (of which the baby activity centre and other similar toys are examples) we see the beginnings of:

− *A distortion of the child's creative existence* with toys and in particular *a distortion of the most significant tenets about the development of the imagination.*

The concrete, the diffuse and the abstract - as a paradox

Toys as signs and as *index, icon and symbol,* and the space for interpretation between these states, are paradoxical.

We cannot be sure that small children see toys first and foremost as toys and not as e.g. tools or something completely different, except if the parents at the same time show positive attitudes in the form of smiles and laughter.

According to Beckwith (1985), this means that the child is assisted both by the toys "meaning" from everyday "reality" and by his "parents' conditioned expression". Toys and parents together try to provoke a lighter, happier disposition.

However, if early childhood is filled with "synthetic sights and sounds" from such distorted toy influences (supplemented by fictitious and diffuse TV-programmes, later further supplemented with "false realities", e.g. diffuse computer games), the child's life will be "cocooned" in numerous synthetic messages which have absolutely nothing at all to do with reality.

The opportunity to connect the concepts' influence and reality in what Derrida calls space for interpretation is suspended completely. And especially so for children under three years.

The dilemma with the "concrete" and the "diffuse" toys has also been expressed in another way. Steenhold (1989):

"A concrete toy is a toy which from its original form has maintained its value in play and as a plaything over time without having changed significantly. It is only rudimentarily adapted to circumstances.

The form toys have will never change or disappear from human consciousness. They are unique in their everlasting basic form.

Concrete toys are therefore determined for Mankind's own development, in fact they are a necessary principal element in it - and create the connection between a toy's meaning and its reality.

In contrast to concrete toys, diffuse toys are not easily definable. They are not comparable with the concrete toy tradition. They are not realistic. They suspend the connection between meaning and reality - the concrete framework, logic, the familiar strategy of play, creative imaginary pictures, experimentation, intensive play and tenacity. They are usually manufactured in very poor materials, often synthetics.

The Concrete	The Diffuse (the mix)	The Abstract
SUSPENDS		
- copies of reality - good models - small instruments - constructions - building from instructions - "clear thought"	- The reality - The concrete - logic - familiar strategies - familiar forms/rules - "crazy thought", the parody!	- imaginative figures - alternative models - imaginative instruments - wild constructions - free building - "wild thought"

Briefly, the paradox in this matter is that if we ignore "the diffuse and the abstract", we limit toy analyses to *realistic comparisons* (that the doll is a baby, etc.).

Spheres of investigation and triads

With reference to Chapter 1's description of the triad system within research, it is now relevant to mention:

‒ *How the playing, inquisitive, exploring, testing and investigating person tries to overcome, to gain mastery, control or knowledge about objects and items in the form of toys.*

On the surface, play is simply a matter of "playing" but, at a so-called "higher" level (in secondness and thirdness play), play is concerned with investigating and understanding objects and problems within a wide variety of different processes, spheres of study and research - i.e. interpreting!

In Peirce terminology, the interpretant is "that which is interpreted by the person-at-play who interprets" when the toys provoke creative thoughts and ideas, motivate to experimentation, manipulation and interpretation.

From Peirce's basic pragmatic definition, a toy will therefore be *a sign which always means something to somebody.*

Peirce refers to six categories - *physics, biology, physiology, psychology, logic* and especially *metaphysics* - each of which include several triads which are used to experience and interpret the sign's foundation from the perspective of the person-at-play's individuality and personality.

These are listed here in arbitrary order and indicate the *types of content* through which the person-at-play arrives at an interpretation of the many different actions and experiences (the many elements of play), objects and items (the variety of toys):

 1. <u>Toys', play's and the person-at-play's *physical* capabilities</u>
are experienced via the following four triads:

- Indeterminacy, Haecceity, Process
- Chance, Law, Habit
- Rest, Velocity, Acceleration
- Inertia, Force, Causality

2. <u>Toys', play's and the person-at-play's *boilogical* capabilities</u>
are experienced via the following three triads:

- Sensibility, Motion, Growth
- Variation (Arbitrary Sporting), Heredity, Selection
- Instinct, Experience, Habit

 3. <u>Toys', play's and the person-at-play's *physiological* capabilities</u>
are experienced within two triads:

- Cellular Excitation, Excitation Transfer, Habitual Excitation
- Irritation, Reflex, Repetition

 4. <u>Toys', play's and the person-at-play's *psychological* capabilities</u>
are experienced within the following four triads:

- Feeling, Willing, Knowing
- Feeling, Reaction, General Conception
- Feeling, Activity, Learning
- Instinct, Desire, Purpose

 5. <u>Toys', play's and the person-at-play's *logical* capabilities</u>
are experienced within the following six triads:

- Hypothesis, Induction, Deduction
- Names, Propositions, Inferences
- Sign, Signified, Cognition
- Terminus, Connection, Branching
- Icon, Index, Symbol
- Absolute Term, Relative Term, Conjugative Term (of recognition)

6. In _metaphysics_, toys', play's and the person-at-play's capabilities
are found within the following five triads:

  – I, It, Thou
  – Spirit, Matter, Evolution
  – Origin, End, Mediation (Betweenness)
  – Pluralism, Dualism, Monism
  – Mind, Matter, God

We don't know whether Peirce had thought that the concepts of investigation and research _are_ play but there is no doubt in my mind that his own investigations/research - his life's work - occupied him in such a way that the impetus must have been _playing with ideas_ or a playing with things.

At one stage, Peirce formed an idea about research and investigation, that "_the irritation provoked by doubt causes a battle to achieve a state of belief. I will call this the battle for investigation._" This statement is the closest I can get in my "game" to connecting the theories of Buber, Jaynes and Peirce - despite the fact that the basic premises are so different - although maybe in fact they aren't so different after all!

The question of _belief and consciousness_ arises from the human being's _desire_ to undertake a search, although this seeking or desire to find an explanation for all kinds of questions about life can drive a person to the limits and often beyond!

Wanting to find an explanation, a solution, a form of recognition and belief is the human being's desire to conquer uncertainty.

We have to work hard and fight for, but also play our way to belief and recognition - and this is exactly what many people do, i.e. allow themselves to be fascinated and play with both things and thoughts all through life.

There is a clear connection between the metaphysical triads and the philosophical paradigms about thirdness play in the play triad and there is all good reason to consider it because children consciously/unconsciously are able to experience toys, play and the possibilities in the situations within the metaphysical triads described by Peirce.

Research and studies within this sphere are very few and far between. As the first and possibly the only researcher, Turkle (1984) includes these **metaphysical concepts** in connection with children's recognition of their own play situation - in a study of the use of animism, PCs and video games.

It is obvious that play is an integral part of investigation and research - and vice versa. But the stages or levels (especially the logical or metaphysical phases) of play differ according to the child's development.

The child's development - his capacity for understanding his surroundings, his indefatigable desire to find solutions and explanations, well assisted by a sympathetic and stimulating milieu - is dependent upon his age and experience.

Where the **metaphysical** aspect is concerned, through my own observations of children at play, I have reached the following conclusions about children's level of development and the theories described:

− **The primary metaphysical phase - the naive phase (0-5 years)**
    The child is in a dialogic and speculative position on a naive foundation which is processed via awareness and curiosity about a phenomenon through experimentation, manipulation and random, spontaneous testing (naïve research).

− **The second metaphysical phase, mastery (from 6 - 10/11 years)**
    The child competes with himself and with others on the legitimacy of testing and solving uncertainty and ignorance in all unknown phenomena and questions. His consciousness of his own power over things and situations is crucial to continuation of the dialogic and speculative dimension of the first phase.

− **The third metaphysical phase - identity (from 11/12 years and up)**
    Children evaluate and consider the truth and value of things on the basis of the earlier phases. They are occupied with the pragmatic complex re the consequences of making the "correct" choice and of recognising trivial but sometimes contradictory explanations.

Universal pragmatism and the play triad

The importance of the evaluation problem can be justified phenomenologically because a fundamental characteristic of human behaviour is that it is value-oriented. Phenomena in our surroundings (e.g. in the form of toys) and actions (e.g. in games) are consciously or unconsciously apportioned value and we make a conscious choice between norms and values - without giving categorical judgements expressed as positive statements!

The inclusion of some thing/object or other in a game (regardless of whether the thing/object has or has not been produced as a toy) will always be due to its own value and meaning because the person-at-play makes a subjective choice, constructs connections, conflict structures and lines of action within the fictional framework of the game.

In his linguistic-pragmatic and communication theoretical categories, Habermas' (1976/1981) so-called universal pragmatism, the value criteria:

comprehensibility, truth, truthfulness and legitimacy - (will)
are central parameters because we presume that these criteria for value and meaning are always necessarily present in a dialogue and in any exchange of

information between "parties in a conversation", "good friends", people who play together, etc. Without them, a dialogue is neither conceptually realistic, meaningful or authentic.

In this connection, "parties in a conversation" are:

THE TOY   and   **THE PERSON** who plays with **IT**

and

PERSON-AT-PLAY   and   **PERSON-AT-PLAY**
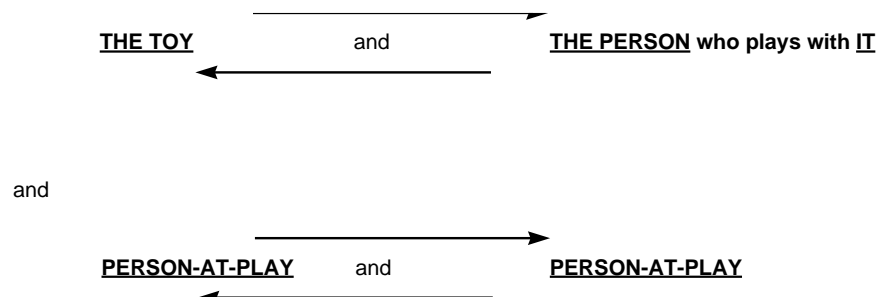
and play understood as a message must also adhere to these principles.

The question is whether the parties agree on what is true/false, correct/incorrect - both re the toy, the game with it and the desire and way to play (the way to do it!) together.

This can be problematic in itself when play and games which are not reality involve cheating the principle of universal pragmatism - and preferably in a way which is both fun, serious and enjoyable.

But if the parties are to agree, the following demands must be met:

− Toys and the person-at-play must express themselves clearly.
− The case can be understood.
− The interpretation has to be comprehensible.
− The parties have to agree on the legitimacy of it and of what they do.
− The parties make an effort to understand each other (want each other).

As long as toys reflect society and play reflects a true problem, we have no difficulty in listing demands that the universal pragmatic theses must be evident. But the parties in a game do not always agree on how far the toys are false, that the game is a sham and that the dialogue is merely a game because both the toys and the game played with them are fiction and imagination.

There is also an existential question about whether "truth" in itself is really true or really false.

In any case, the concept of deception in this connection could legitimately be used by both parties in play as the parties can be equally good at testing each other's truth threshold - or ability to cheat convincingly.

I question the wisdom of Habermas' having given his pragmatics the adjective "universal" in order to confirm the legitimacy of the view that things have to be true to be confirmed.

It is actually also odd that Habermas does not mention the fact that "will" is needed if we "want to do something".

"In addition, we note that the pragmatism is equally universal and valuable as long as it is used to confirm a lie or deception which the parties have used legitimately and together in order to achieve something in common, i.e. that they have found a universal common shortcut in the game through the labyrinth of lies", states Johansen (1989). Play is not only profoundly serious but is also laughter, deception, tricks, funny toys, false objects and pretence - i.e. a legitimate pursuit of pragmatic universal untruth! But <u>will</u> is needed for all of it.

Thus there is not only a need to understand the concepts but also the *will to a common conceptual understanding!* (and this is why the concept of "will" (implying the *will to want to act*) ought to be included in Habermas' universal pragmatism).

REALITY		PROBABILITY
	→ sorting truth from untruth	
THE TRUTH IS A LIE?	← by the will to confirm	THE UNTRUTH IS TRUE?
PROBABILITY	the legitimacy of the lie	REALITY
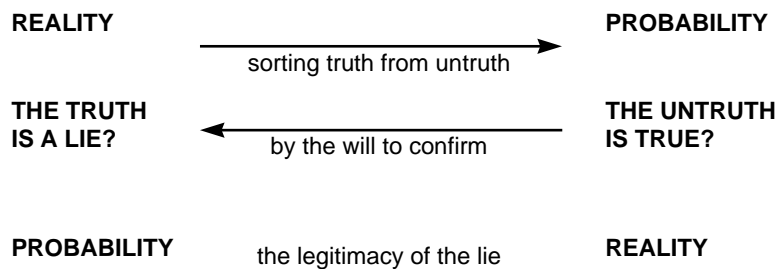
Peirce also covered conceptual realism in depth. At an early stage, Peirce states for example that:

observation and evaluation

are simultaneous and indivisible and interlocked. The human being sees entities and recognises and acts upon them. The human being sees truth and untruth as equally important - though not immaterial for the person who is evaluating them.

Peirce (1905) suspends the distinction between "a true world" and "a false world" not to improve on the chaotic lack of perspective nor to give up on creating order but rather to introduce a mode of thought which deals with the probabilities of the world around us.

He distinguishes between "a real world" and "an apparently real world". He argues that several laws, opinions and conclusions can be considered equal as long as they have not been disproved or disallowed.

All persons-at-play and toy consumers are aware that there are lies and deceptions in conversations and play and that toys cheat, lie and deceive us about their uses - because toys and play *are* fiction. There is therefore widespread corruption, apparent or hidden.

The important thing is that the validity of the five (originally four) criteria is not questioned - despite the fact that they are (constantly) breached (wrongly interpreted).

If there is the least bit of doubt, then the dialogue or conversation will become impossible because the meaning of an utterance will then be blurred. See Dines Johansen (1989). However, completely unrestricted usage of the five fundamental criteria in all situations is also problematic because they will contradict each other.

We can consider a lie legitimate (e.g. as in play!). If, in any given situation, a lie is considered legitimate then it is understood as a motivated breach of the general norm of truth.

The dialogue is no longer oriented towards understanding but must be described as strategic in the broadest sense of the term - and be justified as such.

This is why both Buber and Habermas claimed that dialogue which is free for power and mastery and honest conversation is anticipated by the unavoidable basic tenets of human dialogue and speech.

From this point onwards, my perspective is that the five criteria are valid for comprehension-oriented communication, which includes toys and play.

CHAPTER 3 THE SIGN CONCEPT

Peirce and the triadic sign concept

In this book, the evaluation of and criteria for the matter of toys or "the object" with which one can play, is defined and described on the basis of transferred and revised theoretical criteria.

Where, e.g. the literary researcher evaluates relative to "text, story, interpretation", the toy researcher must evaluate relative to "object (implicitly understood as a toy), story, interpretation".
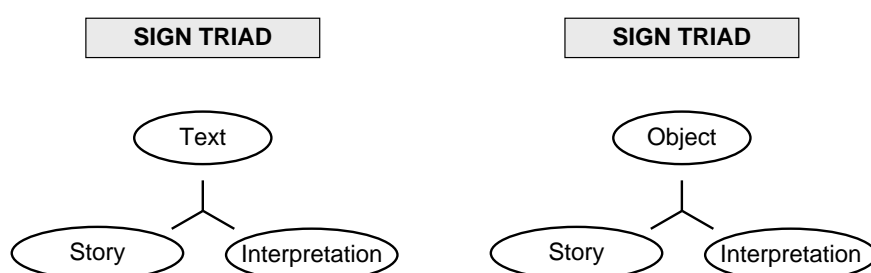
With reference to Peirce, the tripartite nature of toys will be outlined in several sections of the book because toys and play are to be understood as a sign, in addition to being a symbol which is interpreted.

It is thus *the sign,* not the toy itself, which is the basic unit for study of *play with it!* The sign is information about the toy and information is subject to interpretation and is the same as a *sign.*

As earlier mentioned (see the triadic spheres of research within metaphysics and the account of the play triad), toys or an object/a case (physical or intangible) which are used in play can also be interpreted with the triadic method. Peirce's (1902) definition of a *sign* is as follows:

"A sign, or Representamen, is a First which stands in such a genuine triadic relation to a Second, called its Object, as to be capable of determining a Third, called its Interpretant, to assume the same triadic relation to its Object in which it stands itself to the same Object."

In other words, a sign is a triadic relation between three phenomena.

Firstly, there is the primary sign, which is the sign's bearer or its appearance/form without reference to its meaning.

Next is the object or the case or story (material or non-material, physical or intangible) to which the primary sign refers.

Then there is the interpretant (that which is interpreted by the interpreter), which is the person's or the system's interpretation which expresses that the primary sign relates to its object or case.
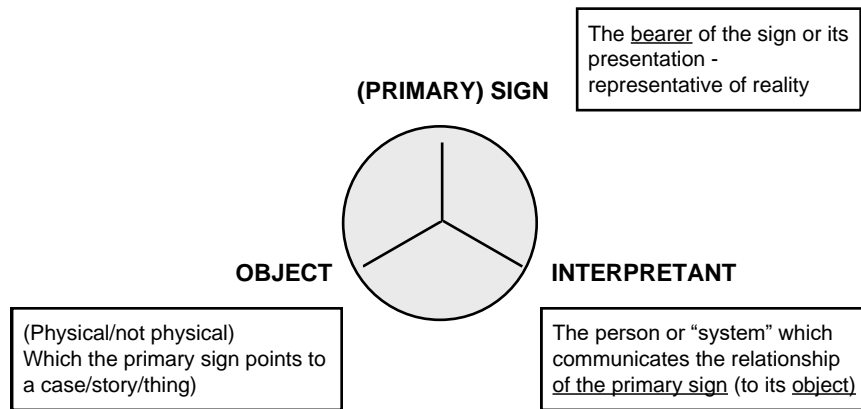
As both signs and play are symbolic, I take the liberty in my description of the sign triad to include firstness, secondness and thirdness play.

It is, however, imperative to note that the play triad has *absolutely nothing* to do with Peirce's sign theory. It is similarly imperative to emphasise that the sign's (the triadic sign concept's) three fundamental instances are *not* ontological and cannot be positioned in any of the three universal categories in the way I have "played with them" in order to construct the concept "play triad".

A general sign triad looks like this:
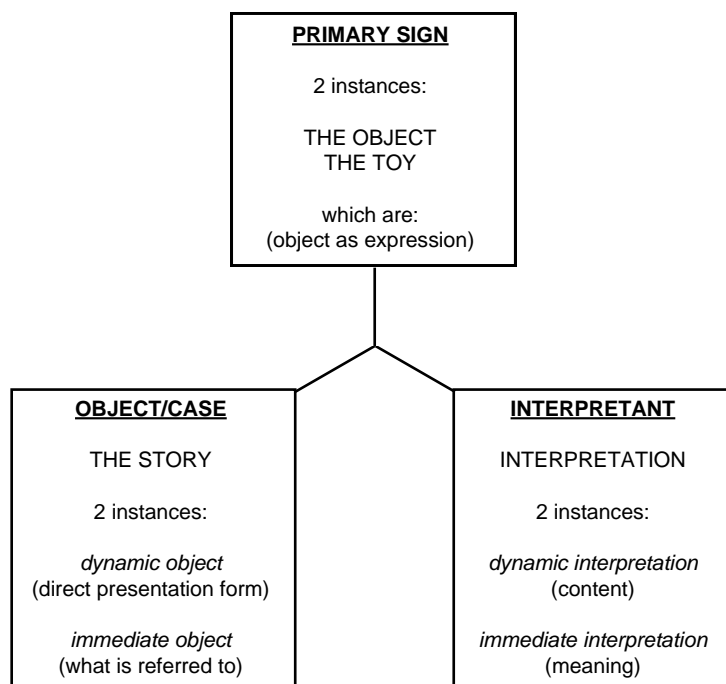
As the figure shows, each instance is subdivided into two *instances, an internal and an external*: object/toy, dynamic/immediate object and the dynamic/immediate interpretant.

Primary sign, object/case and interpretation

In the following, the sign phenomenon for toys is described as a logical grouping of many elements within which signs are developed.

Peirce calls logic "semiotics" so what we will do is form toy semiotics. The description follows the instructions of Eco (1971), Nöth (1985) and particularly Dines Johansen (1989:13-22) concerning text and literary values and evaluation. Thus, we are talking of toys' values and evaluation in relation to the exchange of signs.

1. The primary sign
"The object" is a concrete object (e.g. a car) as it is seen, for example, in the street by an observer. The car's sign system of course includes the materials or combination of materials it is made of and the way in which it is manufactured and developed, i.e. its complexity and degree of reality.

"The toy" (e.g. a small toy car) is an expression/symbol for (a copy of) the real thing. It is a sign for something that is object-specific which can be classified as "a car".

(Concerning the toy's classification and material determination, please refer to Part 2, where very many elements are categorised.)

We very often use the expression "What picture corresponds best to what you would like to see?"! This expresses a search towards achieving a consciousness in relation to the sign system which e.g. an object represents. Even if we observe the same things, we don't see them in the same way because our understanding and interpretation of things are individual - although there are some signs which are understood by all of us in the same way.

In play with a toy, in firstness play, the person-at-play experiments his way to a subjective criteria for truth concerning the toy as a copy of the object and that which it superficially represents. The sign system in play thus becomes a message or piece of information on the strength of the material categories and classification - even though classification and material determination can be complicated enough in themselves.

2. The Object or Story is also split into two parts.
The immediate object (physical or intangible) or the superficial case is that to which the object and the toy points or refers, seen exclusively from what the toy itself purports to resemble (in this case, any ordinary car).

