PART III

PLAY

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Introduction

Nowadays children aren't able to play. We believe that we encourage them to learn to play by playing all of us together - Dad, Mum and children. It might be a good idea if the schools taught parents how to play with their children because we believe that children would then be better at understanding themselves and better at learning.

(Quote from a parent)

Definitions

According to one dictionary of the Danish language, "play" is an activity undertaken as a pastime, for fun, for (mutual) entertainment with no real use or serious purpose but which follows certain rules, often a liberal imitation of purposeful adult activities.

This definition is both erroneous and problematic! However, in its defence, we ought to mention that the definition was prepared in an era where knowledge and insight about play as a phenomenon was still limited.

It was proven many years ago (Pellegrini, Klein, Goldstein) that a lack of opportunities for children to play with others (social play) and to play with interesting things and objects leads, in adulthood, to failure to adapt to a social group and to develop constructive co-operative processes in which there is an exchange and pooling of implements and knowledge. This in itself is enough to make the above dictionary definition almost embarrassing!

Solitary play is just as important as social play. Solitary play involves the need for a varied supply of different toys while social play involves a need for a varied supply of different games and toys with which several children can play together at the same time.

Any game contains a "text" - which in this book will be called the "play text" or "the text of play with a toy".

In the context of this book, text is to be understood as:

> **An action in which participants communicate with each other legitimately and honestly about the different expressions, content and consequent relations of the toy or game, where systematically correlated communication forms relevant messages and therefore creates contact, is honest and interesting for the persons-at-play."**

The text of a game will not be interpreted in the same way by everyone, even though the expression, content, relations, system and the way in which these are correlated is understood in the same way.

Behind these concepts, there is a hidden, subtle level of multiplicity and permutations which possibly not even the persons-at-play are aware of or ready to channel and communicate.

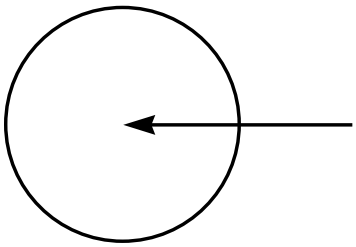
Every game has a “context” - in this book, context is to be understood as (see also model in Chapter 9, The Play Phenomenon):

That which determines that the content (play text) is limited relative to other things which are to be found in the immediate environment.

The context of a game is not understood in the same way by everyone. The context or framework is however always understood as the limitations on children’s play and on the development of the game placed by the stipulations of the immediate environment. It would be wrong, however, to view the context as a “limiting framework” for play. The context ought rather to be seen as an invisible limited circle which children in their creative and most imaginative play jump in and out of, as if they were hopping in an out of a circle. Because in play everything is permitted. Put in another way: the only barrier is fantasy and in play, events are experienced which have yet to take place.

Hopping in and out of play can be described in the following five ways:

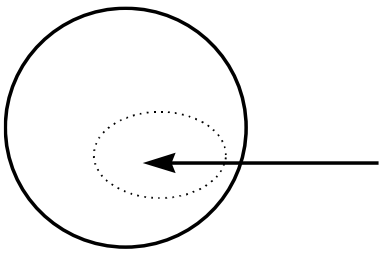
1. **Contextualisation**: when the child (on the basis of the following tenets) learns that:



- “<u>this</u> is play”
- “<u>this</u> is fun”
- “<u>this</u> is the (correct) way to do it”

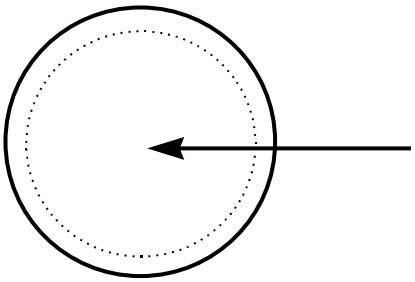
At the precise moment the child learns or **contextualises** his <u>surroundings/reality through play</u>.

2. **<u>De</u>contextualisation** occurs when the child learns “his own game”* within his own closed world, despite the tenets.



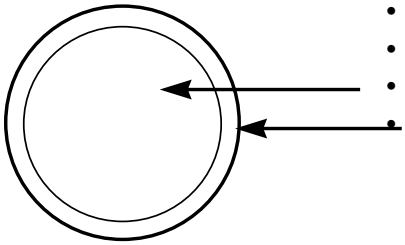
* That play doesn’t contextualise the surroundings but the child’s own self-made surroundings to the child.