Here, what matters is the object's/case's (toy car's) particular roles/stories: Role within the family, role in relation to the person-at-play's development, its technological role, its role on the toy market, artistic role and general cultural and creative roles.

What also matters are the general *main classification groups*, functions and structures, especially educational or psychological values and the car's general meaning within social and cultural frameworks.

The dynamic object or the dynamic case is the object/case which exists independently of the given object's reference.

By this we mean that the object exists due to its being attributed quite special *qualities of usage* which are decided with the help of the *spheres of investigation* and the triads (within physics, biology, psychology, physiology, logic and metaphysics) which were at the core of Peirce's investigative triads.

The difference between the superficial case and the dynamic case can be illustrated by the following example:

Some toy figures are produced which are intended superficially to represent a specific ethnic population., The designer has unconsciously (presumably!) given the figures some degrading (education, psychological, social) features and values which are superficially seen as identical with the real ethnic group.

By using *dynamic* methods of research and investigation, the ethnic group will naturally be able to draw attention to the fact that these features are pure fabrication, myths or a product of spite and would therefore be in a position to reason that the group itself could not be identified with the features communicated by the figures.

The design of these figures means that they do not send credible signs of sincerity but communicate with the help of false signs and illegitimate codes and therefore create a diffuse impression.

One central condition for understanding a toy's expression is that it has a natural *double link to its potential meaning,* which is evident in both the toy's coding and reference to the case itself (which can justifiably be termed the toy's "discursive universe" - and which maybe does or maybe does not exist - dependent upon the nature of the original object).

Secondness play revolves around the experiences with that which is expressed by and contained in the *case*.

Through the toy's form, it is possible for the person-at-play to classify the toy so that play can unfold both on the toy's conditions and on the strength of the person-at-play's experiences with it.

On the basis of the confrontations, conflicts, experiments and manipulations which the toy adds to the game, the person-at-play gains cognition, insight, opinions and other experiences.

3. The Interpretant
The interpretant communicates the primary sign's relation to the object and is a "translation" of the *object* to another form of visual expression which has the same meaning. The interpretant is "that" which the interpreter interpreted. And that too is split into two.

The superficial interpretant is the toy's *possible meanings*, such as they are to be interpreted from signs, symbols, design and the total impression the toy gives as a whole. (A car which looks like a racing car can both be "driven fast" when you play with it and as a model it "looks good" as part of the collection of cars on the shelf).

The possible meanings decide the character of the toy. In thirdness play with the toy's possible meanings, the I of the person-at-play is expressed through reflection, recognition and personal conclusions which result in a judgement (or many personal conclusions which result in a judgement (or many judgements) over the toy and play with it).

Play then takes place on the bedrock of a judgement of the toy's value. Evaluation takes place on the basis of the person-at-play's and the game's intensity. (Caillois calls it play's "euphoria", Sutton-Smith calls it "getting high on play", Gadamer (1982) calls it "deep play".)

*The dynamic interpretant **is** the objective content of the interpretation which the observer, the person-at-play, the interpreter apportions the object, the toy.* It is subject to significant variation depending on the interpreter's individual preconceived ideas and especially his imagination!

The subjective content is constituted on criteria which are called the toy's criteria for objectivity and judgement, which are well and truly infiltrated with both ethnic and moral criteria. The criteria for marketing toys to children and advertising criteria are also of significance.

The interpretation of a toy - the degree to which it is comprehensible, true, truthful and legitimate - is therefore quite individual (universally pragmatic).

This individual interpretation of the objective content of a toy is due to the concepts in the relationship between toy text and context. The most important aspect is the individual's free will to "want to interpret". Without it, there can be no dialogue.

The concepts of relationships in this book are explained as "genre relation and object transformation" (Einsiedler) and the many complex relations between mastery, power and emotion, competition, etc. are described in Part 4 (from Huizinga to Sutton-Smith.)

Summary: Toy semiotics and the play triad

It is important to emphasise that none of the three parts of this triad - primary sign, object/case, interpretant - can be left out if we are concerned with *a sign* as defined by Peirce. It is also important to stress that the play triad - firstness, secondness and thirdness - form a unit and an entity at thirdness level as long as we are talking of "the great play", play's euphoria, "deep play" - all three being terms to describe one and the same thing.

Together and individually, the expressions express an entity:

For the person-at-play in *firstness play*, the fundamental starting point is toy classification and material definition. If/when this happens, it expresses the fact that the person-at-play mentally "gets hold of" *the complexity of the sign*.

Secondness play's experimenting and often conflicting relation to the toy makes it possible for the person-at-play *to relate to the mutual complex relations between several signs.*

Thirdness play is an individually interpreted demonstration of the game and the toy and shows the person-at-play in a state of harmonious *comprehension of the signs' mutual legitimacy*.

As the person-at-play in thirdness play is able to evaluate the toy's possibilities while simultaneously and harmoniously reflecting within his environment, displaying his cognition and showing understanding, tolerance and openness, I must once again state that thirdness - an advanced state and an optimum interpretation - does not often occur often!

The characteristic that all the elements mentioned must be mastered - which in the end gives rise to thirdness play - is the finest and highest level the human being at play can achieve and experience - but incredibly many, very different elements and assumptions have to meet for this to be the case!

Sender and recipient

In this semiotic construction, it is not merely a question of **that** which the interpreter interpreted but also of **who** re-interprets?

In this construction there are two parties acting in a dialogue with each other and on the strength of the toy's sign:

the sender - who makes the toy
the recipient/consumer - who plays with it.

The two interpreters are in reality several/many but in this construction we will refer to them as if they were two individuals.

The sender usually consists of an entire group: ideas men, planners, designers, product developers, marketing people and agents.

The recipients/consumers are not only the person or persons-at-play but equally importantly parents, pedagogues, teachers, agents, etc. All these parties have to be considered individual personalities, each with his/her own abilities, pre-dispositions, possibilities and needs. What they have in common is that they have something to do with the toy on the basis of subjective assumptions, which can be analysed and classified.

Both sender and recipient (understood as each individual person who is part of the construction) are determined by a personal lifestyle paradigm.

Education is the foundation for the person's life style potential but gender, job and work situation are also contributory factors. Interests/hobbies and parental life situation (which are particularly important for the choice of toys for younger children), ecology and the way in which the individual sees the future are all important factors. These will be covered in more detail in Parts III and IV.

Communicative problems in interpreting toys' referential and code aspects between sender and recipient are generally interesting - and difficult!

| **SENDER** | ⟶ | **RECIPIENT** |
| | ⟵ | (The modern consumer) |

Education		Education
Gender		Gender
Work/job		Work/job
Working situation		Working situation
Interests/hobbies		Interests/hobbies
Parental situation		Parental situation
Attitude to the future		Attitude to the future
Ecological factors		Ecological factors
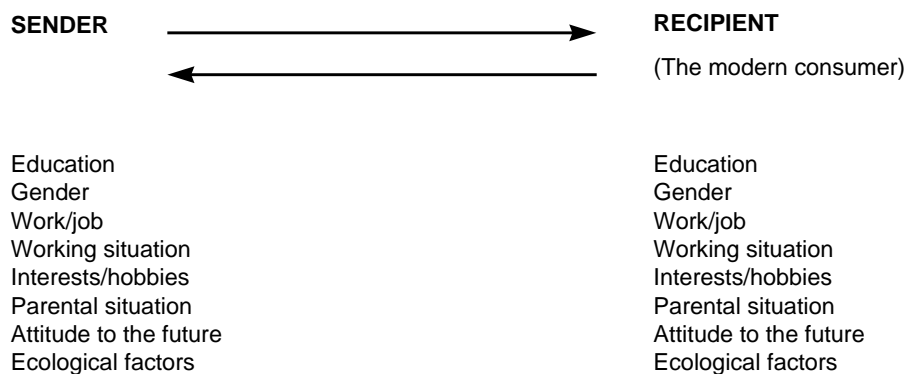
The toy as a pragmatic communicator

It is important to ask, "How do the different instances send messages to each other?"

−   Firstly, *communicative consciousness* (feeling and intuition for acting communicatively and in a dialogue) is important relative to the question of the person-at-play's (the I's) control system

−   Secondly, on the strength of spontaneous and random analysis and criticism, toys are allocated many meanings which result in a situation

where the toy's basic meaning does not always appear especially compositional.

The reason for this is that we allocate and force (cause: space for interpretation) upon the toy meanings which come from general ideological fundamental ideas with very disparate origins. These meanings will very often have nothing at all to do with the given toy. This distorts the communicative relation re the sign, case relation and interpretation, thus misrepresenting the toy's real meaning.

Toys and play can be copied rightly and wrongly and this gives rise to both interpretation and misinterpretation.

Communicative relation and sign exchange are determined by:

1. The communication channels and factors which transmit a two-way communication. The mutual referential and constituent aspects change position relative to the person-at-play's individuality, the originality of the toy, its role and position.

− The *intersections* of which there are two sets:

2. *The external intersections* which intersect the instances at the limits (marginal assumptions) of the relation,

3. *the internal intersections* where the channels of communication intersect internally and where the demands for comprehensibility, truth, truthfulness and legitimacy must be met so that mutual understanding is possible (as long as there is also the *will* to do so!)

4. which come to expression (visibly and invisibly) and which pertain to the collection of *elements or moments* which are the core of the toy or the play/action.

   The toys and play are classified in five main groups: People/social relations, animals, instruments, system/strategy and nature. Each main group, sub-group and individual toy has its own special and unique initial assumption.

5. *The case relations or many case relations (numbering ten in this construction) which expose semconfigurations in the communicative relationship.*

In the case of a toy and in a constantly changing or random order, these cover the following elements:

(Semconfigurations in the communication)

Figurations	- re play * re toy
STYLE	- the person-at play's individual personal play style and behavioural pattern * the style of the toy emphasises the attitude and personality of the sender through his/her choice among the many variants
PRACTICAL USE	- the person-at-play's ability to use the toy * understood as the daily use of the toy as opposed to "use on special occasions"
MOTIVE	- the person-at-play's special motives for using the toy * special motives and perspectives for choice of a particular expression which is apportioned to the toy
STATEMENT	- the sender's and recipient's mutual dialogues * statements about the attributes which are connected to the toy(s) and their relative position generally
EXPRESSION/ DESIGN	- sender's intentions and attitudes - recipient's immediate reactions * the toy's individual, characteristic form and appearance
COMPLEXITY	- the complex relationship between sender and recipient * the special factors and relations of the toy, its complexity * a toy's special relationship to another toy
SIGNAL	- limited pieces of information re play, sent by the persons-at-play – in code form * defined pieces of information which are part of the sign system - in code form
PLAY	- freedom to test/explore/investigate the toy anywhere/anyhow
UNDERSTANDING	- cognitive mastery re using the toy in the game - applied metacommunication and object transformation * the toy's universal pragmatic character
CODES	- artificial pieces of information re the game * artificial pieces of information which are a part of the toy's coding system

On the strength of this combination it is possible to understand and analyse the toy as an utterance because its being in a broad sense is confirmed by the relation:

sender - superficial case (object),

a relation which is always subject to critical analysis of many kinds and to philosophical analysis of the communicative form.

When we regard a toy as a sign or as information, the real recipient (consumer or the person who plays with it!) is able to question and make demands of the toy and its relation to each of the instances.

These questions and demands can be formulated thus:

1. What is the meaning of a given toy? Is it comprehensible and unambiguous?

2. To what original object does the toy refer? Does it express the original object in a true way?

3. What did the sender (manufacturer/designer) intend for it? Are these intentions reliable and truthful?

4. What legitimate challenge to play and action does the toy present? Is it correct that the person-at-play follows the instructions?

These questions:

1. Relate to the relationship toy - interpretation and to the visual and social codes and questions which concern the toy's meaning and the norm which the toy fulfils in order to be understood in the first place.

2. Relate to the relationship toy - case. The first question refers to the type of reference while the *norm,* on which the toy is evaluated, is the criteria for truth.

3. Are concerned with the relationship sender/subject - toy. The first question is concerned with the type of play/action involved. The second question addresses the matter of how the evaluation norm affects the integrity/truthfulness of the utterance.

4. Address the relationship toy - recipient/subject, i.e. the relationship to the de facto recipient (person who plays with the toy) - and raises two further questions:

   – The first: How does the toy seek to engage the recipient, how does it challenge the person-at-play to regard it? What implications does this have for play and action?

- The second is concerned with evaluating: Is it correct that the recipient should accept the suggested impression? Is it right to play/act in accordance with the suggested impression?

We are here concerned with the toy's *acceptability or legitimacy* relative to a given or individual norm.

The toy and the person-at-play

The external limit for the eco-social environment (marginal assumptions) consists of five levels:
- Resources
- Technology
- Heredity
- Event
- Time
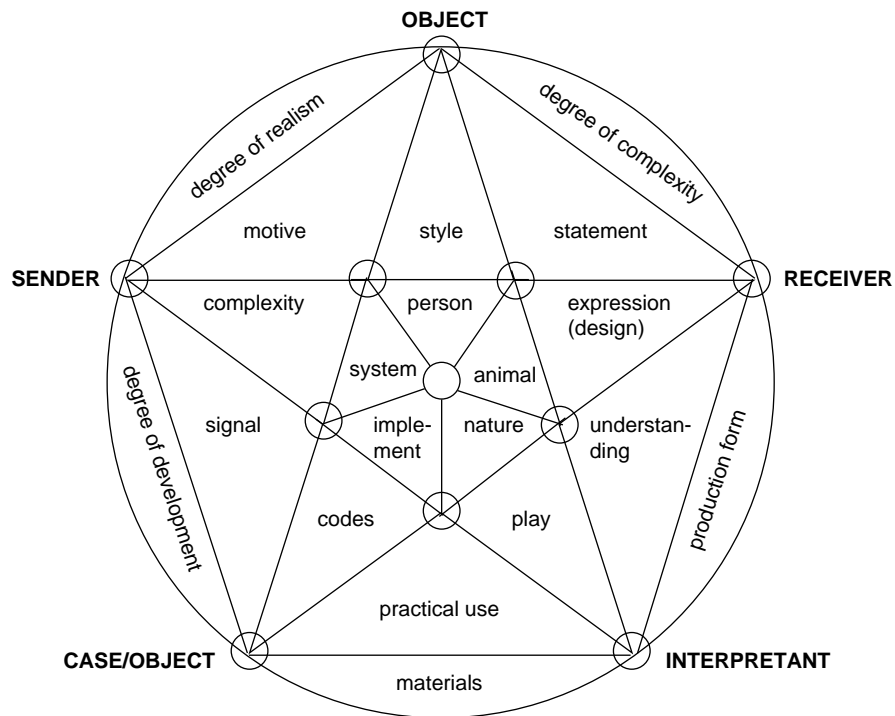
The internal intersections contain the universal pragmatic concepts:
- Understanding
- Truth
- Truthfulness
- Legitimacy
- Will

 Internal and external intersections
- Channels of communication and communicative factors
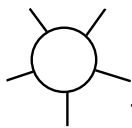
 The core of the text (and poetic function)

Concerning the model:

It is important to note that *NONE* of the concepts featured in the model are *static in relation to any of the other concepts*.

Their respective positions crystallise according to where (the circumstances) and how (the ways in which) the concepts originate and react within play.

Play with a toy, play itself or playing a game are "unique" - because play occurs, progresses and dies never to be played again. Whenever a game is repeated, it is a new game in which all the constituent concepts are dynamically re-mixed. New dynamic structures appear all the time. The sheer numbers of variables means that it is both wrong and impossible to say much about play or a game in advance. Every individual game must be explained by the forms it assumes.

Here the classical and pragmatic communication model (Jakobson (1967)) will be employed speculatively.

It illustrates the communication between the sender (designer/manufacturer) and the recipient (the person-at-play) as something which takes place in a code which directly or indirectly transmits content.

Such pragmatic relations in communication - sender, recipient, code, etc. are the external energies which give meaning. For example, in his basic model, Jakobson uses six concepts to explain communication:

sender, recipient, case relation, channel system, sign system and poetic function.

In this book's communication model "TOYS AND THE PERSON-AT-PLAY", we also have *a sender and recipient and three referential and code aspects (which are partly comparable with Jakobson's functions). Jakobson's (1967) "poetic function" is the most central element in his functional communication model. Without the poetic function, Jakobson's model would be completely meaningless because it would not be able to express e.g. all the metacommunicative or artistic uses of language. And it is the artistic in language which uses metaphor and other figurative modes which together refer to meaning and value.*

I have therefore taken the liberty of placing the poetic function at the very centre of the model, right there where the expression or text/core is expressed!

The poetic is particularly relevant for play and toys. It is here that thoughts and dreams "float around" and become language, communication, information, dialogue and the artistry in play with toys.

In addition, this model includes Habermas' general universal pragmatic demands for comprehensibility, truth, truthfulness, legitimacy and (adding the fifth) will.

At first sight, I ought to mention that the addition of "will to act/do something" does not really fit into the categories of Habermas' communication theory as Habermas' theory is made up of the assumptions of cognitive theory which are imperative for a successful message. Will is of individual psychological character. However, I am including will because the will to recognition is just as significant as the will to participate in a communicative process at all.

In the model, these "disclosures" are marked in the innermost and the central intersections as the person-at-play's object transformation is impossible if the person concerned cannot transform the universal pragmatic concepts.

As earlier mentioned, a toy cannot be reality's object because:

a toy's significance is not evident by virtue of its special or specific realistic characteristics but rather by virtue of the form of the overall impression it gives through its being used by a person-at-play as part of experimentation, investigation and manipulation in play.

Summary

THE OBJECT/TOY is of course defined as "something to play with" and therefore more or less expresses communicative action - as it comes to expression in play with the toy.

The way in which the object/toy expresses itself, the different possibilities in the communicative and play situations are called THE SIGN SYSTEM.

The SENDER is one or more persons with intentions, cognition, motives (attitudes) which play a significant part in the communicative relationship.

If the toy isn't good to play with, the blame can only be put on the sender.

The RECIPIENT is also one or several persons (the persons-at-play or the consumers) who all to some degree want to receive, investigate, explore and possibly redefine the sender's intentions for the toy.

If communicative situations (in play) are to occur, then it is important that the receiver has curiosity, interest and experience at his disposal.

− The sender's and recipient's STATEMENTS are their many dialogues and theories about the toy and the play (stated theories).

THE CASE/OBJECT/STORY is reality or the world picture of the people involved.

– Comprehension and theories about the case where these are included in the case are called <u>CASE RELATIONS</u>. The case relations are therefore placed in a picture of the reality of play with toys, located in time and space and equipped with relationships and qualities.

– The arrows between sender/recipient are called <u>CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION</u>.

– The arrows between object/case/interpretation are called <u>COMMUNICATION FACTORS</u>.

<u>INTERPRETATION</u> can be more or less explicit, depending on the participant's linguistic capabilities.

General Comment on the model and its pentagonal form

A model cannot completely illustrate the reality it is intended to represent.

In this case, I have been inspired by Dines Johansen, partly also by <u>Jakobson</u>, Sutton-Smith and Tokeby (1993):

Jakobson (1967:41-52) uses six concepts in his explanation of communication:

Sender, recipient, case relations, channel system, sign system and poetic function.

Using these concepts, the various clarifying elements can be brought into a explanatory and communicative relationship to one another.

Apparently, Tokeby was experimenting with the possibility of using the pentagon at the same time (early 1990s) as me.

The use of the pentagon as a model both informs and misinforms because reality - as a model containing many different instances all subject to arbitrariness - can never be as symmetrical and as perfectly star-shaped as the dialogues in the mathematically equilateral pentagon.

Depending on conditions and situations etc., reality's model is both distorting and distorted and forms the strangest shapes which the many different conditions can produce.

> *The model as a "symmetrical" pentagon therefore serves only to represent the multiplicity of factors and instances.*

CHAPTER 4   EVALUATION OF PLAY AND GAMES

We can construct a concise model for the concepts of play and games (similar to the model for toys and play with them but containing a different constellation of instances):

> *In play and in games, the person-at-play/player plays the same roles as sender and recipient.*
>
> *The roles are however constantly changing places and have different functions as sender and recipient but also as object, story and interpretant.*

Play

THE CREATOR, ORGANISER AND MANAGER are central functions in play which involve *power* within play or within the game.

But the ACTOR(S) AND AUDIENCE are significant factors in the play process. From time to time the roles change and other functional roles take charge.

In Part 3, Sutton-Smith and the relativity of play, in the section on "quadreologic communication", we will investigate these roles and functions in more detail. The roles and functions individually are particularly qualitative and dynamic. In their own way, they scan those limited spheres of investigation which are connected to the function. Here too *the spheres of investigation* and the triads (physics, biology, psychology, physiology, logic and metaphysics) are the motivational basis for Peirce's research triads.

Play is unpredictable, games too. The permutations are numerous:

The persons-at-play/players exploit one another in a complicated I/Thou and I/It relationship where from time to time a "third person" materialises, giving rise to a Thou/It relationship, which operates on the lines of another "toy" or as an "object".

The communicative relationship and the exchange of signs between players is determined by the following:

Channels of communication between the persons-at-play/players are drawn up so that they meet at the *intersections*. These intersections illustrate the persons-at-play's moments of recognition during which there is an understanding of the inner logic of the *case relations*.

There are two sets of intersections (as in the model for toys):

− Where the persons-at-play receive reality's messages and possibilities in relation to the roles and positions they undertake within play/the game.

− Where the players must classify and distinguish between the play relationships and expressions in relation to other, similar games (about rules, norms and fixed points).

The events which occur at the intersections particularly fulfil the conditions for *firstness play.*

The *case relations*, which are play's and life's existential moments, are filled with confrontations, conflicts and new recognition on mutual relationships between things/elements, exactly as in secondness play.

The case relations as concepts of being are based on the play theories of Buydendijk, Huizinga, Chateau, Caillois and Sutton-Smith. These case relations (as semconfigurations in the communication between the persons-at-play) are constantly changing, appear in random order and change position within the model, are as follows:

Figurations	re play
RECOGNITION	the person-at-play's complete understanding for the nature of play, through which he becomes conscious of the quality of play
CONFLICT	situations within play where the persons-at-play disagree or oppose one another usually over decisions/rules or over who should have which toy and perform certain roles and functions
PASSION	the euphoria of play, "getting high on play", etc. - concentration and fascination with moments or situations in/about play/the game
COMPETITION	contention where the persons-at-play try to settle differences by competing against each other
MASTERY	where the persons-at-play master (or give themselves the ability to master) something or are able to do some specific thing
ORDER – ANARCHY	the extremes or poles within which play can be placed
PRODUCTION/ DEMONSTRATION	presentation of a process or a manifestation of a particular understanding, adopting/displaying attitude to something in particular
DISCIPLINE	mastery of or adherence to rules or attitudes to play, often where the persons-at-play are tempted to "cheat"/act contrary to agreed rules for the game
FORMS	Forms in play can be free, separate, uncertain, unproductive, regulated or fictive. Play is often a mix of forms.
TIME/SPACE	Time taken to play but also the game's historical time dimension. Play's space is the play's free or limited area.

Finally, we must mention the initial assumptions. As earlier mentioned, these are the visible or invisible characteristics which apply for the collection of *elements or moments* which are *the core of the play/action*. The game, like the toy is split into five main groups: people/social relations, animals, instruments, system and nature.

Concerning the model:

It is important to note that *NONE* of the concepts featured in the model are *static in relation to any of the other concepts*.

Their respective positions crystallise according to where (the circumstances) and how (the ways in which) the concepts originate and react within play.

Play with a toy, play itself or playing a game are "unique" - because play occurs, progresses and dies never to be played again. Whenever a game is repeated, it is a new game in which all the constituent concepts are dynamically re-mixed. New dynamic structures appear all the time. The sheer numbers of variables means that it is both wrong and impossible to say much about play or a game in advance. Every individual game must be explained by the forms it assumes.

Play and the person-at-play

The external border for the eco-social environment contains 5 levels:
- Event
- Personality
- Reification
- Time
- Space
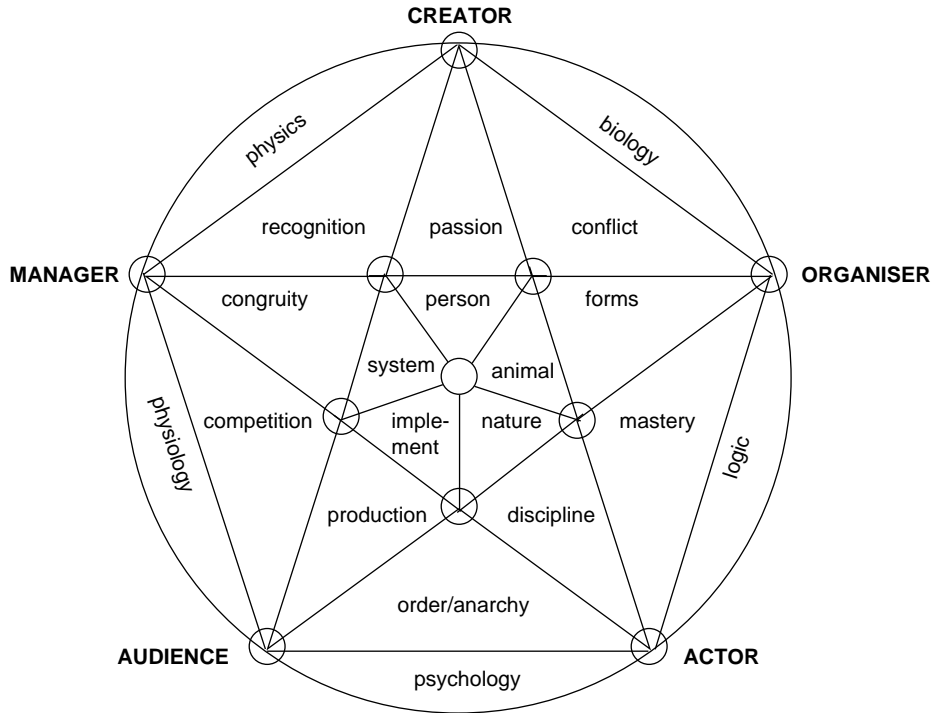
The internal intersections contain the universal pragmatic concepts:
- Understanding
- Truth
- Truthfulness
- Legitimacy
- Will

 Internal and external intersections

- Channels of communication and communicative factors
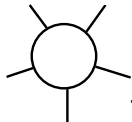
 The core of the text (and poetic function)

Summary re play

Play/games and possibilities with toys hang literally like planets in the universe (the universal environment) and are subject to the different, random variation in conditions around them.

- **Play with a toy is like an atom or a ball!**
- **External features propose and limit their size.**
- **The contents, the eco-social environment, are formed differently and vary according to different constellations.**
- **Games are good or bad determined by and subject to these existential conditions - as the model demonstrates.**
- **Play with toys can be harmonious - as a ball is.**
- **If it is rounded, it will have the natural ability to move in the desired direction or in a random direction. But play can also be - and often is - "lumpy" or awkward which is why it stops dead, comes to a halt and remains in a locked or unmoving situation.**
- **If there are changes inside it, in its eco-social environment, its centre of gravity shifts which can lead to a change in its form - which gets it moving again.**

The game

A game is an exercise in voluntary control systems in which there is a mutual competition between the power and energies of the players, limited and controlled by the rules of the game, the objective being to achieve an unequal result.

- *Sport/competitive sport* are games in the same way many strange and wonderful kinds of play are games.

- "*Life games" are games and play* which human beings use on and with each other both to cheat and reward each other.

- *Sport* is a game played in which there are a variety of physical activities, attitudes and modes of behaviour.

- *Competitive sport* is a refined, perfected activity of the players' physical and psychological constitution and behaviour - relative to elements in the game and to mastery of the finer points of that game.

  This is in fact the decisive difference between the practised/trained and unpractised/untrained persons in relation to the question of mastering a game.

The individual player *co-operates* with the others. The quality of co-operation on the basis of the individual players' abilities will be decisive for the result of the game. What is also decisive for the *result of the game*, however, is that the game's norms and rules are clear and obvious and are both understood and accepted by all the players.

It is difficult to compare and distinguish the similarities between play and games but there are two areas in which they differ i.e. a) the limitation in the game due to *rules, time and space* and b) the attempt in the game *to identify a winner*.

More precisely, the differences between play and games, sport and competitive sport can be compared thus:

<u>**PLAY**</u> to participate		<u>**GAME**</u> to win
<u>BY PARTICIPATING</u> free to stop imagination self-control	<u>**SPORT**</u> to participate/develop	<u>BY PARTICIPATING</u> play to the end strategic choice practice/mastery
	COMPETITIVE SPORT to win	
informal unorganised co-operative practice-oriented collective	informal institutionalised practice/mastery discipline-oriented individualising/group-oriented	formal organised competitive rules-oriented groups/teams

All games simulate a "reality" of some kind, type or description. Games have marginal assumptions which consist of eight levels:

– EVENT - for the occurrence of the game
– PERSONALITY - persons' gender, ages and experience
– REIFICATION - description and quality of the requisites
– TIME - limited or predetermined
– RESOURCES - put into the game
– TECHNOLOGY - conditions for the game
– HEREDITY - the game's traditions and history.
– SPACE - area of the game and its limits

The game and its players

Over the years, many attempts have been made to construct classification systems for types of games. This is difficult and has yet to be achieved with complete success.

Sutton-Smith (1978) states that the reason for this is the relativistic motivation that when a game is played, it represents an incredibly large number of strategies and cultural expressions.

The many and varied types of games refer to a broad variety of traditions which again are rooted in different economic, technical, political and sociological principles and their development.

Attitudes, concepts and ideas which lie behind these are ideologically oriented, he says. In addition, the way the game is played is also affected by age, gender, experience and aptitudes/pre-disposition for the finer points of the game and other special abilities.

As a game is always regarded and interpreted from an ideological point of view, a game's ideology can be described as:

− a system of specified concepts and possibilities which come to expression via the players' way of playing the game.

The finer points of a game and special aspects, rules and qualities can very reasonably be called the game's ideological being.

The finer points, the game's expression and core, which are seen by the player through object transformation and metacommunication, are probably the only factor which can be classified with any certainty but their importance can vary significantly within the same game, depending on the relative combinations and relations between:

PHYSIQUE/PSYCHE   aptitude, skills, perseverance, stamina, intellect

STRATEGY   plan, structure, solution, hypothesis, possibility

CHANCE   chance decisions, risky possibilities

CHEATING   cheat, delude or trick the opponent

ORDER   turn order into chaos or chaos into order

It is up to the game's manager, referee or judge to ensure that the rules and the correct attitude and behaviour are maintained within the permitted ideological limits and rules of the game.

It should be noted (cf. Caillois (1958:65) and chapter 14) that each individual game also outlines what constitutes morally correct, "good behaviour" relative to the rules of the game. Caillois classifies and arranges play and games according to quality - dependent on the cultural and social frameworks in which they are played and based on three quality norms:

− the cultural forms, bordering on social life,

– the institutional forms, which are socially integrated and
– corruption, the expression of which can here be paraphrased to a game:

<u>Corruption</u>:

Competition	- violence, ruthlessness, cheat, tease, irritate
Chance	- exaggeration, ruthlessness, dominate
Simulation	- indifference, coldness, exaggerate own abilities
Euphoria	- overreaction when leading, jeering at opponent, slating the opposition.

There are several ideological dimensions, in the form of pairs of opposites which are always prerequisites for a game. Further, there are cultural limitations between one pair of variables which are opposites i.e.:

– *imagination and social proximity connected to women and girls, and*
– *prestige, heroism, mastery and individuality connected with men and boys.*

Games as pragmatic communication

There are clear case relations of play ideology connected to communication in the game.

(Semconfigurations in game communication)

Figurations	re the game
RATIONALITY IRRATIONALITY	how far the game is logical/ comprehensible or meaningless
USEFUL USELESS	constant testing of the innumerable variations and permutations in the game
CHILDISH ADULT	expression of the "level" of behaviour relative to age and development in the game
ACCEPT A ROLE REFUSE A ROLE	the way the participants fulfil their roles within the game
SIMULATE PARTICIPATION	the will to participate actively in relation to the level at which both team mates and opponents play the game
IDEALISATION REFUSAL TO IDEALISE	to idolise the game or to see it just as a game
NOVELTY TRIVIALITY	novelty value of the game, discovering new aspects of the game or trivial repetition
PREDICTABLE OUTCOME UNPREDICTABLE OUTCOME	perspicacity in the question of who among the participants will win or lose
ORGANISATION DISORGANISATION	organisation as a basis for the players' being able to play - or the lack of it
HUMAN CONNECTIONS HUMAN DISTANCE	whether the game promotes a stronger connection to (an)other player(s)

It is the transition between the different dimensions (pairs of opposites) in the game which generates excitement and the often incomprehensible irrationality which also generates the energy and the intellect with which to build rationality, order and strategy which in turn ensure that there is content and form.

There are vast differences in the various life styles as to how the different games are played and evaluated. In addition, there are also differences as to which activities are characterised as games.

Even attitudes to what is rational/irrational, useful/useless, female/male in society are different. Certain games are idealised because they are part and parcel of the ideology of the society and are thus given to be healthy and reasonable. Other games are characterised as unreasonable, immoral or destructive.

The kinds of games which are regarded as suitable relative to children's upbringing and development have changed with the times. We see this in

changing attitudes to play and games as described in many childhood biographies.

The idealisation of the game is dependent on the number of ideological dimensions which in any given situation are placed in theories and studies of play and games. There is, however, widespread agreement that games manifest *restraint* but it is restraint of a voluntary kind - where play manifests **freedom**.

If, however, force intervenes in a game and sets fixed targets for the development of the game, its progress and result, the spontaneity of the game disappears. And it doesn't matter whether the game is educational or fun or similar, the play element of the game has ceased to exist.

That there must be an aim to children's games so that they learn something through play is a widespread idea in the Western cultures. Characteristic for both artificially produced toy products and sports equipment is that they are intended to stimulate children physically and psychologically. Play areas or sports fields must, however, always be regarded as artificial environments.

Freedom is therefore not a characteristic of games in any form of universal perspective.

Where freedom in modern childhood is concerned, seen in the light of developments over the past century, organised institutions, schools, (voluntary) clubs, sports and TV have taken over more and more of the children's free possibilities for play and games.

Despite the fact that parents, teachers and pedagogues idealise free possibilities for play and games, the focus is drawn away from them by the amount of time children spend in institutions with obligatory stimulation programmes and "educational" toys and with games reduced to a kind of occupational therapy, often a case of getting the children to pass the time in an easy way.

How much opportunity do children really have for voluntarily experience of the free, natural and self-made play and game processes in addition to the organised forms of play/games? The correct answer to this question is another question: How does society want to administer and disseminate freedom?

Concerning the model:

It is important to note that *NONE* of the concepts featured in the model are *static in relation to any of the other concepts*.

Their respective positions crystallise according to where (the circumstances) and how (the ways in which) the concepts originate and react within play.

Play with a toy, play itself or playing a game are "unique" - because play occurs, progresses and dies never to be played again. Whenever a game is repeated, it is a new game in which all the constituent concepts are dynamically re-mixed. New dynamic structures appear all the time. The sheer numbers of variables means that it is both wrong and impossible to say much about play or a game in advance. Every individual game must be explained by the forms it assumes.

The Game - and the Player

The external margins for the eco-social environment are on 8 levels:

- Personality   - Heredity
- Reification   - Event
- Resources   - Time
- Technology   - Space
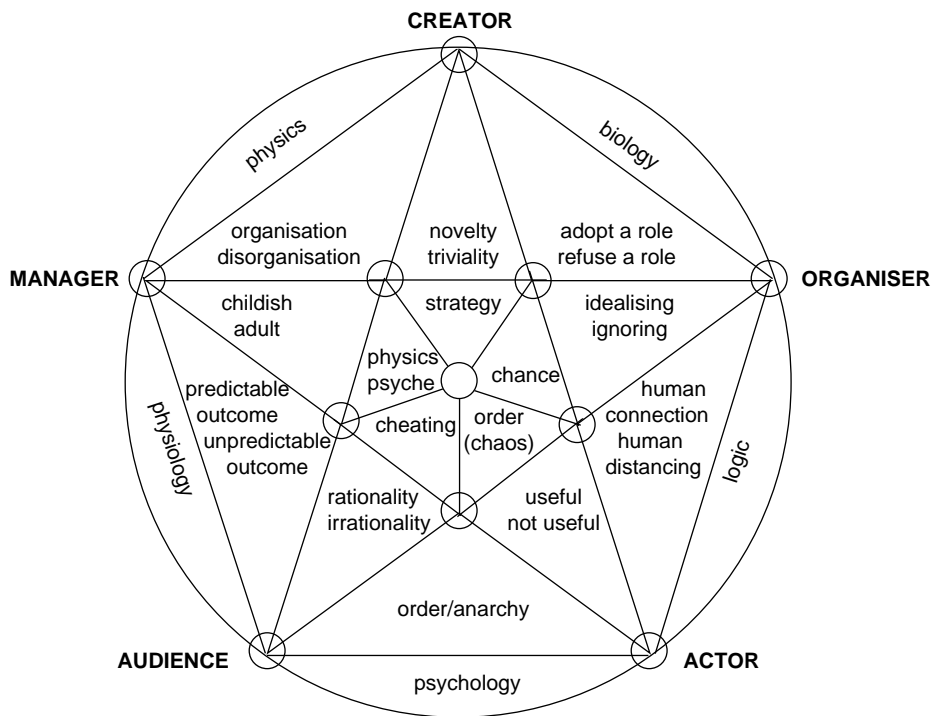
CREATOR

physics   biology

organisation   novelty   adopt a role
disorganisation   triviality   refuse a role

MANAGER   strategy   ORGANISER

childish   idealising
adult   ignoring

physics   chance
psyche

physiology   predictable   human
              outcome   connection
              unpredictable cheating order   human
              outcome   (chaos) distancing   logic

              rationality   useful
              irrationality not useful

order/anarchy

AUDIENCE   psychology   ACTOR

The internal intersections contain the universal pragmatic concepts:
- Understanding
- Truth
- Truthfulness
- Legitimacy
- Will

Internal and external intersections

- Channels of communication and communicative factors

The core of the text (and poetic function)

PART II

TOYS

PART II   TOYS

PART II TOYS

The fact that adults regard children as a version of themselves is never more clearly demonstrated than by toys. Normal toys generally make an adult world in miniature. This world consists of nothing more than miniature copies of human objects as if society sees a child as nothing more than a little person, a dwarf who has to be equipped with the objects suitable for his size…

…The child, however, does not make objects which have any kind of meaning. The child is indifferent to whether its constructions can be given an adult name. What the child is concerned with is not a consumer act but an act of creativity: A child can make objects which move, which can roll. The child creates life, not property. These objects drive themselves for they are more than just inanimate, complicated products. But all of this is something relatively rare: The ordinary (French) toy is an imitation which encourages consuming, non-creative children…

Roland Barthes (1969:49)

To a certain extent Barthes is right but toys are more complicated than that. In the following four chapters, we walk in Barthes' footsteps but will take the liberty of looking at his statements in far greater detail.

Definition: Toys are:

− copies of real objects
− copies of historical items and objects, but can also be
− imaginary things based on both reality and fantasy

A toy can also be:

− an analogue for an object about which the person-at-play seeks cognition, knowledge and experience through play - in play, the analogy replaces the object itself.

Introduction

The toy as a "gift" is clearly expressed in the modern consumer society as toy gifts as a part of family life represent innumerable forms of cultural expression. The toys refer to the various core values, attitudes, norms and traditions which are themselves based on a variety of economic, political and sociological principles. Toys are given particularly in connection with celebrations (Christmas and birthdays) because the giver wants to please the receiver. But toy gifts which suggest ceremony, intimacy and belonging, community, bonding, commitment, debt of gratitude and claims between giver and receiver (see Sutton-Smith (1986:15-21) and Mick (1991:143-159) are also an important and interesting brick in the complicated socio-psychological patterns within families.

When parents give their children gifts, what are children expected to give in return? Obedience, affection, gratitude?

The toy gift can also be regarded as the band which ties the generations of a family together in a time where insecurity and disintegration characterises the family and the relationships between the generations. Many parents have a guilty conscience and never have time to play with their children and the gift functions as compensation.

Some types of toy were invented just to give "substitute affection" or to replace the lack of parental affection, time or desire to be with and play with their children. Pets are popular because they return the love while toy animals and agent dolls as gifts are intended to substitute a lack of security and lack of time spent together. Superficially, it would seem that children in modern society have no use for all these toy gifts filling shelf after shelf and whole cupboards full of toys.

According to Winnicot (1971:51-52), gifts contribute to persuading children gradually to give up some of their expectations for direct and lasting (human contact) parental contact, being together and interplay - which were all something more prevalent in earlier, more collective societies.

In modern technological society, consciousness of children's gradual *turning away* from close human contact is probably a necessity. A new adaptation to *loneliness and separation*, to individual achievement, to manipulation with symbolic objects and products at many levels has already overtaken and replaced the collective work processes which were more evident in earlier times.

Part of Winnicot's theory is that there are specific toy gifts which are regarded as absolute necessities and that the toy's significance and special role is part of a socialisation towards this adaptation. Certain objects have cultural motivations and their significance as "transitional phenomena" means that they act as mediators between the child and his environment/society. The child gives his parents "a gift" by showing his interest in the toy - so that the parents can continue their busy lives with a clear conscience.

Gottfried's (1984) research shows that children in nuclear families spend a large part of their time alone and surrounded by their toys in their playpens and in their rooms.

In modern society, the solitary concept of play, individual play and isolation are just as important a part of the child's play existence as social play was in the past. Individual play involves a need for greater variation and supply of toys. Time spent in child care institutions, with sisters and brothers and playmates can of course modify the isolation of individual play, separation from parents, loneliness and self-absorption. On the other hand, the social concept of play, being together, acting in community demands greater variation in play.

Definitions

According to one dictionary of the Danish language, "toys are objects which are used in play. More specifically, toys are things children use to play with."

It is, however, not only children who play. Adults play too, particularly parents. This means that "things to play with" will not only be limited to the objects children choose for this purpose but also to things and toys which parents find interesting to include in play with their children - or to play with on their own when the children aren't present! The dictionary is therefore very narrow in its definition of the word "toy".

Things people played with in the past, prehistoric toys, antique toys or old toys are usually called traditional because they were small copies of the original objects - and it is clear what they represent (see the dictionary!). As an example of a modern description of what toys are, I quote the European Union's Toy Directive, dated 3[rd] May 1988, article 1:

Part 1: By toys we mean any product which is clearly constructed or intended to be used as a toy by children under 14 years.