3. **Recontextualisation**: when the children at play bring the text and context into balance at an intense *metacommunicative* level.



4. ***Co-contextualisation****: where the child learns the connection between several different contexts*:

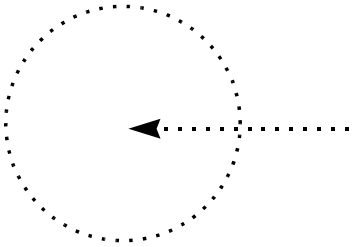
   – by bringing about consistency between the various tenets with the same meaning.



- "this is play" when "this is also play"
- "this is fun "when "this too is fun"
- "this is the way to do it" when "this too is the way to do it"

The child can also co-contextualise to a false understanding - an unreal reality!

5. **Context dissolution** is when the child (through giving up on or rejecting the tenets) learns that:



- "this is not (no longer) play"
- "this is not (no longer) fun"
- "this is not (no longer) the way to do it" (method is rejected)

The child dissolves his own framework for understanding what is reality and what is fantasy (play).

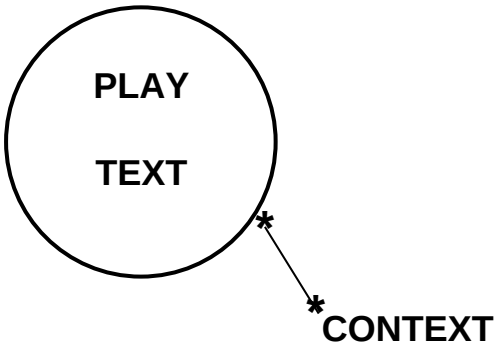
Will it ever be possible to transfer our stereotype search for mechanical explanations for why children play with toys and instead concentrate on the unique forms of creativity and fantasy involved in toys and play with toys? The following four chapters suggest some of the possibilities.

CHAPTER 9 THE PLAY PHENOMENON

Play and the person-at-play

The external limit of eco-social environment contains five levels:

- Event
- Personality
- Reification
- Time
- Space



Play depends on several external and internal factors. Around play itself there is an EXTERNAL ATMOSPHERE and a UNIVERSAL ENVIRONMENT. These external factors are situated on the “shell” (the circle in the model) which marks the border between the eco-social environment in which the process itself takes place.

The external factors, which consist of five levels, are:

- TIME or the historical period in which play takes place
- SPACE or the environment in which play takes place
- PERSONALITY OF THE PARTICIPANTS, persons-at-play
- EVENT or situation underlying play
- REIFICIATION or the selection of objects in the form of toys used.

There is no definitive or unequivocal definition for play and there is in actual fact some doubt as to how play really can be defined and explained. Authors almost queue up to give their explanation of children’s play on the basis of the general and direct nature of their surroundings, the multifarious experiences of everyday life and often trivial influences.

However, **play** can be “explained” as:

- an activity undertaken for its own sake.

What often happens during play is that the participants find or invent a purpose or an aim for their game but the aim will always be less important than the play process itself.

For many persons who play, the play process and the aim of the game can often melt into one. But the common denominator for all the legitimate explanations for play is that play springs from the desire “to do *something*”.

The most general and comprehensive explanation of play is that:

- Children are the basis on which the future of the world rests.

- Regardless of how far back we go in history and regardless of which culture we study - children have always played.

- Play is just as important as our basic needs for food, health, a home and education because play is necessary for the development of the child’s potential.

- Play is something which is instinctive, voluntary and spontaneous. Play is natural and investigative.

- Play is communication and a form of self-expression and, since one can combine thoughts and actions in play, a feeling of satisfaction and of having achieved something arises through play.

- Play touches on all life’s facets.

- Play develops children physically, mentally, emotionally and socially.

- Play is a way in which we learn to live: it is not merely a way to pass the time.

Organised play

- is an activity most often controlled or organised by someone other than the participants themselves. Organised play has predefined covert or obvious intentions, targets or aims for the activity.

Common to all the authoritative explanations for organised play is that the activity contains “elements of play” which succeed or fail to give the persons-at-play the desire to do exactly that which the organiser of the activity intended. Organised play is also defined as having to give a result.