Part 2: The products named in the appendix are not considered toys under the terms of this directive.

(The products named in the appendix are sports or similar equipment).

The most common impression of what a toy is and what it can be used for is therefore not only dependent on the toy's similarity, function and usefulness or of play or the dialogue in play with and around the toy but also on whether the directive points to *its being* a toy at all!

Today toys are most often defined as commercially produced objects for children to play with. Much of these toys are of course traditional but can also be described as diffuse, kitsch or "crazes" because they distort or confuse the concept relative to how we ordinarily expect toys to look.

Antique toys (old toys) meet the traditional ideals that they must look like the original thing or object and that they must be useful and function as intended.

Small copies of original things and objects from pre-history live up to the traditional ideals even better but there is reason to doubt that these things were ever really played with. Most were probably used as fetishes or as props for use in ceremonies and cult rituals.

Fetishism comes from the word "fetish" - a charm which primitive peoples thought had magical powers and which they worshipped and honoured. Worship of a thing or an object has also characterised the modern welfare and industrial society in the 20th century and this has naturally given rise to a widespread fetishist attitude to things.

Transgressing the taboos of these phenomena has of course given grounds for questioning modern social and behavioural modes.

The literature relating the different historical backgrounds for play on the basis of toy objects' specific appearance and development is extensive, imaginative and characterised by the authors' deep nostalgia for old and exciting items. What the literature often lacks, however, is a general theoretical basis for analysis and evaluation.

Bibiography

Literature on and studies of toys for children - "what we think children ought to play with" and what can stimulate their general development - are divided (by Almqvist (Children and Toys, A Bibliography, 1989) into 5 groups:

Group 1:   Toys and children's general development
             Toys and cognitive and social development
             Toys and socialisation
             Dangerous toys
             Toys' construction and play appeal

Group 2:   Toys for handicapped children
             Training programmes for use with special toys
             The toy library, toy classifications and collection systems

Group 3:   Toys as educational equipment and instruments generally

Group 4:   Toy Overviews:
             Toys as educational equipment
             Toys as ethnographic data and cultural instruments
             Toy catalogues

Group 5:   Dolls and doll accessories:
             For use in teaching

For use in play therapy and treatment

What the experts recommend as stimulating and developmental toys is one thing: what children choose to play with is quite another.

There are regrettably no overviews over what toys children own at different ages and in different countries or cultures - and what they play with.

The reason for this is the lack of research but also the fact that there are great cultural differences in attitudes to toys generally - doubt whether toys are valuable to children - doubt as to what extent too many toys lead to children generally losing the comprehension dimension - doubt as to how far and when children can abstract from the familiar to the cognitive, etc.

As the supply of toys in the Western world is so colossal and incalculable, especially where diffuse toys and "craze" toys are concerned, it is not difficult to imagine what toys are owned by children at different ages but we cannot begin to find out whether they actually play with any of them.

Roger Pinon, the pioneering founder of modern toy research, formulated the first basic definitions and theses concerning toys' function, degree of mimicry, significance, limitation and qualities and spoke about this dilemma (1958:287):

> "Innumerable problems with production and distribution, with style and technology, with the relation to general psychology, society, racial issues, with religion, Art and culture, not to mention the market, medicine and upbringing, possibly make the study of toys a new, doubtless significant topic which is not easy to tackle if one doesn't first apologise for only being able to tackle the topic superficially and imperfectly due to the current level of research."

Fiction, fairy tales and Hans Christian Andersen

The authors of fiction and a few authors of children's books often describe toys and play from a different perspective from that used by pedagogues and psychologists.

The inspiration for this chapter, "what toys Danish children own and what they themselves say they play with", is principally found in the type of children's books where toys and play are a significant part of the tale or story. An overview of some of these children's books in Danish is to be found in Steenhold (1989:62-63).

In the Norwegian and Danish tradition, Hans Christian Andersen plays a central role in the description of toys, play, children and existence.

He communicated an attitude to play where "play is born, develops, lives, dies and evaporates", never to be played again. The toys text the play.

In "My Life's Adventure" (Mit Livs Eventyr) he tells of the toys his father made for him, his moving pictures, his dolls' theatre and especially his peepshow (box with a lens and spy-hole) but everything was used as a toy, gained an identity and played a role and position, took part in long conversations and dialogues - and died at the end.

In "Only a Minstrel"(Kun en Spillemand), a spinning top ("a flower which dances") is buried. In "Cares and Woes" (Hjertesorg) a mop is buried and in "Little Ida's Flowers" (Den Lille Idas Blomster), dead flowers are buried. Next time the same game is played again it is a new game. Dolls, maids, soldiers and cavaliers are toys in Hans Christian's rich world of play and all the toys which can be bought for money are symbolised in the fairy tale "The Piggy Bank" (Pengegrisen). Even weapons are included in his tales as toys.

In "Five from a Pea Pod" (Fem fra en Ærtebælg), all five peas are shot out into life by a boy with a rifle and in "Little Ida's Flowers" (Den Lille Idas Blomster) the Norwegian cousins are meant to shoot their arrows over the coffin with flowers. The adult role (the father's) in the child's (Hans Christian's) imagination and play has definitely been significant - as indeed the adult role in play with the child always has been.

Non-fiction

Toys as ethnographic material are described by many authors, e.g. Gordon (1953), Daiken (1953), Murray (1968), Geist (1971), Fredlund (1973) and Hansen (1979).

White (1971) and the Danish Cultural Historical Museum Society "Heritage and Ownership" (Arv og Eje) analysed the historical development of toys and typified toys on the basis of culture and development. Hansen's account covers Greenland toys. Sigsgaard and Varnild (1982) cover antique toys compared to how we see modern toys.

As for non-fiction about modern toys, I have been inspired by my studies of the major works, including "Spielzeug" by Retter (1979) and "Toys as Culture" by Sutton-Smith (1986) with many references and sources and other works by the same authors in addition to long conversations with both authors and a long list of more recent articles and dissertations prepared by toy and play researchers in association with the ICCP (International Council for Children's Play) and the ITRA (International Toy Research Association).

My inspiration material has also included the toy manufacturers' many brochures produced over the years, toy advertising (from several media channels) and studies and observations of children's play with toys.

CHAPTER 5 THE TOY AS AN OBJECT

Toys and the person-at-play

The outer atmosphere and the universal environment contain 5 levels:
- Resource
- Technology
- Heredity
- Event
- Time
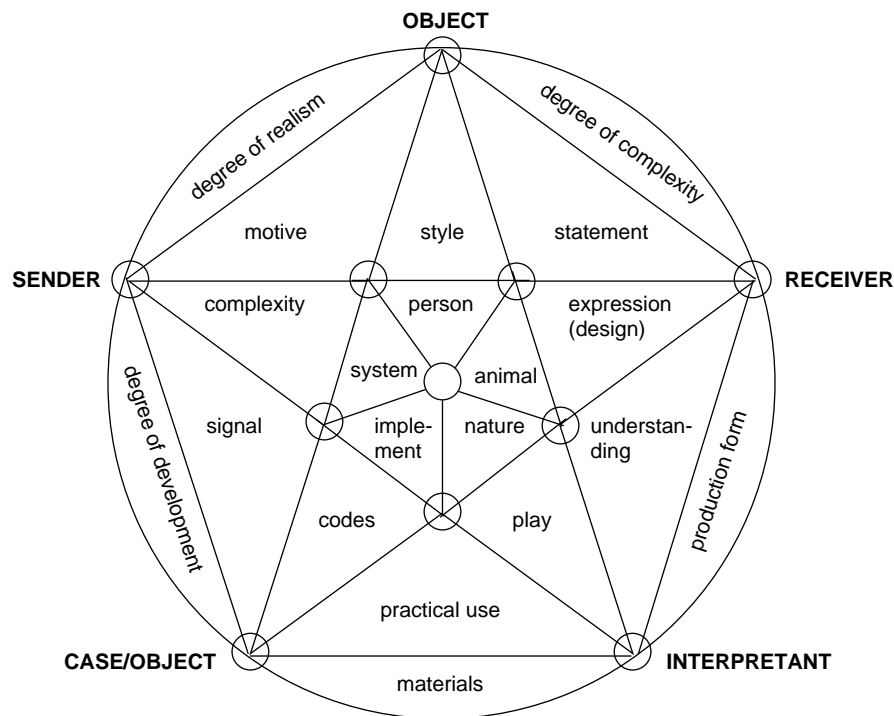
Explanation of the model:

Toy production is conditional on internal and external factors.

Beyond the production and play, there is AN EXTERNAL ATMOSPHERE AND A UNIVERSAL ENVIRONMENT.

The external factors are placed in the "shell" (circle in the model) within whose boundaries (in the eco-social environment) the process itself occurs.

The external factors include:

- TIME   (the historical period) in which it is produced

- HEREDITY   that which predates this particular toy's appearance
                          (object history)

- EVENT   (or special situation) which motivated its production

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- RESOURCES   the various materials available within the relevant geographic area

- TECHNOLOGY   (or lack of technology) used to produce it.

History

The modern toy stems back to the development of micro-science in Europe in the 17th century and to the opinion that the universe is not subject to "God's capricious and random will" but rather that it is a "functional machine".

If God can make the world function according to functional and mechanical laws, Mankind must be able to do the same on a smaller scale. Mankind ought to be able to create a miniature universe - a copy of God's blueprint.

For example, the French philosopher Descartes (1596-1650) wanted to make a machine which could move eternally to the honour of God, thus demonstrating the truth of both God's existence and the function of the universe.

With Copernicus' (1473-1546) new view of the Universe - that the Earth is only a small part of the universe and not its fulcrum - a new scientific and human ethos arose. Science, which until then had been comprehensive in its orientation, was now to become massively interested in fragments and the different parts of the human body, existence and life itself. Studies and descriptions of objects and fragments (e.g. maps and topography, lenses, light and prisms, internal human and animal organs, clocks, miniature machinery, etc.) were thus intensified.

The paintings of the Dutch painters Vermeer (1632-1675), Van Eyck and De Vries are superb examples of the era's concentration on the "micro space" which followed in the wake of "discoveries of the human body, the individual objects in the immediate vicinity and the universe immediately surrounding us".

Due to the new orientation of science, there was enormous interest in producing things and objects in miniature and exact models of machines and instruments.

It has since been established that inventiveness in this endeavour knew no limit. Interest, supply and demand were enormous - and has been ever since.

Particularly in Switzerland and Southern Germany, there were cottage industries which specialised in developing and manufacturing mechanical figures and objects in the form of toys. Interest in machines expanded and new life habits were introduced on the background of the interest and curiosity which these "gadgets", objects and toys excited.

Objects of curiosity

According to Philippe Aries' "The History of Childhood", the world of the child was changed for ever because the lonely world of the child was transformed to real curiosity and interest in the toys with which he was presented by his parents who were often equally inquisitive and interested in these toys which - in the most literal sense - were built "to play with"!

It became a life habit for the most progressive and development-conscious parents (at least those who could afford it and who were interested in their children's childhood, upbringing and development) to ensure that their children were introduced to an impressive gallery of significant and interesting objects. Curiosity about "new things" was shared by children and adults alike.

One of the major theories within modern psychology concerns the elemental principles which tempt and attract children and juveniles to examine and investigate the things and objects presented to them or to which for some reason or other their attention is drawn.

Berlyne (1960) theorises over such concepts as "novelty, complexity, description, conflict, uncertainty and surprise" which can motivate and stimulate real human curiosity and interest for things and objects. In a cunning way, Martin A. Hansen in his novel "The Liar" (Løgneren,1960) relates how the protagonist (a teacher) hones his pupils' curiosity, interest and concentration by showing them something covered with a cloth (a small model of a Greenland dog sledge, as it turns out) which he will reveal and tell them about - but only once they have worked for some time on other lessons in the classroom.

These (especially Berlyne's) theories about curiosity are possibly not entirely credible in their attempt to explain the background for "human curiosity" but they represent a rhetoric which tells us that toys or objects exercise their own power over children and that toys contain some innate principles which can partly explain the background for children's exploration and curiosity.

Most parents like to see their children show an interest in miniatures, interesting small copies and machines and to see them become adept at handling them. Metaphorically, it seems parents want their children to be good small copies or miniatures which play and work in accordance with internal, useful and positive laws - as the toys do. The toy itself is a model of independence - and the child becomes a model for an independent person.

This relationship between individual and object, between child and toy is an example of the power which is learning to master things through play.

One of the most influential theories about modern play (Erikson (1977)) is based on the idea that play is a form of control training through which the child hallucinates that he has "control" - which he has not yet mastered - but which

he will gain later if he continues to dominate things, if he plays that he has power over things.

This phenomenon could well be called "the Descartes syndrome" (Sutton-Smith coins the phrase (1985)). It is both the wish to create a self controlling machine and master it - and the fear that that the "thing" created might take control of one's own world so that both one's own and the creator's power and control will be lost. Very many parents have this attitude which manifests itself in the form of angst/fear of different media. It has also been expressed over the past two centuries first through the contents of fairy tales, pictures and books, later on cassette tapes, in comic strips, films, cartoons, on TV and video, computers and video games, in addition to many different toys and toy advertising for in particular mechanical cars, Barbie dolls, Masters of the Universe figures, Nintendo games, Bart Simpson and, most recently, for the Ninja Turtles and Power Rangers TV series and figures.

Many parents' angst is expressed as constant moaning about the media's making the children dependent on specific products. (TV gets the most blame - see chapter 7, influence of TV advertising).

Angst is psychologised through claims that children risk losing their "authenticity consciousness" when they play certain types of video games and electronic games and that they do not develop sufficient linguistic skills.

Paradoxically, this is a doubtful expression for a real belief in progress, development and knowledge for the benefit of the next generation. At the same time, many claims about the destructive effect of the media on children have never been proven, checked or tested.

Within the past couple of years, some examples of the claims have been identified, especially in research into toys with specific connection to TV programmes and advertising with a stereotype narrative content (Kline & Pentecost (1990), Kline (1993)).

On the one hand, parents in our culture want to bring their children up as *autonomous and independent individuals* which toys can help them to become. In this connection, Sutton-Smith (1984,b) describes a "conflict socialisation of the children on the strength of the toys the children want to play with but which their parents won't let them have". On the other hand, some parental groups would like to see their children achieve object control but the same parents have constructed their own *ritual of magical danger* in relation to the objects, the toys.

The children must therefore try to manoeuvre through their own play rituals with interesting, sometimes prohibited toys - or toys of which their parents are sceptical - whilst having to counterbalance their parents' notion that they are developing into helpless zombies.

Children emancipate themselves and express opposition in different ways, all of which are part of child "culture" and always have been. In earlier times, the

ways and expressions were clearer, more direct and appealed to the desire for greater personal freedom, free choice and independence.

This happens today too but nowadays it is more symbolic, e.g. motivated by children's wish for objects and toys to which their parents to some extent and for a wide variety of reasons take exception.

Toys as kitsch

In a particularly satirical tone, Freidell (1937) described how the petite bourgeoisie in the last century decked themselves out with the cheap, mass-produced imitations of the elite's, the aristocracy's trappings of power and taste in the form of papier mâché instead of rosewood, sheets of lead covered with chalk instead of marble, a palette knife instead of a Turkish cutlass, an ashtray as a Prussian helmet, etc. - tasteless reproductions of the "real", the original goods.

It was in the 1800s that the material conditions for the democratisation of access to goods were created. These material conditions have now become the characteristics of 20th century consumer society.

Imitation of "real" things brought with it a slow blurring of the identity, meaning and hierarchy of things. This was dissolution and an aesthetic freedom which both undermined the culture of the aristocracy and the elite but also contributed to its appreciation. The duplicity and the division between form and content, form and function - the fascination of the ostensible and the simulated as a kind of mask over things - is a clear example of the fact that the status of things is undergoing a transformation.

Increased buying power and new demands of culture will initially always give rise to copies of existing things before the traditional forms are broken and new forms, designs and customs become the norm.

In this way, things have a "life cycle", due to their becoming worn out, losing relevance, poor quality, losing value and going out of fashion. Fashion, therefore, becomes the emblem which is decisive for the relationship between new and old/antique, "in"/"out" - but fashion is also the force which can give things life.

In the construction of 20th century Western society, freedom has been largely measured and determined relative to the ability to acquire things. Beyond the purely material level, which usually goes beyond bare necessities, there is a further aesthetic demand connected to people's "taste", i.e. capacity to buy the "right" things, which is often determined by fashion.

"The extent to which one is able to buy what one wants is taken as the measure of how free the individual can feel. Not because what counts is owning specific things but because ownership and choosing to own or not to own, the feeling of being part of the enormous consuming organism is a

significant basis for the self-confidence and identity of the individual. There is an identity the social success of which is connected with the ability to handle things with taste, a social convention which implies a promise of freedom." (Christensen, 1993).

Toys are naturally subject to the same development as everything else, things, objects in the modern Western welfare society.

A great deal of modern toys can therefore be seen as kitsch, a natural product of industrialisation and urbanisation: Cheap mass produced imitations of *noble originals* or *playthings of the elite* and *stylish play objects* - and the only difference between kitsch and quality is "good or poor taste"! (Steenhold, 1994:32-39).

As it happens, the aesthetic and cultural standards for toys (like many other things) are founded in the demand for authenticity and good taste. A poor or artificial replacement for the real (always very much more expensive) thing is expressed as bad taste or lack of taste.

But the essence of kitsch (including kitsch toys) is, as Dorfles (1961:71) expressed it: *" a mixture of the ethical category with the aesthetic: The aim is a "pretty" piece of work and not a "good" one, because the most important aspect is the effect of beauty. Despite its often naturalistic character, despite the repeated use of realistic terminology, the world is shown not as it really is but as people would like to see it or as people fear it is."*

Kitsch toys are therefore to be found within a realistic universe but do not come directly from the ordinary everyday context. They are not social realistic. They are a prefabrication of an effect which is based on certainty, tried and tested, seen it before. They reiterate only the simplest "clichés" or forms which are easy to emulate. These forms are given universal value and the thing or object is sentimentalised.

The Barbie doll, Barbie's world, Belville, My Little Pony and (as a mixed blessing) Masters of the Universe and other monster toy concepts are the modern toys which come closest to the ideal of kitsch toys. Barbie is what people want her to be! Belville is the older girl's dream of the future! HeMan's universe is what people fear the world could turn into!

Old toys are also sentimentalised. Old (antique) toys which have an unbelievable position in toy collectors' consciousness can be described as kitsch when nostalgic and sentimental feelings are united, thus elevating otherwise worthless and useless things to fetishes, giving them enchanting or even magical abilities. (See later Winnicot).

Within psychoanalytical circles, such adoration of things-in-themselves, despite their being completely adrift and bereft of any form for real historical connection, has been given a meaning such that the toys have been identified as substitute phenomena - with the widespread opportunities for interpretation which this area has to offer.

The aesthetic dimension of the toy

Production of a toy can in many ways be compared to the artist's creative activity and the artistic product (Steenhold, 1994:32-39). However, as with all forms of creative activity, it is difficult to differentiate between art and craft. Both the artist, the craftsman, the toy maker and the child make demands on the thing - finely, soundly and thoroughly manufactured - which is meant to be played with.

As with so many other symbols and useful utensils in everyday life, the toy gains aesthetic dimensions. Aesthetic theory is a reasoned notion of what beauty is. The notion of what is beautiful is a definition of beauty and it is no secret that toys are often defined relative to beauty by both children and adults. For an object to be defined as beautiful, it is decisive that *aesthetically relevant aspects* can be identified. Beauty as a concept is generally tacit whilst aesthetically relevant aspects are concrete and sensuous.

Many readers will be acquainted with Platon's three basic values: beauty, truth and goodness - also called the Platonic triad.

The historical understanding of the realisation of this triad is that:

– *beauty* (which is created beautiful by the Creator!) must be confirmed by imitation (firstness)
– *truth* (which must confront untruth!) must be confirmed through *testing*, confrontation and struggle (secondness) and
– *goodness* (exemplary examples of tolerance, compassion and mercy) must be confirmed by demonstration as *harmonious action and mastery* (thirdness).

The elements of the triad suggest a trinity which can, however, be challenged. The problem is that life and existence do not confirm that beauty is *always* true and good or that truth and goodness are *always* noticeably beautiful.

This problem has given space for giving creative persons valuable freedom without having moral responsibility for what they have created. As Goethe (1739-1832) expresses it:

> *"A good work of Art can and certainly will have moral consequences but demanding of the artist that he make allowance for morality is to destroy his craft."*

Moral and religious demands have however always been made on both artists and craftsmen - and, as often heard coming from parents, these demands are still formulated today and now also include political, economic and ecological sanctions. The sanctions concern both content and formal character and are formulated both overtly and covertly. A toy maker however rarely thinks of these demands during the creative process itself.

The toy maker progresses though a creative process:

1. he carries out specific actions
2. he prepares or reshapes a specific material

The process has a specific duration. But this description is not complete because there is a third step which is equally important:

3. Intention or objective of the exercise: a clear idea of what is wanted and display of the will to realise it.

For the person-at-play, the toy is always one specific object in a world full of objects. It does not have to be differentiated from the rest by any special capacity but is differentiated by time and space. It will be attributed originality and special capacities, awakens interest and curiosity (usually through its being something new) in its own way. It will later be familiar, promote a feeling of security and will be a significant part of the whole. There is sufficient grounds here for stating that the object gives new cognition on the strength of *its own elementary beauty, its truth via its existence and its goodness, i.e. having good qualities.*

An aesthetic definition which can apply to toys in relation to beauty, truth and goodness must - as a minimum - include the following five conditions:

1. The definition must be universal and formulated as such.
2. The definition must be empirically relevant through its referring to practical examples.
3. It must be possible to use the definition deductively in order to support the intentional aspects behind the processes of detection, assimilation and creation.
4. It must be possible to use the definition inductively on the strength of the truth of the object's (for Man, universal) existence.
5. It must be possible to use the definition abductively with reference to the object's general utility and serviceability.

The manufactured dimension of the toy

A child's "naïve" manufacture of an object into a useful toy is one thing; the toy maker's craftsmanship, insight and traditions are another but industrial techniques are a third, completely different thing - because they are what makes today's toys "modern".

As with the artist and the inventor, the child's creative action is universal. The child's creativity is, however, subjected to child-romantic currents and theories about children's (and Mankind's) lost childhood and innocence because others take the liberty of assaulting something so basic as the production of "the instruments of the child and of childhood".

The attitude is often apparent and directs its attentions to a frontal assault on the large, multinational toy suppliers. The attitude is reminiscent of the saboteurs of the 17th century, who - for fear of losing the traditional methods and instruments of production and traditional markets, sabotaged the new machines instead of integrating them as alternatives - for the sake of the "case" rather than of the "element".

Quite another matter is that children are still producing the most incredible things within the category "toys" and will continue to do so as long as Mankind exists.

18th century and partly also 19th century enthusiasm for the craftsman as the saviour of the cultural norm and employment demonstrates the entire question of "ability and experience".

Ability and experience are put into objects and the person-at-play feels pleased about this. This is "a double transgression" - an amalgam of the concept of usefulness with something cult-like and a union of the artistic with the religious. Even now, at the end of this century, objects produced by craftsmen still enjoy greater prestige and sympathy than industrial products.

One of the most significant reasons for this is to be found in the role of the craftsman as a compromise between Art and industrial production.

Another very significant reason is that the craftsman and the artist - through close co-operation between them - are able to operate a form of industrial production of a limited number of original products without compromising the crafted identity of the products.

Many industrially produced objects (toys) fail to live up to the above-mentioned aesthetic definition: they are grossly ugly! They devaluate respect accorded to the original object. The reason for this is that they are devoid of artistry and intellect.

Technology's processes are international which means that products are the same everywhere. The national and regional characteristics of things disappear, thus making not only the world itself but also the world of play a smaller, stereotyped and limited place to be. Steamrollering the beauty and diversity of national cultures and styles vulgarises and impoverishes the true value of the objects and erases the necessary traditional historical and local historical value. Quite simply, it brings an end to social diversity and to the good story on its own merits.

A return to the child producing his own toys - which is a precondition for later co-operation between artist and craftsman - establishes conditions under which industrially produced toys might come to include the qualities described in this section.

The gender-specific appeal of toys and the set of toy attributes

Toys have appeal - and especially strongly to gender - such that many toys are designed and produced so that they emphasise some qualitative values connected to gender.

These values are also connected - figuratively - to the set of toy attributes.

A set of attributes is composed of the aspects or qualities which can be identified and utilised to characterise a specific toy.

The characterisation or interpretation of the attributes of a toy is undertaken naturally by the person-at-play/user in the following order:

∗ **VALUES**
∗ **SET OF ATTRIBUTES**
∗ **TOY/SIGN**
∗ **CHARACTERISTICS/INTERPRETATION**

It is therefore reasonable to describe how gender culture dominates the set of toy attributes so strongly - although in some cases the opposite is true!

This description of gender culture as a basis for toys' attributes is a general description motivated by some interesting descriptions of gender related by Sørensen (1990).

Gender culture is the way in which the toy appeals to the differences between girls and boys and simultaneously underlines these differences. The two sexes form different networks which have different meanings.

The most apparent and well-defined differences will be described here:

From infancy, girls seek to go together in twos, in close girl-to-girl relationships or dyads. The dyads are connected to larger cliques or clusters in any given group of girls, e.g. in a kindergarten or class at school.

Boys associate in more loosely structured groups, gangs or hordes.

Individually, children are gender conscious from around 18 months. In kindergarten gender cultures are formed in which girls and boys live in relatively separate worlds until they are 12-15 years old.

This doesn't mean that girls and boys don't play together because home, the supply of playmates and number/gender of brothers and sisters are influential factors. But the children are usually conscious about gender differences and cultures.

There is much foreign literature on this topic. In Denmark, there are only very few gender-based investigations of kindergarten children's grouping and

friendships which can give the development psychological discussion a gender-cultural dimension. See Hjort (1987), Kryger (1988), etc.

Girls' attributes

This will describe the girls' attributes which text toys.

Preschool girls - and girls' play
In Danish kindergartens we can observe how girls make "best friends" in very intimate girl-to-girl friendships.

Conflicts and drama threaten when there is a break up between best friends - and the unfortunate party ends up isolated outside the inner circle.

Sometimes the conflicts are visible but on other occasions it is more difficult for outsiders - well-meaning adults - to understand what is happening within these friendship patterns. The girls organise themselves within a flat structure without formal organisation or leadership.

Girls in kindergarten spend a lot of time discussing their internal relations, often whilst they are playing in the dolls' corner, playing role play and play with dolls (e.g. "mothers, fathers and babies", "doctors and nurses" and "hairdressers"):

These games are the type of play where the "recipe" and role list is a reflection of immediate social surroundings and of a direct and personal way of speaking to each other. The games are very much concentrated on caring and "taking care".

The most important aspect of the game is, however, staging and casting. This gives rise to a more or less camouflaged discussion of the participants' own situation and conditions and on mutual relations and conflicts within the girls' group.

The most coveted roles, the role of the all-powerful mother, the uncontrollable child or the clever dog are gained on the strength of the best arguments. These processes display and are used to select and demote the group's informal "leaders".

These gender patterns are founded in kindergarten and are continued, developed further and varied at school.

Girl-to-girl dyads and clusters
Girl-to-girl dyads and clusters are often formed around the fulcrum of one or several dominant girls.

The dominant girls act as informal leaders on the strength of more or less random qualities such as appearance, social status and/or cleverness.

These girls can attain a very despotic position because they and they alone decide which of the girls are allowed to "come in from the cold", to be close to the inner circle and accepted.

The same girls decide who is to be kept out in the cold, out on the periphery. But they also establish the level which is the norm for the entire group - what are the "in" interests, clothes and attitudes.

In positive cases, it is often the case that the central girls function more as spokeswomen or as a cushion for some of the weaker girls or for the girls' group. The other girls in the group are more equal because within girls' groups a lot of effort is spent on reaching agreement on fair decisions.

Amongst girls from 6-7 years there is already a gap between the informal (hidden) and decisive power on the one hand and the desire for a definite democratic consciousness on the other.

This means that older girls' and adult women's talk amongst themselves is concerned more often with internal democratic "rules of the game" and criteria for responsibility (e.g. tasks at work) than on hierarchical problems and organisation and leadership questions.

Verbalised culture - "chatterbox" culture
The girls' culture is an extremely verbalised one:

In school - it is expressed via what has been called "the girls' sub-openness" in the class. This is seen (or heard) as mutual talking in class beneath and parallel to the open/public teaching situation.

In the youngest classes, creative and verbal expression is emphasised and girls perform better than boys - even though the boys occupy the class and the teacher's attention with their very physical brashness.

The desire to speak develops girls' linguistic abilities so that they have an advantage over boys which is maintained until the senior classes.

Outside school - girls' relationships develop mainly through intimate communication in the girls' playrooms.

They talk about parents, teachers, playmates and other important relations and persons and about feelings, their bodies and their appearance.

Girls' mutual relationships are - as with the early mother-daughter/little girl relationship - reflective and discursive. They are built on mutual feelings (the speaker assumes the listener shares her feelings) and they often switch roles (speaker/listener).

In this way the girls are mirrors for each other because the most positive relationships and constructive alliances confirm mutual proximity and equality.

They give each other space for distance and for being different (and admire and support each other in this).

Girl-to-girl dyads can also develop negatively and become "infantile" when/if the two girls cling to each other in a claustrophobic and guilt-ridden enclosure.

Bedroom culture
Female (feminist) youth researchers, according to Bay & Drotner (1986) have described girls'/women's culture as a "bedroom culture" (usually from ten years and partly earlier).

By this we mean that the girls aesthetically stage their bodies and the room in which they spend most of their time. They do this in order to establish a common friendship identity which is different from the others' identities.

This is achieved by means of common (secret) symbols, the meaning of which is only known to close girl friends. A unique identity community is established which gives deep emotional satisfaction and confirmation. At the same time, this characterises the difference, distance and separation in the girls' relationship to their environment.

One characteristic of the bedroom culture is the sense of aesthetics. This sense is expressed in other spheres through pre-artistic activity in the form of handicrafts (knitting, sewing, etc.) and in imagery (poetry, writing stories, drawing, etc.).

Girls' culture is deeply rooted in a long female tradition which differs from one social class to another.

At the same time, the culture absorbs and integrates elements from modern media culture (TV series, girls' books/magazines, hero worship) and new forms of physical expression, e.g. youth cultures.

Girls' symbols
Helmut Hartwig (1985) who has studied the symbolic world of aesthetic and cultural practises among children and young people, makes the following general comment about the girls' symbol world:

− They typically choose living motifs from the natural world, e.g. plants, animals (especially horses) and special people or children with special talents.

− They focus on relations between figures in their symbol and fantasy world (adult/child, person/animal, boyfriends/love stories, etc.)

− They collect objects where the sense of touch/feeling can be a quality in itself (soft materials, etc.) and where the colours, forms and patterns are of great significance.

The girls' aesthetic expression can be characterised, therefore, as "the aesthetics of beauty" - a desire to create, produce (symbolically "to give birth to"!) something which can motivate to community, contact and closeness.

However, the aesthetics of beauty most often become *outward forms and ritual expressions* which can be seen as a replacement for something which the girl wants to harmonise and idealise but which she actually knows to be non-existent or unattainable.

This duplicity and contradiction in girls' aesthetics is also seen later in life both in the vast differences in women (as compared to men) and strong female potential (i.e. that girls' are seen to want to both demonstrate and seek beauty). However, innate in this dichotomy are hindrances and limitations (i.e. that some girls/women will succeed better than others and that the beautiful dreams are "maybe" both unattainable and unreal).

Horses
As a central symbol in female culture, the horse has quite special status. One only has to look at the commercial media culture of magazines, comic books, posters, badges, etc.

The classical explanation for this is that, through horse-worship, the girl acts out a dawning, latent sexuality which originated in her relationship to her specially dominant and directing mother and the very active form of lust associated to her.

The horse expresses the fullness and intensity of the original relationship as it is a strong but controllable force.

.. It might also be true just to say that girls simply like animals!

Model and fashion drawings
Another element in girls' aesthetics (also followed up on by commercial girls' culture) is the many model and fashion drawings which are supported by girls' magazines and fashion products generally.

Here too we find an expression of the girl's/woman's lust, this time as "exhibitionist decoration of the face and body". This can be regarded both as self-absorption and as a search for external confirmation of femininity's existence and importance and for an external measurement of its value.

Exclusive alliances
Girls' alliances are deeply serious and very exclusive.

They are only for the chosen few. The objective is to "stick together" while excluding all the others.

Such relationships between girl friends are just like the early mother-daughter relationship with its many deep contradictory emotions but, according to psychologists, it is also latently sexual. The girls' relationships revolve around

the theme: "to be loved/not to be loved" which is almost the same as "to be or not to be" (to live or not to live).

Friendship dramas
Exclusive alliances explain why there is serious drama when a dyad is threatened by a third party and a friendship triangle occurs. It also explains why a girl "pines" when she is deserted by a friend. The threat is always present and the girls always attempt to exorcise the threat by the use of external symbols, e.g. swapping friendship rings.

At the same time the girls guard and confirm each other by finding a common identity between them which outwardly contrasts the difference and marks the distance to the others.

The nature of such a common identity can take the form of adopting a style or an interest in horses, make-up, girl scouts, collecting, (later boys), etc., as a way to profile themselves for each other within their peer group.

Older girls (10-12 (15) years)
In the pre-puberty phase, sexuality increases.

When girl friends begin to show an interest in the boys in the neighbourhood, it is really still their common sexual (friendship) feelings and intimacy which motivates this and which is transferred to the opposite sex.

The romantic dream is a fixed ingredient of girls' friendships. It would however be limiting if we gave the impression that the romantic dream is just a naïve devotion to someone of the opposite sex or a withdrawal into a traditional female role (as the feminist lobby has often claimed).

The romantic dream also liberates other qualities. It is an incredible qualitative feminine drive which can both include high professional ambitions and desire for the fulfilment of strong existential ideas. In addition, the romantic dream represents fantasies about the future and what it might bring.

On the other hand, Sichtermann (1984) has put forward an interesting theory that the dream in the encounter with the opposite sex (the prince!) also represents an encounter with an unfamiliar side of oneself (symbolised by the prince's white horse!). With this, the vision of a double transformation of the entire personality (from poor little girl to adult princess with a personality structure which can handle a prince). I.e. that the girl is both the horse and the princess without which the prince cannot live as they are the be all and end all of being a prince.

Young adult girls
However, as mentioned, girl friends' common and different presentation and interpretation of the dream are significant and important. A significant part of the girls' friendships in the pre-puberty phase is the support the friendship can give in the rebellion against parents but especially against the mother. The rebellion deals with themes such as eating habits, personal hygiene, etc. and

these are conflicts which are resurrected from infant's symbiosis with the mother and which now resurface with new possibilities for release.

It is during this phase that some girls show signs of developing anorexia nervosa. In the same phase, girls reveal an entire repertoire of possibilities displayed as a violently strong appetite for life with little or no deference to accepted sexual norms.

There is therefore not much difference between the horse-loving girls and the make-up freaks - indeed it is very possible to be both, only not at the same time.

Attributes in girls' toys

Girls' key words
Most frequent terms used
∗ cute
∗ pretty
∗ soft
∗ "like Mummy"
∗ correct
∗ can be transformed (the magical)
∗ "in" (fashion - the older girls)
∗ dreams and hopes

Most popular symbols
∗ hearts
∗ bows
∗ stars
∗ clouds
∗ horses

Codes and concepts in girls' toys
∗ loving
∗ caring
∗ identification
∗ matches/goes together
∗ modern/"in"
∗ idyll/romanticism
∗ family fantasies and dreams

Boys' attributes

This will describe boys' attributes which text toys.

Boys' at kindergarten age - and boys' play

At the age of 3-4 years boys will not generally have formed a group. They are individuals on the periphery of the girls' group in kindergarten. They are more likely to play alone than girls, each with an instrument-like toy (cars, small instruments, construction set, construction toys, etc.) or they play motor play (cycling, riding carts, playing football, climbing, etc.).

Now and again boys are "allowed" to take part in the girls' circular and role play but in less glorious roles as Dad (at work), baby brother (asleep in his pram) or as a naughty dog (who has to stay in his basket).

Sometimes girls' select "favourite boys" who are accepted into their games. They are usually boys who understand and have the ability and experience to fall into step with the girls' role play and games.

Around the age of 5-6 years, boys begin to form groups around often extremely physical games which need many participants and a great deal of space. They are typically tribal/group games like cowboys and Indians, pirates, soldiers, cops and robbers, etc.

The theme of such games is winning and losing. Victory or defeat are clear and unmistakable. The game is also concerned with acting within or outside the law/norms (insiders and outsiders).

The games are clearly agreed and often organised in advance down to the smallest detail. The boys' games are verbalised only very little but can be noisy (some adults would say deafeningly so!).

Argumentation within the games is usually concerned with the definition of rights and duties which belong to the respective groups and roles: Do the police have the right to be brutal and hit criminals? Do the Indians always win? Can the sheriff get shot?, etc.

Manliness and quality
Over the past few years, new masculine literature within pedagogic research has appeared (see Sørensen (1990)).

Some of this literature illustrates boys' culture and masculinity from a critical, female and feminist perspective. This material also reflects an understanding of small boys' need to express themselves violently and noisily through aggressive play.

The literature supports the idea that the basic patterns of manly behaviour are constructed and differentiated in the kindergarten (3-6 years). See Kryger (1988).

In boys' play where manliness is investigated and strengthened, even the youngest boys give each other a number of "manhood tests", special physical actions.

In their play there is an internal hierarchy based on an external measurement (stronger than, bigger than, faster than, etc.). The biggest, fastest, strongest boys fight their way to a place as one of the leaders without much discussion whilst the smaller boys with special abilities or forms of expression (of the kind preferred by the leaders) are given a special place.

The boys who are almost as good as the leader - or who are able to introduce another masculine norm or possibly a norm of a more intellectual kind - present a constant challenge to the leadership.

Boys' hierarchy
In school, the hierarchical organisation of the boys' groups becomes more apparent, to the extent that it is often very obvious. A conspicuous leader is informally selected and he is always surrounded by this henchmen and a loyal flock of hangers-on, each with a separate role.

The hierarchy is accepted by all and there is space for everyone. The decisive factor for who gets which roles is a mutual measuring up of each other's achievements - and primarily physical achievements.

Later, the boys measure up their achievements within sports and hobbies which also serve to give the group adhesion. There is, however, still space in the group for the boys who have difficulty living up to these feats - if nothing else, as the group's mascot, clown, professor or similar.

Boys' community
Characteristic of the boys' community is that it is a action-oriented fellowship of interests, as opposed to the girls' emotion-oriented fellowship of identity.

The interests the boys have in common can be very varied. The boys also form smaller groups within the community based on special interests. These groups are often of a more instrumental and/or intellectual character.

Typical of these smaller groupings could be an interest in computers, a particular toy category, collections, etc.

Like girls, boys can sometimes form pairs in deep, intimate and emotionally important friendships. For boys, this type of relationship is typically built around a common interest and that it is an open, flexible arrangement with room for others and for several parallel friendships.

Through the boys' community, they explore and consolidate their masculinity. Boys' culture also includes a strong symbolic masculine identification. Hartwig (1980,1986) describes, for example, how the boys' multifarious aesthetic-cultural activities correspond to the girls'.

Boys also enjoy handicraft hobbies but there is a tradition of classical masculine pursuits e.g. woodwork, mechanics, engineering. They collect tools associated with that cultural tradition. In a more advanced form it represents a deep interest in experimenting and testing, discovering and inventing.

Technical interests, action and movement
Technical skills and technical instruments and objects (especially cars and aeroplanes) which represent action, speed and movement play a central role in the boys' world. When boys draw, for example, they construct the machines (cars, aeroplanes) and scenes (e.g. often battlefields) and they draw objects in motion or in a procession.

Boys' activities are characterised more by *action* than by talk, their motivations are *more instrumental* than emotional and their standards *more objective and rational* than aesthetic and moral. When boys present their arguments, the child who can argue clearly on the basis of criteria which those in authority have formulated and established as norms is most likely to be right.

Boys both identify with and challenge authority because it represents not only an aim for budding manhood but also bears the brunt of the urge to rebel. Boys fight many battles with teachers at school and outside school. They challenge authority with a whole gamut of activities bordering on the unlawful. In their rebellion there is, however, a desire to be part of the community.

Physique and girls
The boys' community is very physical and bodily but in a completely different way than the girls'. The boys' many physical activities give rise to close bodily contact between the participants. These physical activities, romps and fighting (for fun) establish a close connection between motivation and action - *for the boys **are** their bodies*.

For boys too, close physical contact during the pre-puberty period is of a sexual nature, bordering on the homosexual. These experiences correspond to their relationship with their fathers for which strongly conflicting emotions are characteristic.

At the same time (i.e. around puberty), the boy has a score to settle with his mother and with the femininity she represents. His activities are to a great extent both an approach and a retreat from his mother who he longs for and yet whose femininity he fears.

One of the means by which boys distance themselves (at puberty as well as much earlier) is to give priority to anything which expresses manhood and masculine values whilst denigrating any expression of femininity, anything "sissy" or womanly.

Around the age of 12-15 years, all this energy is directed at girls of the same age who the boys on the one hand attempt to dominate (or just to irritate) whilst on the other hand they are very fascinated by girls and dream about them. They are in a period of deep conflict with girls, categorising them either as harlots or madonnas.

Boys' romanticism
There is a romantic dream in the boys' world which is filled with heroism (victories) and sexuality (conquests).

The motivations are heroes and heroic deeds, idol worship and identification. Their heroes come from the sports world and from the world of film/video and even in some cases from the intellectual world in the form of historical heroes, the inventor who saves the world, the super-hacker, the master detective or the astronaut. Personal satisfaction via heroism and fame is central for boys.

All of this has naturally been analysed in modern psychology and anthropology, including the following example:

<u>The classical narrative</u> (modernised and varied to suit our world) is always a variation on the "*Prince on the White Charger*". He always leaves the security of his home and rides away from his mother and father. He travels the world (*a good, "proper" heroic action*) to slay a dragon and conquer evil, free the princess (*sexual experience*) and either conquer a kingdom - or persuade his father-in-law to give away half of his - (get a secure, stable and interesting job).

The three conquests give him (*the boy soon to become a man*) a very active and powerful position.

The princess reveals her seductive charms to him and chooses him (*he dreams - sexually and lustfully*). But his lust and love for the princess is held back (*girl and falling in love*).

This "holding back" is due to the fact that the entire pattern brings unromantic duties in the form of looking after the babies, household chores - like washing, cleaning, cooking, etc.).