Games

- A game can be compared to play in many ways. There are, however, some marked differences.

A game is a voluntary testing of an activity in which there is a “battle” between the forces (participant’s energies), limited by rules, and in which control systems are utilised (referee and/or rules) and in which the process aims at an unequal result (proclaiming a winner).

Types of Play

Solitary play
- where the child engages in play either completely alone or keeps a low profile with his activities.

Just as it is important for a child to be with others, it is also important that the child has time and space for being on his own and can isolate himself voluntarily with his toys.

A small child plays solitary play the first twelve months of his life. Solitary play forms the basis of the child's learning the basic rules and laws of existence. The child experiments and manipulates objects and toys on his own in a variety of situations in order to get to know his immediate surroundings.

Solitary play continues even though the child grows older and begins to play with others. Everything has to be tested and sorted even though the things in themselves do not have much to do with one another. The child still learns on his own what is possible/impossible and in this way he learns to recognise reality and the limits of what is possible.

From the age of 3-4 years, the child is able to participate in social play groups whilst solitary play becomes a means by which to be alone, to potter about with interesting things and to test them for himself. Solitary play is part and parcel of being able to show, alone and to others, the things he can do on his own and the things with which he needs help.

For older children, solitary play and isolation are ways in which to be on one's own, to work quietly on pastimes, hobbies or projects which contribute to the development of the child's concentration, perseverance, endurance and intellect.

Parallel play
The child engages in an activity alongside but not with others.

Classic parallel play is the situation in which a child plays on the floor with his toys, close to an adult who is working on something else.

When children play alongside each other in parallel play, they perform the same actions, do the same things and generally try to be identical in their ways of doing things and to achieve the same results. They mimic and mirror each other's actions.

Mimicry is the basis on which to learn or acquire an ability which another child in parallel play already masters. Mirroring another person's actions - testing the other person's behavioural pattern - represents possibilities for finding out whether one's own mastery of things is as good as the other person's.

A classic pattern is two small children playing parallel in a sand box with sand and sand toys. They neither interfere nor intervene in each other's way of

doing things. They don't borrow or steal each other's spade or sieve because, even at a very young age, children know that this leads to conflict.

When one child turns his bucketful of sand out to make a sand castle, the other child does the same. When they talk or sing, it's only to themselves - but they do listen to each other and each child individually keeps tabs on what the other child is doing.

Older children play parallel too - both for the sake of play and for the learning process inherent in it. In contrast to the under threes, older children's play is social. This means that mutual conversation and dialogue are exchanged during play, thus achieving a balance in the execution of tasks and the evaluation of the result.

"Let's pretend I'm big sister/Mummy", carrying out the same action and attitudes in parallel is imitation, copying and mimicking. This is a mixture of parallel play and imitation play.

Group play
Through play, the child engages in activities with another person or several other people in which the participants are engaged with the same aim or purpose for the game/activity.

Group play demands social behaviour. By this we mean that it is expected that participants keep to the rules of the game and are sociable, co-operative and willing to help one another. But these important things first have to be learned and understood.

Children are not ready to understand and play group play until they are 3-4 years old. Until then, their play is solitary play and parallel play. Group play is the motivation for the child's being able to participate in complex social association at many levels later in life and to build deep, personal and lasting connections.

Group play is free play which does not necessarily have to have a motivation but often arises from a common subject or interest which is played and experimented with. In group play where an older child controls the free play, even small children under three years of age can adhere to the norms and rules which form the framework for the game.

As mentioned, there does not have to be a basic motivation for the play. The free processes and incidental situations which occur can also form the basis for social interaction within a group.

For organised group play in the form of circle games (traditional, cultural games), it is imperative that the participants understand the rules. The basic motivation for the game is inclusion in or exclusion from the group (circle).

Role play
In play the child accepts a role to play.

Role play can be played alone but there are very often two or more participants in a so-called social interaction in which the roles and functions are divided between the participants. Role play forms the basis of the child's gaining knowledge and capabilities about functions and roles in everyday life - and the child has an opportunity to experiment and test possibilities.

Around the age of six years, the child also begins to experiment with dreams and imaginary pictures which lie outside the familiar roles and functions of everyday life. Role play can either be instructive or imitative (see below).