As the hero with the "key" (the racing car, the space station, the owner of the "secret code" and the famous magic sword, etc.) and the knowledge of where things are leading, he cannot yet, however, expect suddenly to turn into an adult (*he is still only a boy*) via a sexual encounter with the opposite sex (*the princess*).

He is still the same - and has to wait for all these exciting things to happen - i.e. both sexuality and transformation (to adulthood) and getting an education. These dream encounters are more likely to result in a return to security (home to Mum) and to fulfilling expectations in peace and quiet (Dad's demands on him). There is a happy ending (to the dream) both psychologically and culturally.

Boys' fantasies and dreams vary in innumerable ways in stories in books, films and on TV.

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Boys' culture is both independent and autonomous of adult culture but very often also seriously in clinch with it. Boys' culture is visible (where the girls' culture is most often invisible).

Younger boys' play and activities are carried out where there is plenty of space and preferably challenges.

Older boys turn to clubs and organisations or go out into public spaces, like streets and squares to demonstrate their prowess - e.g. perform stunts on skateboards and roller blades or operate remote-controlled cars - and preferably in groups and often as a provocation to girls and adults.

Attributes of boys' toys

Boys' key words
Most frequent terms used
* strong
* can do something
* tough
* like Batman (or another hero)
* big
* can be completed
* in ("cool")
* strong identification figures

Most popular symbols
* cars
* guns
* aeroplanes
* tools
* strong men

Codes and concepts of boys' toys
* power
* strength
* independence
* vigour
* functionalism
* resilience
* hero fantasies and dreams

Gender-specific attributes and differences in toys

1. Girls are organised in girl-to-girl friendships (pairs and threesomes). Boys are organised within a "gang culture" and in group membership.

2. Girls display a community of identity. Boys display a community of interests.

3. Girls seek mutual confirmation in order to feel accepted. Boys seek mutual admiration and recognition in order to feel accepted.

4. Girls' organisation is not visible or is random in a "flatly" organised structure. Boys' organisation is open, visible, a hierarchy with rules.

5. The girls admire each other's personal, intimate qualities. The boys admire each other's personal performance qualities.

6. Girls are relationship and situation-oriented: For them the process is essential. Boys are action and case-oriented with the product as the central parameter.

7. Girls are speech and process-oriented. Boys are information and product-oriented.

8. Girls dream of transformation and acquisition. Boys dream of conquest and administration.

9. Girls appreciate the aesthetics of beauty whilst boys appreciate the aesthetics of victory.

10. The girls play in scenes and within limited areas. Boys play action and in unlimited areas.

CHAPTER 6 THE ROLES OF TOYS AND OF PLAY

As mentioned earlier, toys today are typically identified as commercially produced objects which children can play with. It is, however, difficult to distinguish between:

– toys as toys or instruments and children's play as play or
– children's play as a copy of something or other, e.g. as a ritual which is motivated by their parents' work.

Toys are also most often treated as if they have absolutely nothing at all to do with children's creativity and imagination.

It is often stated that toys even destroy children's imaginations, as mentioned in Barthes. In the meantime, play (in modern play research) is always regarded and described as the essence of creativity, e.g. Huizinga (1949), Caillois (1961) and Singer (1990).

Toys are charged either with being too realistic or for lacking similitude and adaptation functions.

Sutton-Smith investigates this contradiction between the roles of the toy and of play in "Toys as Culture" (1986) and presents four theses:

– toys within the family
– toys and development (the pedagogical aspects)
– toys and technology
– toys and the toy market

supplemented by a fifth:

– toys and Art

Sutton-Smith relates that both parents and children obtain toys on the basis of vastly different motivations. (also called "prepurchase factors".) The toy's use is exploited to the full, i.e. the consumer attributes utility values to the toy dependent on individual motivations which are conditional on personality, social condition and situations and opinions at the moment of purchase. In other words, when toys are purchased, ideological benefits are involved.

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IDEOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF PURCHASE

* IRRATIONAL
* USEFUL
* CHILDISH
* ASSUMING A ROLE/POSITION
* IMAGINATION
* IDEALISM
* INFORMATION
* IDENTIFICATION
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After the toy purchase, the owner of the toy defines the benefits more or less clearly or more or less consciously. The following eight ideologies or views (revisions) apply:

The irrational: Impulse buy, made without further thought as to why one bought the toy
The useful: what positive uses could be apportioned to the toy?
The childish: the toy provokes feelings for childhood and for being a child
Adopting a role/position: that the toy strengthens the role and position in a game but also that ownership of the toy gives the owner strength and power
Imagination: that the person who buys the toy allocates the toy imagined values, importance or simply that he is just plain satisfied by owning it
Idealism: That the toy meets the ideal requirements of the person who will play with it.
Information: That, on the strength of its presence, the toy can teach the user new and different ways in which to play.
Identification: That the person who plays with the toy "is or becomes" the toy or that the toy becomes a part of the owner's identity.

A toy can therefore be regarded differently according to the perspective from which it is seen: e.g. a toy as a gift brings family members together or is an instrument to promote development, is an automatic machine acting as an aid/useful object which is part of the normal pattern of consumer culture.

Dangerous fantasy and the urgency of reality

It is true to say that the concepts "fantasy" and "play"/"toy" are closely linked. It is equally true to say that not all children have the same capacity for fantasy and that some children suffer a complete lack of it.

While there is no doubt that play is an expression of fantasy, one thing more is certain: some of the myriad of toys which are used in play are not especially imaginative.

Many toys express a catastrophic lack of imagination, even though many toy manufacturers would claim that their products "stimulate the child's fantasy and encourage him to explore, experience and express his own world in a world without limitation." (Quoted from the LEGO Group's company concepts).

Other toy manufacturers do not claim any connection between fantasy and their particular toy products.

The concepts of fantasy and reality are in many ways opposite. Fantasy is e.g. fantasies, imaginary images, fiction, play, dreams, illusions, improvisation, etc.

Reality is e.g. facts, natural laws, documentation, conscious connections, the "known" world and "real" life.

Fantasy is expressed by making many and varied images of something new and alternative, things which do not (yet) exist, and things which are different than they are in reality.

Creativity is the ability to convert fantasy, thoughts and ideas into practise. This is why a person's creativity can only be confirmed through something concrete in the form of a tangible result or a product which can be evaluated.

(Two basic forms of fantasy)

THE CONCRETE		**THE ABSTRACT**
far from reality	**THE DIFFUSE**	far from reality
What is fantasy?	Imagination Images Fiction Dreams Illusions Improvisation	
close to reality		close to reality
------------------------------- BORDER -------------------------------		
What is reality?	**REALITY** Facts Natural laws Documentation Conscious connections "Real life" "The known world"	

There are 2 basic forms of fantasy:

– fantasy based on the concrete and
– fantasy based on the abstract.

Between these poles lies the world of the diffuse.

The concrete and the abstract are opposites because the concrete form is the clearest expression, a true copy, of reality while the abstract form is an abstraction of reality.

The concrete and the abstract can both be extremely close to reality and extremely far from reality. At the same time, a diffuse mix and transitional overlap between the concrete and the abstract can be the expression of both entertaining and grotesque forms.

Fantasy is, however, also real for the individual. In fact, it is a "conscious concept" because it exists in every person as a mental instrument for making images.

These images or imaginary pictures do not necessarily have much to do with reality - and most often don't.

Fantasy collects its themes from everyday reality. These include primarily the elementary existential themes (which are also elementary for the most basic of human instincts (lust and drive) which - at different, imaginary levels - are part of all play and games.

This covers:

Death - Life
restraint - freedom
loneliness - two/more people together
meaninglessness - meaningfulness
Evil - Good
wrong - right
ugliness - beauty
unloved - loved

The very visible and particularly urgent existential themes, both positive and negative, are:

peace, security, harmony, proximity, longing and
fear, attack, vandalism, violence, war and death

Within play, these themes are constantly experimented with and imagined. These themes are also used a fictive concepts and themes in literature, films and on TV as narrative elements and formulas which text, "feed" and stimulate play.

The themes - in the form of toys and the children's very obvious play with them - frighten and provoke a reaction from many parents.

Paradoxically, even though we try to minimise or remove "evil" and frightening things from reality, we introduce them in the form of fictive themes in the different media.

For example, aggressive play (not to be confused with "realistic aggression") uses especially the negative themes. For anyone observing the game, these often turn the action of play towards "evil", violence and anti-social behaviour.

Fantasy and play are therefore what we seek whenever we are afraid of reality or need to try out the exciting, interesting, good and evil things in the world or when we want to learn new things, gain new experiences with the elements of reality.

Using semiotic phraseology, we can say that life and the world can both be recognised and learned but we familiarise ourselves with the world through the signs and fictions we interpret it in.

Development of fantasy
In the same way as they go through a cultural development (see the section on "Play and Childhood Cultures"), children also go through fantasy development.

From birth to about 24 months, the child is fascinated by touching, imitating, copying, repeating, getting to know, controlling and mastering the basic functions and natural laws. The child does not fantasise but seeks to gain knowledge and understanding of the world at hand.

Once this is achieved, the child begins to make images about things, situations and episodes.

It is open to question whether the unbelievable energy the small child invests in all these basic activities can be called play at all. It might be more accurate to describe it as "hard work", according to Rijt & Plooij (1992).

Between the ages of two and three years, the child no longer tries to comprehend the timeless functions of body and objects but his experience and knowledge of these allow him - with his new-found autonomy - to make conscious choices, to evaluate the limits of the possible and the impossible, "the real" and "the unreal",

The child seeks to understand events in reality and learns that they can be categorised according to functions in everyday life. This experience forms the basis for the next important phase in the child's life: role play (from three or four years).

From 4-6 years, children play. All imaginable concrete functions of being are played via role or group play in which the social and fictive elements are central.

They act out episodes, visions and situations in order to confirm or refute possibility/impossibility. They experiment to find the limits between truth/untruth, real/unreal, fiction/realism, the motivation being everyday life, events and functions from the worlds of childhood, adulthood and the media. Anything can be converted to play, roles and functions.

The children's fantasy is concrete, "everyday imagination" which is played - literally "enacted" - in a narrative form.

From 6-7 years the children's recognition of the future forms and there are suddenly completely new imaginative perspectives and universes.

This recognition and these discoveries about life can be dreamed about and played with - and they can be dangerous because they contain strange and unfamiliar abstract perspectives and consequences. But they can also be a diffuse mix of all kinds of disparate things.

Until now, the child's being and play have been connected to his surroundings. Now a new world is revealed simultaneously on many levels:

The historical and the cultural become relevant in the form of a vast mixture of perspectives looking both back and forwards in time.

Consistent existential themes (the strong, urgent ones mentioned above) are no longer just stories and play but are also real - and worse still: they are no longer simple but can be graded, given different meanings and values, abstract and very diffuse.

Functions of reality and fantasy as utterance and interpretation
The functions mentioned above give the child the first unconscious recognition that these different types of functions can be manipulated and juggled in time, advanced and delayed as a kind of imaginary tale, account, story or image. Children recognise the possibilities inherent in the narrative.

Categorised stringently, these three basic types of function can be called:

- the chronicle functions
- the narrative functions
- the mystical functions

1. The chronicle functions are related (from birth) to the everyday time dimension and contribute to the child's updating the common events in everyday life, being fetched and carried, shopping, Mum and Dad's functions at home, bedtime, mealtimes, time for play, etc., so that the child is constantly aware of what is happening around him.

Later "news presentation" (talk and relating events) is added which again gives the child a framework for typical events in his everyday life and teaches him that understanding and interpretation of everyday events can be adjusted.

The child's conception of time can be described as "*everyday time and everyday life*".

2. The narrative functions - (from 2-3 years) involve a deeper collation of everyday events as they occur for the individual in comparison with others.

These are experiences, memories and encounters which are processed and related often in exciting and entertaining ways. They are longer stories, descriptions, ceremonies and ritual songs with which to a great extent the child is able to identify.

The child's recognition of time is called "remembered time and individual life".

3. In the mystical functions (from 5-6 years) the child attempts to create connections between everyday life situations and other events. These are partly events which are remembered, events which others have experienced or events the child sees in the media. Connections are preferably logical and causal explanations or alternatively legitimate and specially interesting (exciting, dangerous!) courses of action. Many of these actions are beyond the child's comprehension.

These functions include everything the child would like to but cannot understand. He seeks collectively acceptable interpretations, causal relations and explanations.

This type of recognition of time is called "*story time and collective recognition and life*".

Fantasy is therefore not a simple phenomenon because its content is communicated in many different ways.

The narratives, pieces of information and stories produced by the fantasy are a means of understanding things. They are motivated by the individual's basic instincts and his appetite for experiencing and recognising.

On the other hand, the many narratives about events and life functions are a way in which to find the shortcuts and imaginary journeys on which this appetite feeds in order to create meaning and interpretative patterns.

The many good stories in play and toys are just some of the ways in which we communicate, report and think.

Play and fantasy are the leitmotifs of life - two fantastically creative forces which reject the dark themes of death, meaninglessness, loneliness and constraint - and instead seek enlightenment, meaning and intention.

Play and childhood culture

The literature on childhood and children's culture is comprehensive and can be split into two fields:

1. The dilemma "adult play with children": The dilemma and discussion of adults' play with children is concerned with the question: How far does the adult intervene or supplement the child by playing with him, by acting as play manager or simply by trying to participate in the game?

2. Studies and research into the optimum conditions for fulfilment of the basic needs of play and well-being for the individual child for the family and for society (called Environmental Research, Social Ecology and Eco-pedagogical Studies).

The dilemma and discussion about environmental conditions is concerned with maintaining conditions for well-being and conditions within human society and co-operation in relation to the natural conditions for this.

Opinions about both fields (and the many variations within them) can be identified by giving a brief description of the *three historical directions* within toy research as an example of the influence of parental attitudes in this sphere.

These historical directions are:

1. functionalism and
2. critique of functionalism
3. play and childhood culture movement (including play and phases in children's cultural development)

(1. and 2. will be described together)

Functionalism, critique and research
Functionalism indicates that it is important that adults play with the child for the benefit of the child's development.

This belief is held by a number of representatives who view the problem from both cultural and ecological perspectives. The particular aims, outlook and philosophy of the individual researcher form the background for what he/she sees as the most important aspects of child development.

Representational ability, problem solving and cognitive style: Here represented by a variety of researchers including (among others) Berlyne, Piaget and Bruner, Christie & Johnsen. *Environmental research literature and inspiration* is represented by Lull (1980), Bonfadelli (1981), Pellegrini & Yawkey (1984), Gottfried (1984, 1985) and Fein (1981, 1985), etc. *Ecological stimulation* is covered particularly by Bronfenbrenner and the German school of thought: Spanhel, Retter and Zacharias, etc.

The critique of functionalism is in a way a part of functionalism. It refutes the idea that adults should become involved in children's play. The critique is based on a wide variety of attitudes and pre-dispositions.

The idea is that the child's world is unique and irrepressable. The critique is most clearly represented by Aries (1962) who takes the child out of society and describes the child's special history within history. He describes how sport, play areas, toys and TV programmes have developed so that the adult is able to control and restrain the child's play and target his activities to fit into modern society.

Foccault (1973) also criticises functionalism:

He describes functionalism as inhuman and positivistic (without ever really raising the question of how and why adults want to stimulate children through play!!)

A common trait in the research directions within critique of functionalism is an underlining of the importance *of research into childhood generally*, including research into children's play and their development independent of adult influence.

Where Environment Research is concerned, the usual, general attitude is that play with things and objects is connected to the "play environment".

Environment Research claims that the eco-social and socio-cultural environment contains some specific limitations which together form a selection of images of events which can influence the child's understanding of the meaning and content of these events. The claim rests on the assumption that when a child plays with a toy, the child is locked either into

– the toy's capacity to stimulate, or
– previously gained experience of the play environment

because the user - due to the limited function of the toy - is forced through discipline to accept the toy's limiting message (which is often to treat the child as if he were an idiot).

Both the environment and object world in everyday life are so familiar and so close to the child but the adults often neglect their importance, regard them as obvious or even accredit them with no importance or value at all.

For example, small corners in houses, parks, spaces, bags, cardboard boxes, paper, used packaging and many other things which may seem like totally worthless environments or objects become particularly useful and valuable when seen in relation to the many ways children can find to use them in play.

Children utilise these things by processing, experimenting, investigating and interpreting - which incidentally is how the human being has come to terms with his environment over thousands of years. Long ago the human being discovered how to find purpose and to interpret the oh-so-transient world of objects and nature.

Unfortunately, it is no longer true to state that we can do this for everything around us. Therefore, other situations, objects and fragments have to compensate for the loss!

An environment contains specific limitations which together form *a selection of images of events which can influence the child's understanding of the meaning and content of these events.* In allowing a child to investigate his immediate surroundings, we give him a chance to form images of the world around him.

Play and the Child Culture Movement
This is a playful culture in an exchange between children and adults. This research direction rejects functionalism and its critique as one-sided!

According to Kelly-Burne (1989), what is important is not only giving the child competence through play and ensuring adult power and control over the child but also enabling children and adults together to change modern adult culture so that the mutual adaptation processes give both children and adult social competence.

Cross-cultural, and in particular social anthropological, studies and data are used to illustrate the cultural changes - especially in relation to the importance of play for and between adults and children.

For example, Huizinga states that culture is play. In many ways, "homo ludens" is the theoretical basis for this play-cultural research direction but the dilemmas between child and adult play are not resolved unless they are observed in a broader cultural perspective.

The question of whether there is a special or specific play culture which belongs exclusively to the child and in which adults are incapable of participating is one of the central problems in play research.

Mouritsen (1990) states that when attention is paid to culture for children, the interest focuses on:

a) culture produced for children and
b) culture produced with children and
c) culture produced by children

Where c) is concerned, studies are insufficient and enjoy relative obscurity. Paradoxically they represent the most important work because children do produce and communication a comprehensive culture and a multitude of cultural expressions through play, narrative, nursery rhymes and verse, etc., which we may call "play culture".

This culture is of course a central part of their lives. Culture produced by children communicates (in an oral network between children) and exists on the strength of active practise through which children inconspicuously attain

qualifications which are the basis for many learning processes as well as social and cultural activities.

With reference to e.g. the literature on collection and registration of older play and games (Antiquarianism), the attention paid to children's consciousness and their understanding of reality - and their open and closed communication of this - is increasing. There is some hope for a corresponding increase in respect for play culture and for integration of play culture into the greater cultural panorama.

Play and the phases in children's cultural development

Research within pedagogical and developmental psychology is visible by virtue of the sheer numbers of theories about play. Such theories are also oriented towards the prevention of malfunction in children. This applies particularly to theories in developmental psychology dealing with the phases of child development.

Unfortunately, children's incredible, constant and playful experimentation with texts and contexts in their social lives is often misinterpreted because the sole motivation for research has been theories for locating flaws in different phases of children's creative, cognitive or psychological development.

Where the phases of children's *cultural development* which they reveal through cultural expression, e.g. in their "*play life*" are concerned, the story is a completely different one.

Children's manipulation with objects (including toys), their aesthetic and social forms for expression etc. on the basis of a conscious distinction between real situations and fictional spheres, is under constant *cultural development.* The way in which children try to adapt to new recognition, their consciousness of what is real and what is imaginary, their experiments and testing of the value and importance of opinions/things are naturally included in play.

Play is therefore not only a contributory factor in creating new recognition but also in creating serious and sometimes painful crises and ruptures.

From the age of three, children are aware that *play* belongs *to themselves* because there is a kind of specific difference between adults and children but also because play permits them to manipulate and experiment with individual and social competence. Throughout childhood, this is expressed in many linguistic, bodily and social experiments in play partly as:

– fictive content, "tomfoolery", sounds and rhythmic squealing, rough-and-tumble, etc., and partly with
– real thematic content, circumstances in daily social life, scenes and parodies of these, etc.

Children's play lives and childhood are the opposite of adult life and adulthood. Play (in all its aspects) is what is *meaningful for children in childhood* while children (their upbringing, socialisation, cultivation to culture) are an expression of what is *meaningful for adults in adulthood*! Generally, children are communicative and conscious of this from about the age of three years.

To summarise children's cultural development

- <u>From 12 months old and onwards</u> the child achieves greater and greater competence relative to his surroundings. This is achieved with the help of touch, imitation, mimicry and repetition through which he learns to recognise/control/master things and situations in his surroundings.

  The small child works hard - literally - to achieve an understanding of the world around him, his immediate surroundings and the many functions found there.

- <u>From the age of 2-3 years</u> play is parallel, egoistic and egocentric but becomes gradually oriented towards others. The child gains autonomy or self-recognition. He experiments and tests his conscious choices, discovers for himself the limits between possible/impossible, real/unreal.

  The child seeks an understanding of the "realistic", an understanding of real life.

- <u>From the age of 3-5 years</u> children play together and gradually achieve social insight and understanding for each other's possibilities within play.

  There are variations in role and group play. There is also play with visions and fictions on a realistic foundation where all imaginable possible and impossible situations are tested out. During this phase, children gain knowledge about the limits between true/false, right/wrong, etc. (i.e. basic ethical and existential values) *on the basis of the concrete aspects of their own lives.*

  <u>Apart from play</u>, the children communicate the world of their recognition and fantasy which they experience through the fictive content of play ("tomfoolery", sounds and rhythmic squealing, rough-and-tumble, etc.) and the real thematic content of play (circumstances in daily social life, scenes and parodies of these, etc.) in drawings - a sign language is both symbolic and realistic.

<u>Before the age of 5-6</u>, the child has experienced and communicated three significant cultural transitions through play and drawings:

From <u>recognition of his environment</u> to <u>egocentric awareness</u> to <u>social awareness</u>.

One special cultural transition (and possibly the most significant breakthrough in childhood's play life) which is more important and vastly different from the transitions of developmental psychology and which is also included in the above-mentioned transitions, is the transition to consciousness of possessing *literacy*.

Literacy changes the child's mental, physical, social and cultural recognition so completely that the meaning for the child of playing and drawing (and of communication by drawing) changes character.

Children are illiterate until they are 10-12 years old - i.e. until literary culture is achieved.

The language of literary culture is different from the spoken word and the child gradually recognises that adults rate the symbolic value of the written word higher than "children's talk" and "nice drawings".

From having been direct, spontaneous and imaginative, the child's play life becomes cultural, by which I mean that "oral cultural manifestations" as characteristics of play are replaced by "written cultural relativities", as Mouritsen (1990) expresses it.

Language characterised by oral cultural manifestations is dependent on situations and contains analogue imagery or visible metaphorical expressions.

By contrast, language characterised by written cultural relativity is abstract and contains digital concepts.

The special attributes and originality of the child's play life disappear gradually along with the unbelievable qualities this represents. The transition changes the nature of the child's play as many children cease to play childishly, stop singing spontaneously, stop drawing, cutting and sticking, painting and fantasising randomly, etc. (This is also why this book concentrates on toys and play of the 4-10 year olds and their families.)

The cultural toy

I.e. the cultural toy's character role and effects.

Sutton-Smith uses four theses to explain why toys can be described as cultural because toys have functions which promote socialisation, learning, development, character development and commercial aspects. The four theses outline the character roles of toys:

- *The external character role*
   (where the toy as an object forms its own effect/result on the child)

- *The functional character role*

(where the effects or results are useful in human adaptation to new life conditions)

The speculations and consideration above are some of the explanations which control everyday logic in the Western world.

The explanations express positive thinking and a belief that the character of any - haphazardly chosen - toy in play becomes inscribed on the blackboard which is a child's mind and can contribute to the child's behaviour (and attitudes) in accordance with that toy's stimulating characteristics.

This belief or line of thought has been documented during the last couple of years. We will mention just some of the most interesting examples:

In a study of war toys (as opposed to weapons generally) where it has most often been assumed that the character of these toys would necessarily provoke violent action, Sutton-Smith (1986,b) points out that this is the case with children from extremely exposed social environments.

For many years, pedagogical staff and parents using the methods and principles of Waldorf pedagogical teaching in child raising pointed out (as did Barthes (1972)) that modern plastic toys as replacements for natural materials will suppress the child's recognition of natural materials. It turns out that this is in fact the case but only if the child is given the opportunity to play only with plastic toys.

Kline & Pentecost (1990) proved the effect or impact of stereotype toy advertising on the behaviour and attitudes of socially weak children and deserves therefore to be mentioned again here.

Eisen (1988) explains how small children in concentration camps who had limited play behaviour and angst for experience suffered deep psychological damage from the traumatic experiences there. Eisen (1992) proves also, by means of neurological examinations, that the child's endocrine system (inner secretions and even hormone balance) is affected by certain types of play behaviour.

These examples contribute to creating myths, dark thoughts and gloomy predictions about the future of childhood but can also open up for totally new positive perspectives in toy and play research and in the development and production of new and better toys.

Toys' creative meaning

In the meantime, there are many alternative explanations indicating that the creative meaning of toys is more important than their deterministic meaning. While playing down the aspect of the way in which the toy "forms" the child, these explanations emphasise that toys are independent of the crucial

development factors and yet can still meet the child's previously existing, individual demands.

In psychoanalysis, the traditional attitude to toys is as projection phenomena which can be deciphered by the therapist, allowing him to interpret the child's innermost feelings and conflicts. From these suggested interpretations, diagnostic instructions have been developed, explaining how play and play therapy can be practised. These well-play instructions have been used by many therapists in children's hospitals and clinics over many years and the use of "therapeutic toys" is furthermore one of the most striking developments in the institutionalisation of play this century.

Toys are thus apportioned an adaptive objective in the child's life and the toys will always be apportioned an adaptive role regardless of whether the toy is introduced as:

- a compensation for inferiority
- a kind of consolation for a worried person
  or
- a "thing" which can ease or mitigate conflicts in marginal situations in the child's life
- an aid to coping and carrying on or
- a model for future rituals

A child's world picture

A child's picture of the world generally falls into two elementary categories:

- *freedom and/or coercion*

and their play with objects can be texted as

- *instrumental/functional and/or symbolically functional*.

There are two strong traditions of play in modern technological society of the 1990s. They are based on almost identical attitudes to play and toys and supported by the functionalist belief that toys **are** important for child development.

In modern society the child has two positions - which we can call two pictures of the world - which are most often fragmented and different, i.e.:

Free time which is either a) complete freedom to do/play with anything he chooses or b) a child care facility outside the home where all too often far too many things are organised for the child.

School life which for many children holds the prospect of further education and which is organised most frequently in fixed and inflexible timetables with very structured content.

We see *pastimes/hobbies*, play and free fantasy on the one side and, on the other, demands, duties, schematic learning in an organised form (where even free time is organised for many children).

The one requires freedom
Fantasy, reproduction, unlimited possibilities and manipulation with bought or self-invented toys, things and worthless objects, props and instruments. They require creativity, good playmates, sufficient space and time, impulses from the immediate surroundings and from everyday life and the opportunity to experiment and explore.

The other dictates requirements
for learning and discipline administered to the children by means of important and prestigious dictates. These dictates enjoy society's attention and admiration.

It also includes the entire toy market's traditional discount supply which always includes the most stereotyped selection of the kind of toy whose effects are "canned entertainment" and simplification of activities. These fit in well with the pattern of modern society's dominant cultural categories and the toy companies' promoting supply and selection of several different products.

Two completely different ways in which to approach life and two different traditions = two different world pictures.

Both traditions are based on ordinary functionalist attitude to play but also on a critical opinion of it. As mentioned earlier, pedagogical and psychological toy research claims that the human being has a "primary imitation instinct" which is expressed through *creative and inventive reproduction* and by *imitating and* even *parodying* the immediate surroundings.

These two significant elementary forms of expression are demonstrated in play with toys within the life which contains both world pictures - but the question is "how far is this to the detriment of both world pictures?"

Apart from being instrumental, a toy as an object, a message containing "a case or something meaningful" can also be symbolic:

– _Instrumental_ where the toy is used functionally:

1. In history: as an copy/instrument to facilitate mimicry of the activities of everyday life

2. Today: as an instrument of learning. Parents expect the child to learn through play or simply as an instrument to pass the time

– _Symbolic_ where the toy gains a ritualistic meaning through its being used:

1. As in history, on special/ceremonial occasions and festivals, or

2. In the child's own personal, closed world of play and fantasy.

We must consider which of the two play traditions and which of the two attitudes to the function of toys we ought to give most influence. Both are of fundamental importance to the child's understanding of play and life, the development of his personality and the way he sees society.

Both have meaning for the child's "world pictures" - but they will cease to do so of there is no time or space for creative play, fantasy and reproduction, experimentation, exploration and symbolic manipulation.

The following tables illustrate five "spheres" between free areas, freedom and school life and the symbolic functions and instruments connected with these.

1.

FAMILY *controlled by both children and parents* – commitment – upbringing – controlled by actions – being together with parents/adults – age/gender partially insignificant – dynamic/static environment	mealtimes "putting your feet up" TV/video computer holidays/outings play/games/toys family games family hobbies

2.

THE INSTITUTION/SCHOOL *controlled by parents/teachers (children??)* – upbringing – socialisation/civilisation – controlled by norms and rules – being together with other children – split on age and gender – dynamic/static environment – national culture	topics and disciplines

3.

DEVELOPMENT AND FREE TIME *controlled by parents and teachers (children??)* – controlled alone or with parents – accordance with topic – controlled by principles/rules – development – abilities – connected to age/gender – predetermined and ideological environment – national and/or international culture and a regulated lifestyle	music art sport clubs/centres riding scouts etc.

4.

FREE TIME AND PLAY WITH OTHERS *controlled by mutual experiences* – play with others – socially and hierarchical roles – connected to age/gender – social limitations – unpredictable entertainment/chaos	entertainment competitions accessories consumerism sex experiments "dangerous" games toys/props

5.

FREE TIME AND PLAY ALONE *controlled by individual experiences* – play alone – independent role – decided by the child himself – no time limits – decided by surroundings/environment – decided by lifestyle and milieu	toys accessories collections books/comics drawing/painting music tools TV/video video games experiment

CHAPTER 7 EVALUATION CRITERIA

As a background for analyses and evaluation of the toys mentioned in this book's research, the following perspectives are examined:

Objectivity criteria
Positioning
Declarations
Toy advertising

Objectivity criteria

Attempting to formulate objective criteria for evaluating toys has always been a difficult task. The integrity or falsity of the objective moment is built on individual attitudes to those aspects of the toy the individual observer finds interesting.

In addition, play with a toy is always subject to shifting conditions and different situations which makes so-called objective evaluation questionable. If the observer's personal and unique attitudes did not make finding the core values of a given toy so difficult, evaluating toys would be a simpler task. Attitudes and approaches to a toy can be coloured by:

− a lack of knowledge and insight
− personal taste and approach ("fashion"- colour and shape)
− value norms relative to the object's meaning in the game (religious or ideological)
− material approach (wood or plastic) - approach to "fashion" or zeitgeist (anti-consumerism, ecology conscious)

"Test" and "evaluation" are problematic concepts as there are many different theoretical and dogmatic attitudes to toys within toy research.

These include:

− one-sided naturalistic (as in the Waldorf philosophy)
− Puritanism (few, simple toys - as in the anti-consumerism movement)
− activity ideology (as in Montessori methods of education)
− anti-capitalism (as in Marxist methods of education).

Over the last few years, these - along with the dogmatic attitude to toys - have been the subject of strong criticism.

The critique was initiated, strongly and ironically, by Bittner (1978:228-241) and Retter (1979:61-69). They state that "play criticism" might just as well adopt the same attitudes as culture criticism when it evaluates books, theatre

performances, music, etc. because it goes without saying that dogmatic and ideological observations of children's play can never be objective.

Within the sphere of institutionalised pedagogical and developmental psychology (especially in day nurseries and kindergartens), there is similarly a very one-dimensional evaluation of what is "a good toy": It must preferably be described as "motivating to play, encouraging dynamic and happy play" if it is to be purchased by such institutions.

Almqvist (1992) points out that, when evaluating toys, Swedish educational staff consciously and unconsciously choose, reject and purchase particular types of toys of a kind which entails their deciding and directing the games the children can play with them and thus indirectly imprinting/indoctrinating the children by limiting their play/activities. Some researchers even plead for the right to do this, especially Olofsson (1989,1991).

Using the same logic, Kluge (1985:19-23) suggests that every toy ought to be given a "play definition" so that one can see what kind of games can be played with it. Retter (1979:67) suggests that toys ought to be subject to censorship based on "efficiency and importance in play".

If it is at all possible to formulate objective criteria for evaluating toys, Einsiedler made an attempt (1990:163):

– observations with several subsequent checks
– development of object-specific observation categories and evaluation scales
– comparison of toy product directions (or instructions for use) for different age groups in order to evaluate the group's abilities for play, their needs and experiences with the toy
– comparison of play observations (children, time/space, situation)
– publication of observation results and evaluation scales
– separate comparisons of toy descriptions and characteristics in order to evaluate observation results

Positioning

The term "positioning" refers to the toy's *position* on the toy market *relative to* competitors and consumers. In the context of this book, we refer in particular to the consumer attitudes to the different toy products.

Questions about a toy's position can be formulated:

– Where is the toy on the toy market?
– What is the toy's position relative to similar toys and measured on a number of evaluation criteria?
– What kind of cognitive, emotional and action-oriented opinion does the consumer have of the toy?

Using these questions, a toy's position can be evaluated by measuring consumer perception and preferences for the toy relative to its competitors.

The relevance of "positioning" as a concept is founded on theories dealing partly with the consumers' (children's) spontaneous opinions and feelings for the toy and partly with the consumer interpretations of the toy. More about this in Parts 5 and 6.

Since 1961, Mieskes and Klinke (HdS 1:387:431) have run a centre at the University of Giesen in Germany where they conduct research into and test toys and play with toys and relationships between toy products. (Positioning analyses are today mostly carried out by analysis institutes all over the world, guided by the toy industry's own analysis experts.)

For several years, the centre at Giesen was the HQ for classical German academic toy research, based on traditional German scientific/theoretical thought, experiences from the German toy industry and modern technical and scientific analysis methods as used in today's German toy industry.

As such, toys have been narrowly described because the researchers have used terms such as "play material" and "pedagogical objects".

The research has been motivated by control of toys, materials, teaching material and objects and sees them in relation to play programmes and curricula.

The research is undertaken as field studies in play and teaching, partly as more comprehensive research projects. German toy manufacturers use the centre to test and evaluate pedagogical products.

They achieve this by:

− having clear objectives and intentions for the evaluations
− comparing these with the consumer's stage of development and social level
− through this, it is possible to measure the quality and function of the products and thus
− to verify them in relation to play programmes and curricula.

According to Mieskes (HdS, 1:399-400), many parameters are evaluated including:

− *anthropological and historical research* (the toy in relation to historical and social development)
− *empirical elementary research* (the toy seen on the basis of scientific and developmental tests/experiments)
− *"on-going" research, detailed investigation* (the toy in connection with more specific spheres, e.g. reading programmes, war toys, the specific significance and influence of certain systems, etc.)

- *product development research* (which can include specific products from specific brands)
- *market research* (toy development from idea to reality in relation to supply and demand, etc.)
- *consumer research and marketing analysis* (the population's attitude to and opinions of certain products, e.g. parental opinions of general/specific products)

Within each of these different research areas, Mieskes and Klinke list innumerable dispositions and models for the research processes.

Even though they list many extremely useful analysis methods, there is one aspect re toys and consumers they omit to mention, i.e. declarations and conventions for/about toys and opportunities for children's moral development through toys and play with toys.

Consumers' and diverse social groups' spontaneous opinions of toys can be registered as part of consumer and marketing analysis but no good advice or instruction on the toy's importance for moral development is given.

Declarations

Many researchers (especially Einsiedler (1990:123-139) and Kline (1993)) discuss declarations in relation to play and rules.

There is also earlier research in this area: George H. Mead (1968) and Kohlberg (1974), etc.

More recent research in this area (including Smetana (1981:1336), Christie & Johnsen (1985) and especially Arsenio (1988:1611-1622)) covers children's moral development in relation to attitudes to breaking rules and conventions in play. It is therefore important to take this aspect into account when evaluating toys' significance for the child's development through play (says Einsiedler). He lists eight points for evaluating toys including declarations. In the same way as UNESCO has declarations on teaching and literature, there ought to be useful declarations about toys and play.

In Europe there are approximately 2500 toy manufacturers and factories, producing and distributing a colossal variety of products.

Idealistic and humanist manufacturers who work with responsible product development and who demonstrate real responsibility in their work, are powerless in the face of cynical competitors who distribute products which are poor/dangerous in terms of product development and which can communicate "dehumanist" or destructive attitudes.

A basic declaration about toys formulated in connection with the research for this book stated:

1. A toy may not adversely exploit a child's natural credulity or a young person's lack of experience, nor may it abuse their loyalties.

2. A toy must not contain utterances or any visual form which might cause psychological, moral or physical damage to a child/young person.

We can of course also distinguish between:

− traditional toys and
− "craze" toys

and between

− activity materials (hobby materials) and
− teaching material and learning aids.

Good toys and good instruments are important elements in stimulating children's growth and development and therefore the development of good toys is important. The intention of ordinary development of good toys is:

− to manifest the toy's ordinary play concepts and
− to strengthen general knowledge and consciousness of toys and play with toys.

These intentions are manifested through:

− describing the thoughts and mechanisms the toy encourages in the child
− adding knowledge about the toy and its significance for play and development generally
− indicating the incredible existential values and qualities which the individual toy can bring to the play and the life of the child.

If a toy is particularly well-suited for use as teaching material or if it can be characterised as a good "learning aid", it can, according to Retter(1984), be classified as:

− role play, social-emotional play and play types
− types of games with rules
− constructions, system toys and units (gestalt forms)
− types of learning games as methodical/didactic material
− picture books, educational texts, games as learning tasks, professional literature

Today, several of these types of games can (apart from being traditional) also be technological and electronic. In their original form, toys are copies of adult instruments.

Useful toy copies of newly developed technological and electronic instruments and tools will always be made - and technological and electronic toys can be both a toy and a learning aid.

Many of the new technological and electronic toys are however "craze" toys with a short lifetime - a parallel to the situation in industry which is constantly developing new and better technological and electronic instruments as a supplement or replacement for existing ones.

The investigations in this book will give an unequivocal recognition of respect for technological and electronic toys by indicating the areas in which these toys can contribute qualitatively to children's lives and play in many different ways.

The book takes issue against:

manufacturers who produce electronic games and technical toys which flagrantly breach the principles of the UN Declaration of Human Rights by designing and constructing games that degrade and humiliate people on grounds of their sex, race or culture.

One particularly vulnerable group - socially very isolated children in certain types of families - do not develop sufficient linguistic skills due to a monotonous and exaggerated use of video/technological games. Several scientific investigations have found that there are now children with problems of this kind only in the West. There are only small numbers of such children and they were vulnerable from the start.

Toy advertising

Another greater problem is also apparent in this connection and this is the question of children's "consciousness of authenticity" when faced with toy advertising and technological/electronic toys and games.

When toys (which have to communicate play and imagination) and when play and games (as imaginative simulations of reality) also have to be good things to play with, the following questions are relevant:

1. Children must learn to distinguish between authenticity and illusion. How do children process reality through toys?

2. Despite the distortion of reality through toys, children have an unbelievable ability for finding and seeing "the truth"!

3. Children must learn how to deal with advertising. How do children learn to deal with toy advertisements?

4. Children must learn how to experience things. How do children gain experience through toys?

5. Experience sharpens realistic thought: What kinds of toys and technological/electronic games are particularly well-suited to helping children develop this process?

In all five areas, attempts ought to be made to stimulate toy development and research. Seen from the researcher's perspective, toys are distributed over five domains:

Within the family - within development/teaching - within technology/science - on the market and in Art.

In all five domains toy manufacturers attempt to advertise their products in different ways but the best advertisement for a toy will always be the toy's own play value.

We have to bear in mind that the five domains have different foundations because the idea of producing a toy and the play value the toy can have in the free space/imaginative space in which play takes place, can be apportioned variable codices.

It is therefore very difficult to draw the line between what to permit and what not to permit in toy advertising because the toy's play value has to demonstrate the free space/imaginative space in which play takes place. However, it will under no circumstance be realistic to evaluate a toy's play value on the advertising platform the manufacturer has set up. The very nature of advertising (the advertising world) has undermined and distorted any objective basis for evaluation.

Utopia or necessary measures:
Regulations can however contribute to limiting a) the manufacturers' imaginative attempts to present the toy in an entertaining and interesting way and b) the children's free space/imaginative space in the play situation.

In the following paragraphs, I have both interpreted and rewritten the international attitudes to advertising directed towards children: The International Chamber of Commerce's (ICC) Code of Advertising Practises, article 13. These codes are intended to protect the consumer, the children, and to suggest some limits for the imaginative lengths to which one can go when advertising toys.

Identification:
Due to children's particular vulnerability, TV advertising for toys or TV spots on video in the stores must be clearly and efficiently labelled. Toy advertising must never be confused with authentic events or realistic editorial material or programmes in or from TV.

Violence:
Toy advertising must never give the impression that violence is tolerated in situations or events which can be seen to break the law or to contravene the generally accepted national norms of social behaviour.

Social values:
Toy advertising must not undermine social values by communicating the idea that ownership or use of a certain toy in itself will give a child physical, social or psychological advantages over other children of the same age - *or that not owning* the toy could lead to the opposite result.

The toy must not undermine parental authority, responsibility, judgement or taste, taking generally accepted social values into consideration.

Safety:
A toy must always have a safety value so that children cannot do damage to themselves or to others during play with the toy. The toy must not be part of a statement or photographic material which could have the effect that children might be brought into danger, encouraged to make contact with strangers or to visit unfamiliar or dangerous places.

Persuasion:
Toy advertising must not contain or involve any direct appeal to the children to persuade others to buy the product for them.

Truth:
There must be no references to the toy's size, value, type, use, durability or performance which can mislead children.

If accessories are required for the toy to work or to achieve the result described, this ought to be clearly stated. If the toy is part of a series or of a system, the presentation must also clearly state the facts - and how the rest of the series can be obtained.

Advertising must give an impression of the capacities necessary for using the toy as intended. In cases where the result of the product is either shown or described, a play instruction ought to be produced so that the result can reasonably be achieved by an average child in the relevant age group.

Price:
Price indications should not mean that children are given an unrealistic understanding of the true value of the toy. No advertising may suggest that the price of the toy means that every family can afford it.

All in all, these codes - for and about the evaluation of toys - express some incredible paradoxes:

− They are formulated to protect children's interests and at the same time they set limits for play with toys and reduce the children's free space/imaginative space.

– Toys are copies of adult instruments but the regulations for use and the ways in which these instruments can be used and the way they may be produced are constantly breached - by adults.