For example: an adult will often assume the role of the horse. The small child plays the role of the rider. But the question is whether a small child understands and can play his role. For a child under three years, the game is just pure fun or hard work in order to learn something about daily life.

The roles of the people who make decisions are often distributed in advance. In instruction play the child sets himself and/or others in a scene. An older child will often accept a role where he gives a younger child guidance. The situation is motivated by an everyday function.

In imitation play, the child recreates, mimics, copies or demonstrates (through play) a role with which he is already familiar. The child will often parody the role.

Functional play
Through play, the child experiences sensory stimulation as simple, repeated, muscular movements.

In order to get sensory stimulation through functional play, implements and toys are needed. But simple objects can also be utilised. Small children's functional play represents a testing of their physical capabilities: what can I do? what is possible? let me try! These games and exercises are repeated again and again.

The same applies to older children. The toys and requisites become more sophisticated and require more training, skill and better balance. The child experiments in exceeding physical and psychological limits. The social community is often a significant part of functional play in which children can get a shared experience of getting "high" on the game itself.

Dramatic play
In play, the child dramatises real situations or gives life to an inanimate thing.

So-called real situations which children dramatise, play or enact do not have to be copies of realistic events which they recognise from everyday life or have seen in reality. Just as often, children fantasise or invent situations or episodes or "steal" them from fictional entertainment, from cartoons, TV or films.

If the drama is led or the scene set by adults, we say that this is no longer play but a play activity, controlled by adults with the children as actors. Children under three years are too small and are not able to recognise and understand the story behind the imaginative types of characters which the adults have dressed the children up as and get them to copy.

Until children reach the ages of 5-6 years they primarily dramatise episodes in their own world or in fictive situations with which they are emotionally interested, e.g. “poor children being taken care of at the children’s home by the nice nurses”.

Older children’s imaginative and dramatic play is often completely removed from the situations of everyday, real life and can be very fictive and unreal. Older children can be pirates, aliens on a distant, springy planet, super athletes in the circus of the future - or they can parody “frightened kids climbing for the first time”.

Repetition play
In play, the child repeats previous games, activities and modes of behaviour.

In repetition play children progress through something which they have previously studied or tested out. There is nothing new in redoing or repeating.

From time to time it can be difficult to distinguish between imitation play and repetition play. The difference will most often lie in the fact that, in imitation play, the child imitates or copies a human role while, in repetition play, actions have something to do with the “way” in which things are done.

We often see the picture of a small child redoing or repeating the same function or mode of behaviour: this is repetition play. For the very small child, the repetition includes sensing, testing and the pleasure found in repetition, even when the mode of behaviour is stereotype.

Household tasks can, for example, often be a game for older children even though the same piece of work has to be done over and over again. This combined form of play and doing a chore thus becomes repetition play.

Conversation play
In play, the child actively listens or talks to another child, a peer or to an adult.

The conversation or dialogue demands trust and acceptance between the participants. Conversation is an exchange of points of view/attitudes. A dialogue is an exchange of points of view between two equal parties who both seek to achieve common understanding. Conversation play is therefore both play and experimentation with the principles of conversation/dialogue on a common topic/point.

For 3-6 year-old girls playing together, chat and conversation are ways in which to exchange experiences and ideas about whatever it is the girls are sharing, e.g. the dolls’ house furniture or functional figures. The dolls’ house is

a means for communicating and testing out everyday experiences. They play out events and episodes from everyday life.

The girls' mutual relationship is reflective and conversational. It is built on mutual solidarity and they switch in the process between being the speaker and the listener. In their conversation, boys are message and product oriented.

A dialogue between an older child and an adult can easily become a playful form of exchanging ideas and finding solutions to everyday problems and possibilities. The child seeks the adult's experience and attitude whilst experimenting to find the best solution.

Fantasy play
In play, the child acts out a motif from a dream or something imagined.

The concepts of fantasy and creativity are part of any game. Being imaginative is having the ability to imagine both concrete and abstract possibilities. Fantasy play is imagination. Being creative is having the ability to put imagination into practice. For children, putting something into practice is often the same thing as playing: demonstrating thoughts and dreams through actions. There are three forms of fantasy play, which here will be described through the example "driving the car":

Concrete Play - Through play, the child interprets recognition and knowledge about realities and reality. Small children with limited experience of everyday life play concrete fantasy play. Their play reflects reality.