– Play, in its myriad of forms, is unique. But this too goes against all the instructions listed in the codes - because it is only play.

When play with toys meets controversy, we need the balancing skills of a tightrope walker: *"On the one hand to imagine that you do what you're not supposed to - on the other hand to imagine that you won't do what you can - and do - do."*

Considerations re the evaluation of toys must end in the question: *"How far does the toy challenge the child to stereotyped and mechanical play? How far does it encourage innovation and experimentation on the periphery?"*

Sutton-Smith (1986:259) says that "toys are like play, they are a cultural form of communication" and that opinion also forms part of the backbone of this book's investigations and toy evaluations.

CHAPTER 8 THE TOY CLASSIFICATION

Like many others, the Estonian literary researcher Jurie M. Lotman regards literary fiction as a "model" for human existence or as a section of it. It is, however, obvious that, whatever way it unfolds in a given period, no individual text can function as a model for other typical incidences and relationships in human existence.

"A model is an analogy for the object we seek to learn something about, an analogy which replaces the object during the learning process," says Lotman (1971:281).

The model concept in this general form covers a long list of concrete phenomena including toys, architect's drawings, maps, language and speech which communicate knowledge about human existence and the phenomena and objects of our being. The principal sources of knowledge about our world will always be people's actions, reactions, our own experience and what others tell us about their experiences - and fiction. Other sources include communication of news, information and debate. When we mention communication of knowledge about human existence, there is to a great extent a presentation of emotions, affects, norms and values, passions and the use of force.

All these phenomena are also included in the phenomenon "toys and play". The relationship between toys and play can be compared to double entry book-keeping - and the relationship is a combination of the material and the spiritual/intellectual. However, since we must get the books to balance, we need to register and establish order in the form of key classification models.

Classification must follow specific guidelines for how a model should be constructed. It must have specific "junctions", which can roughly be compared to branches on a tree.

For each classification model, we must ask ourselves the question, "What will or must we focus on: individual components? relationships? the individual toy? or the relations between individual toys or between groups of toys?"

The majority of definitions of toys are viewed in connection with one or more general definitions of play.

The toy is therefore often accorded very different significance and value, dependent upon how the definitions of play and play activity are formulated.

It can be difficult to gain a general outlook on a toy classification if the toy is subject to other general theories than the toy's existing one. The other theories have often nothing at all to do with toys.

In toy classification it is understood that the toys are distributed over a given number of parallel or subordinate subgroups and that the presentation of the classification is undertaken within a fixed pattern to ensure that a comprehensive view is maintained.

If any classification is to be understood, then the model must be *simple.*

Classification systems

Each classification model/type is linked to a variety of systems of analysis which indicate, ascribe and emphasise the toys' special attributes and significance. This is seen e.g. in the following examples of types of classifications which have all been contributory influences on the preparation of the model which will be used in this book.

The existing toy classifications will be split into three main groups:

– functional and structural classifications
– pedagogical-psychological classifications and
– social anthropological oriented classifications.
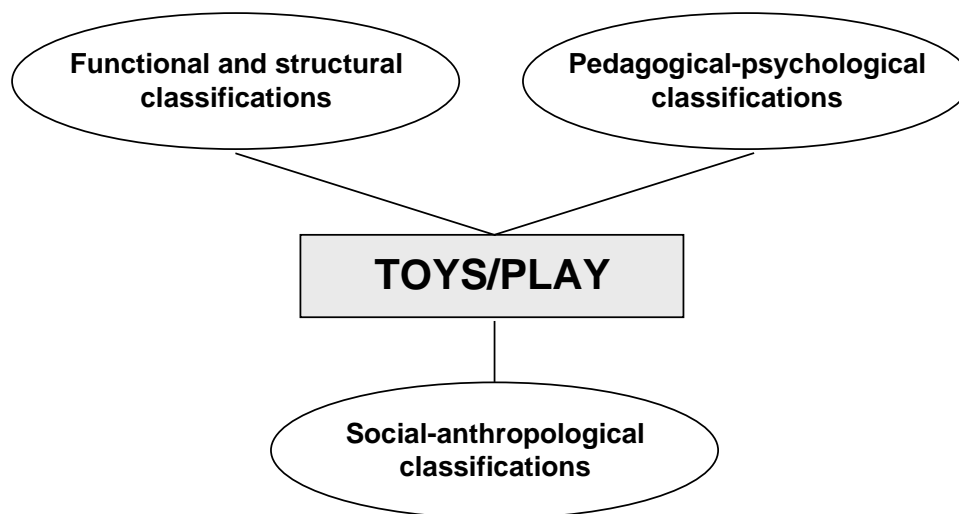
Functional and structural classifications

Functional and structural classifications illustrate the qualities of the toys' functional and instrumental values, i.e. whether the toy is instructive, constructive, easy for children of a given age/level of development to manipulate, whether it is a concrete model or a copy of an original object, what material it is made of, its strength and appearance, methods used in producing it, price level, etc., which are all structural values which in some way indicate how the toy can supplement other toys.

Many toy constructions give a comprehensive insight into the nature of the relation between individual parts of a complex machine. The term "structural system toys" (the LEGO System, Playmobil system, teaching materials and demonstration models, etc.) describes how toy models can express unity and simplicity.

Pedagogical-psychological classifications

Pedagogical-psychological classifications classify toys according to how they can stimulate a child's development generally or specifically, depending on the child's age, pre-dispositions, handicaps, etc. The following pair of examples were a source of inspiration for the classification model chosen for this book because they are able to make classification simple and easy to understand.

The first example of toy classification - both functional/structural and pedagogical-psychological - according to children's general age and stage of development and toy function, is the NAEYC list (National Association for the Education of Young Children, USA 1982). Toys are divided into groups including examples which give potential training areas and targets which the child can achieve through play with the toy.

There are seven groups of toys:

− sensory motor
− motor
− manipulative
− constructive
− imaginative
− art
− look-listen materials

Examples of the motor type of materials are e.g. climbing frames, balls, bicycles, etc. whose aim is to train basic motor skills. Examples of the physical games are jumping, climbing, balancing, etc.

The NAEYC list toys regards toys as instruments to be used for a specific purpose. The classification isn't built up on any specific general theory or set of rules but is logical and sensible in the way it gives a good general overview of the useful things we can find on the toy market.

Toys which have several different functional and structural aspects feature several places on the list.

The second example shows how toy and material categories are classified in accordance with one of the theories of developmental psychology (Piaget's play theory). (Garon 1985). The various games are classified thus:

Activity play:
- – training play
- – symbolic play
- – collection and "joining up" play
- – games with simple rules
- – games with complex rules

Sensory and operative play:
- – sensory motor control
- – symbol control
- – intuitive control
- – concrete operative control
- – formal operative control

Experimental and creative play:
- – exploration and investigation
- – imitation
- – proficiency and presentation
- – creative activity

Social activities:
- – individual activities
- – collective participation
- – variable participation

Toy and materials are categorised in long lists which are further divided into sub-categories according to age and developmental level of the child - as Piaget's theory suggests.

Classifications with a social anthropological orientation

Here toys are seen as part of a social or cultural tradition, developed and produced on the background of many different factors which are preconditions for living conditions and lifestyle. One example is from UNESCO (1984) which I have edited.

Toys can be illustrated within four groups:

1. Most characteristic of the first group is that they reflect reality. Some of the recognisable beings or things from the adult world are reproduced in miniature. This group includes dolls, figures, masks, animals, vehicles, etc.

2. The second group includes elements which are mainly used to train skills or to learn rules. This section includes spinning tops, kites, jigsaw puzzles, tools, board games and musical instruments.

3. The third group of toys are linked to tradition, legends and religion. They can reflect reality and can be based on learning skills but they also have a clear connection to traditional customs, beliefs or activities.

4. The fourth group seems to reflect or involve themes from everyday modern life. These toys can also reflect reality or are based on learning.

And we can add a fifth group:

5. The fifth group - which isn't tangible - is understood as "invisible mental toys": Dreams, imaginary pictures, fantasies, etc. about all kinds of things, actions and events.

Concerning such existential viewpoints on toys, Sutton-Smith says:

> *"each individual toy is unique and unrivalled for the person who plays with it."*

It is the "encounter" with the toy or with a good instrument and the personal satisfaction and enjoyment which using it can bring which gives this unrivalled quality, regardless of whether the toy is hand-made, mass-produced, old/new, inherited or bought.

Judith Levin (1966) classifies toys as ethnographic objects, each having its own special attributes which are significant. The objects are classified and presented in two ways:

– *a systematic presentation*
– *an atmospheric presentation*

The systematic presentation splits toys into eight categories, all of which have a number of sub-groups. Distribution and presentation focuses on the function of the toys individually and on the relationship between different toy groups.

The eight categories are:

– dolls
– dolls' houses
– toys intended to encourage child to copy parents
– books and drawing/writing materials
– movement toys
– auditory and visual toys
– table-top and indoor games
– outdoor games.

An atmospheric presentation illustrates the special significance of the toy when seen together with other things/objects. This could be via a museum's exhibition in a teaching situation where a child's room from a specific era is

exhibited showing toys together with contemporary furniture, children's clothing, household implements.

In this way the toys are seen as part of an historic, social and cultural unit and therefore serve a pedagogical aim and are included as part of a functional (play and teaching) environment.
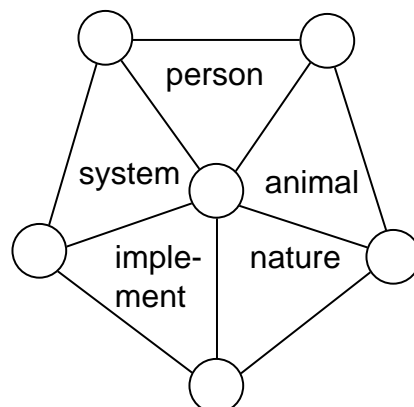

The toy classification

The question this book and investigation seeks to answer is now not: "what are the stimulating qualities of each individual toy for a child's general development?" but rather: "which toys do certain families with certain lifestyles choose or refuse to use in their play/time together?"
The listing of the classification model draws on the instructions of Zacharias (1987): *Biographies* as the background for "the ecology of play" and Berg-Laase (1987): *Social ecological* description and methodology: Games and Living Space Analysis.

The classification used in this book (Steenhold (1993,b) was prepared on the basis of information collected from 401 Danish children and their parents concerning the toys they use everyday and their favourite toys. From the collected schematic material returned by the children and their parents, approximately 7000 toys were registered.

Many toys of the same kind were mentioned repeatedly because they exist in different versions and manufacture. Many of the toys were also registered in a variety of versions or were mentioned as plurals.

The classification itself is built up on the idea that registration of toys should take place as the data collection was underway.

The model is therefore constructed in the centre of the socio-ecological circle and contains:

people, animals, instruments, systems, nature

These are the five main groups in the classification. Each individual toy will be placed in one of 29 subgroups. This means that no single toy will appear more than once in the overview.

The Toy Classification

5 main groups	29 subgroups
<u>PEOPLE</u>	Playmate
	Doll
	guardian doll
	war doll
	doll support
<u>ANIMALS</u>	animal figure
	real live animal
	symbolic animal
	series animal
<u>IMPLEMENTS</u>	tool/implement/instrument
	care
	inventory
	weapon
	transport/machine
	special equipment
	music
	draw/paint/cut out/collect
	learn/listen
	props
<u>SYSTEMS</u>	recycling
	LEGO/DUPLO bricks
	Playmobil
	Fisher-Price
	Construction
<u>NATURE</u>	nature/outdoors play
	tree
	natural materials
	food/baking
(INVISIBLE TOYS) are not registered because invisible toys can not easily be observed and registered.	

Contents

In the collected material, each individual favourite toy was also registered according to:

DEGREE OF REALISM defined as:
Concrete   - the toy is very realistic, a copy of the original object
Abstract   - the toy looks rather like the original object
Diffuse   - the toy is hardly realistic, bears little or no resemblance to an
                 original
Original   - the original object, the real instrument or object

The Concrete	The Diffuse (MIXED) SUSPENDS	The Abstract
- copies from reality - good models - small instruments - constructions - building from instructions - "the clear thought"	- reality - the concrete - logic - familiar strategies - familiar forms and rules - "the crazy thought" - parody!	- imaginative figures - alternative models - imaginative instruments - wild constructions - free creative building - "the wild thought"
Border - between fantasy and reality - Border		
real implements and objects		

DEGREE OF COMPLEXITY defined as:
Not/very low complexity   - easy to use
Complex   - need for guidance
Highly complex   - need for guidance, instruction and some practise in order to
                  use the object

DEGREE OF DEVELOPMENT defined as:
Traditional   - traditional, unchanging toys
Mechanical   - mechanical toys
Electronic   - electronic toys

METHOD OF PRODUCTION defined as:
Industrial   - industrial production
Handmade by craftsmen   - or toy makers
Handmade by family member   - family or relation
Made by the child   - made, produced by the child himself

MATERIALS defined as:
Natural materials   - wood, bone wool, cotton, textiles or pure metal
Plastic   -
Plastic plus other materials -

Based on the literary and serious creative interests concerning an individual toy, the reader will also be informed whether the toy has a *"nickname"* and *whether stories, narratives, songs or poems* have been written about it. Here is a brief characteristic of the classification.

The toy classification: main and subsidiary groups

PEOPLE	Five main groups
<u>aymate</u>	A person who participates in play, an identification object or an object in play. These can include other children, brothers and sisters, parents, other adults - or idols mentioned as: child/boy man child/girl Mum Dad woman own body
<u>Doll</u>	Classic doll, either as a copy or as an identification object with a person (baby, child or adult as a model). The group includes also adult type dolls (Barbie, Ken, etc.) Examples: adult doll man boy doll adult doll woman child doll antique doll costume doll baby doll floppy doll baby boy doll girl doll baby girl doll rag doll
<u>Guardian doll</u>	and idol doll. Dolls which are copies of or whose motivation is the protector's or guardian's (positive or negative) role. Generally part of wider play concept where motivation is historical or a narrative/novel/film, e.g. Turtles, He-Man. Examples: DinoRiders jack-in-a-box doll animals robot guardian dolls Transformers guardian animals troll idol dolls Turtles
<u>War dolls</u>	are doll copies/figures whose motivation is warlike identification figures or persons who participated in warlike events. The event, which can be historical, is most often fictive, a story or science fiction. Examples: Action Force cowboys & Indians Karate Kid Soldiers super hero tin soldiers war doll child war doll man

	war doll woman
Doll support	Masks, paper dolls, glove puppets, etc. "mass" dolls/figures, e.g. Smurfs. Examples: glove puppet mass dolls make-up doll paper doll masks
ANIMALS	- four subgroups
Animal figures	copies of animals, birds or insects. Usually farmyard with farm animals, zoos with zoo animals but also "knick-knack" animals and animal figures for putting on display. Examples: aquarium caged animals farmyard/animals horses insect/butterfly Noah's ark Terrarium zoo
Live animals	live animals and pets. The group also includes live insects and exotic animals. Examples: aquarium insect/butterfly cat parrot dog pets guinea pig rabbit hens sheep/lamb horse terrarium wild animals
Symbolic animals	defined most often as textile, rag and bedtime animals (e.g. teddy bear and panda) Examples: bear octopus bird panda cat panther dog parrot duck polar bear elephant rabbit hedgehog seal lion teddy monkey mouse
Series animals	includes collections of specific animal figures, e.g. "Forest Families" and dinosaurs Examples: Dinosaurs Forest Families
IMPLEMENTS	10 subgroups
Tools/implements/ instruments	smaller versions/copies of all kinds of tools and toolboxes. Toy tools can usually also be used in the same way as the

	real thing. The category also includes substitute and symbol tools. Examples: different tools shovel/bucket/brush diffuse tools toolbox garden tools wheelbarrow instrument box weapons box music box workbench rope/cord sewing/weaving/knitting equipment
<u>Care/decoration</u>	implements, things and objects for caring or decorating with. The category also includes substitute and symbolic implements. Examples: baby care items baby's comforter/feeding bottle beauty/make-up set doctor's set first aid box hairdresser's set jewelry/jewelry box
<u>Inventory</u>	household instruments and objects, utensils and interior decoration of a special kind which can be used in play to create a functional play environment Examples: baby care table dolls' house/furniture basket dolls' pushchair bathtub household instruments bed household inventory/play castle/fort/station playhouse/den dolls' bed shop/office inventory dolls' clothes tent
	Copies and original weapons. Copies are most often pistols, rifles and swords/shields. Examples: bow rifle/air rifle catapult sword/shield dagger fishing rod/net pistol
<u>Weapons</u>	<u>includes 8 different kinds</u>: 1. cars with accessories 2. farm machinery 3. aeroplanes 4. boats/ships 5. trains 6. horses and horse-drawn vehicles 7. cranes and lifting gear 8. war machines (war toys)

	Examples: 1. Cars/accessories cars garage motorcycle road track steering wheel 2. Farm machinery farming caterpillar tread vehicle 3. Aeroplanes/helicopters Airfix model kits cars model aircraft rocket/space vehicle 4. Boats caterpillar tread vehicles model ships ships/boats 5. Trains Brio train electric train locomotive rocket/space vehicle 6. Horses/horse-drawn vehicles horse/horse transport horse-drawn vehicle 7. Cranes/lifting gear crane electric crane manual crane 8.War machines(war toys) tanks/cannons warplanes warships
Transport/machines	where use of these instruments requires special knowledge and skills, where use has a specific intention, includes computers, microscope, binoculars, etc. Examples: binoculars microscope calculator printer compass robot computer/PC steam engine gyroscope typewriter
Special instruments	substitute and original instruments are included in the category

	Examples: composing piano drum singing electric organ synthesiser flute tambourine guitar trumpet keyboard marimba
<u>Music</u>	drawing/painting equipment - things/swaps which are part of larger collections Examples: colouring books compass/ruler cutting/sticking water colour/oil paints Collecting: animal figures, beads, bottle tops, buttons, coins, envelopes, fossils, jacks, keys, key rings, knickknacks, jewellery, marbles, paper napkins, scrapbooks, stamps, writing paper
<u>Drawing/collecting</u>	books and school equipment, tape recorders, electronic games, Walkman, etc. Examples: <u>listen and learn</u> <u>read and learn</u> assignments/school blackboard books crosswords files magazines/comics newspapers poems writing stories/poetry <u>Listen</u> computer games electronic games radio TV/video Walkman walkie-talkie
Listen and learn	play equipment and games - also including the large group of play equipment and motor materials, sports equipment (football, etc.) Examples: Play area equipment in general Games in general <u>Play with props</u> bicycle cart circus equipment climbing frame croquet

	dance equipment
	dolls' theatre
	dressing up
	Frisbee
	go-cart
	hobbyhorse/rocking horse
	jump/hop/hopscotch
	mini-motorbike
	moon car
	role play
	scooter
	skateboard
	table soccer
	tricycle
	yo-yo
	Sport
	athletics equipment
	badminton
	basketball
	darts
	football
	gymnastics
	gymnastics equipment
	handball
	table tennis
	tennis
	trampoline
	Balls
	ball/balls
	balloon
	beach ball
	marbles
	small balls
	space hopper
	tennis balls
Props	Six subgroups
	bicycles
	bottle tops
	boxes
	building materials
	clothes pegs
	corks
	diapers
	card
	cardboard
	glass items
	iron/metal
	knitting yarn
	metal bricks
	paper
	plastic cups
	rubbish
	textiles
	tins
	watches/clocks
SYSTEMS	is a system toy which often includes a building instruction. There are many different LEGO products which fit together

Recycling	and can be mixed in play and form a system. Examples: DUPLO DUPLO airport DUPLO farm DUPLO dolls' house DUPLO train DUPLO world DUPLO zoo Fabuland LEGO airport LEGO bricks/parts LEGO castle LEGO fire station LEGO hospital LEGO pirates/Vikings LEGO police LEGO road track LEGO space LEGO train LEGO TECHNIC
LEGO/DUPLO Systems	is a system toy which often includes a building instruction Examples: Playmobil car Playmobil castle Playmobil circus Playmobil cowboys/Indians Playmobil fishing boat Playmobil farm Playmobil pirates Playmobil soldiers Playmobil zoo
Playmobil systems	includes the brand's system toys unspecified
Fisher-Price	system toys of many different types which appeal and motivate directly to construction play and which usually include a building instruction. Examples: Bilofix construction set engineer set Hansa-tec K'NEX Meccano Tekno
Construction toys and systems	This expression is included under systems! Some parents used this expression instead of naming the toys their children owned. The reason was the parents' distancing themselves from consumerism.)
("A few toys"	four subgroups including information about children's outdoor play, in fields,

	woodland, etc., where Nature itself is the context of play.
NATURE Nature/outdoor play	all kinds of things made of wood, either manufactured or home-made Examples: home-made wooden toys trees to climb in wooden bricks wooden sticks
Wood	Nature's own materials and products, parts of plants/animals, earth/air/water/light used as toys or where these are required for the use of a particular toy Examples: Natural materials/play clay/wax/dough earth garden mud sand sand box equipment sand/digging equipment stones Fire/light play fire/light/bonfire play with mirrors/light play with torches/lamps Air/wind air gliders kite-flying Sound sounds Water play soap bubbles swimming Nature flowers fruit fur leather leaves seeds/pine cones
Natural materials and play	things and ingredients for real food preparation Examples: baking making jam/pickles butchering picking fruit/berries cooking
Food/baking	