Diffuse Play - Through play, the child distorts and parodies recognition and knowledge about realities and reality. Reality is distorted through play and subject to imagination and testing.

Abstract Play - Through play, the child seeks to abstract and innovate. This is often demonstrated by a totally alternative form and signalling.

Construction play
In play, the child creates or builds something with materials. Construction play includes constructing ideas or strategies correlating to the possibilities inherent in the available materials.

Construction is stacking, making an accurate copy, shaping (in both hard and soft materials) but also sampling (getting to know something through experimenting, testing to gain experience). Construction play includes construction, destruction and reconstruction. The game depends very much on the type of materials being played with.

A small child constructs by sampling in a diffuse way with no special wish to make anything look like anything else. The desire to make a model which looks like something does not occur until the child has gained experience from reality.

In construction play with larger materials, accessory functions in themselves are part of the satisfaction of play. For example, pulling lots of nails out of a piece of wood can also be an interesting part of the play/construction process.

Construction play with complicated toys or materials can lead to children choosing social or collective solutions. Perseverance and intellect are a prerequisite for this and collective solutions also demand maturity and powers of concentration.

Games with rules
The child engages in a competitive play activity with rules and limitations which are established in advance.

Rules give the limits for what is permitted in play or in a game. The place, area or pitch is also limited.

Games are competitions in which there is a winner and a loser. All games are a simulated form of reality and the players/participants gain a physical and psychological experience which can be put to good use in other contexts. In the classical family games, e.g. Monopoly, there is an unwritten rule that cheating is allowed as long as you don't get caught. Cheating is most often viewed as poor sportsmanship.

Many outdoor games are a part of children's culture which is passed on from one generation of children to the next. Back in history, these games with their fixed set of rules were also played by adults. Many of the games had connections to a specific seasonal celebration. Modern sports and games have judges or referees who check that the rules are adhered to. Children naturally also play these games and will often check between them that the rules are upheld.

Exploratory play
Through play, the child seeks sensory and emotional information.

Experience is always connected to the sensed world. Seeking sensory or emotional information can be a conscious or an unconscious process. There are five senses (hearing, sight, touch, smell, taste) and "the sixth sense" - intuition. For ordinary, healthy children, recognition is a good feeling connected with enjoyment. If a child has many negative feelings about certain situations and problems, he will often develop serious traumas.

Recognising nature, the changing seasons, the chill of the snow and the perfume of flowers is a very intense experience for many children. They forget themselves whilst sensing things occurring in their environment. Small children's feelings for, e.g. animals, sensing their size, proportions and movements are always a great experience. A little girl can be fascinated by e.g. a large horse and curiosity gives her the courage to feed it whilst her intellect tells her that she must keep at a safe distance. She distances herself from the sensory aspect by intellectualising the situation.

Sensing with the naked body is the total sensory experience. The child thus becomes one with his surroundings and senses the sound of the waves breaking on the shore, the cool breeze and the spray against his skin and the wind in his hair.

Onlooker Play
The child observes the behaviour and activities of other children.

Observing other children's way of doing things is a prior condition for learning how to do the same things himself. The child's ability to observe, learn and understand develops independently of his opportunities for play, experimenting and experiencing. Girls draw and chat together about themes and motifs whilst simultaneously observing each other's way of doing things. Boys do the same in their play and, in particular, they copy patterns of action and attitudes.

In play between siblings, children observe each other's way of experimenting in order to learn how to develop techniques and possibly improve upon them. A small child learns from his older siblings.

Rough-and-tumble
In play, the child engages in physical play activities.

Rough-and-tumble and horseplay are often very violent and chaotic (noise, fun and games). The process of the play is uncoordinated and uncontrolled. Small children play rough-and-tumble alongside other children. Until the child is about three years old, he is still insecure about chaotic and uncontrollable movements carried out in close proximity to other children.

Girls, for example, play that they are dancing and end up tumbling around in such a way that they are on the point of falling over but regain their balance at the very last moment. In the rough-and-tumble play of children from six years, touching each other - for fun - is also a possibility.

Classic boys' play - fighting for the fun of it, attacking each other in play or shooting each other down - is always great fun. These wild games often become totally chaotic while the idea is <u>not</u> to injure or hit each other.

Aggression play
Through play, the child expresses discomfort, anger or opposition using physical or psychological means.

Aggression play is in fact the opposite of aggression. In aggressive play, the child *plays with* forms of expression such as animosity, anger and physical attack in an attempt to gain knowledge of them - *not* to carry them out in practise.

When boys and girls play individually alongside one another, it is the boys one notices first. They are most extrovert and they make a lot of noise. It is in

boys' play that one finds aggression and violence expressed most clearly. This has meant that boys (and men) are often seen as having the monopoly on being extrovert, vigorous and aggressive.

Whenever girls' aggression, anger or violence occurs, this is not nearly as clearly expressed. Girls' aggression is therefore often described as being almost non-existent or partly invisible.

Boys play war, violence, attack, death, etc. Girls play home, cosiness, security, peace, etc. The question is whether there isn't in fact just as much cosiness and security concealed in boys' play as in the girls'? - i.e. camouflaged in rules, agreements, co-operation and irony. In the girls' play there is just as much violence and aggression (death) as in the boys' play but it is wrapped up in intrigues and complications - and the danger of being banned, excluded and expelled from the community (the girls' circle or group).

Boys have an outlet for their aggression - they play outwardly, like an explosion. Girls internalise it - an implosion - they often do *not* visibly play it out.

The prior conditions for avoiding misunderstanding the aggressive element in play is to make a clear distinction between *real aggression* (death, war, violence, attack, vandalism, fear) and *aggressive play* where the aggressive forms of expression mentioned are definitely *not* carried out consistently.

In boys' play in particular there is coincidence between rough-and-tumble and aggressive play, partly also functional play. Their games are noisy and often very violent and chaotic. In girls' play there is a coincidence between conversation play and dramatic play, partly also functional play.

In their play, boys use weapons and the instruments of war. The children introduce motifs and stories from war films and action films. The roles of hero and villain are most frequently distributed and exchanged between participants in the game. Aggression play is often also arranged in advance. In the girls' games, aggression is wrapped up in intrigues and complications with experiments and scenes concerned with limiting or expelling from the group.

The border between aggressive play and aggression is extremely rarely crossed. Transgression is accidental or due to a misunderstanding of the rules and agreements. It seems that transgressions occur more often in girls' play than in boys'.

Since the aim of aggressive play is not to end in a few moments of real aggression, all participants are very aware of the slightest tendencies or hints of it. Turning aggressive play into real aggression is regarded even by small children of 4-5 years as breaking the rules and poor play morality.

Wandering play
Where the child wanders around in the midst of other children's activities and play.

The child plays the role of observer and his aim is to make contact with the other child/other children or to be allowed to participate, to become an active player in the game. Depending on the character of the game or the extent of the activity, an approach can be undertaken in several different ways.

The approach from a distance is, for example, when boys want to take part in girls' play and they try to find the right moment to ask for permission to join in. The best situation would be if the girls themselves asked the boys to participate. This is possibly utopia, so light-hearted teasing, shoving or even direct sabotage of the game may, ultimately, be the only way to make an approach - even though it is negative in character.

Approaching a favourite in an attempt to become best friends or a member of a select group can be a form of play. For example, the one child could try to draw the same picture, say something "correct" about the other child's drawing, loan out crayons or maybe give his own drawing to the other child.

The mute dialogue can be a form of wandering play. A ball is thrown to the stranger or to the child who is wandering. The ball is a wordless question: "Shall we play together?". The recipient replies by throwing the ball gently and accurately back and accepts the approach with the wordless answer, "Yes, let's play together". Then, the game is open for play, community and speech.

Transition play
During play, the child goes from one activity to another or prepares an activity, takes it out or tidies it away.

Children go from one game or situation to another which often has no connection with the previous one. The space and time between the two games is often turned into play.

A lot of things can happen at kindergarten when children decide to stop one form of play and go out to play instead. The transition gives rise to play situations or to games e.g. putting on jackets and boots.

Materials and toys can be used in many different ways which they were not intended for. Small girls find interesting leaves and the game is to collect leaves. And then what? The transition to the next game is to prepare it - to discuss what they will do next with the leaves.

The two boys are observed. They seem to want to play with two girls on a swing. For the boys, the transition to the new common game is sabotage or breaking off the girls' play with the swing. The transition to another game is, however, poss ibly not something everyone is interest in.

Unoccupied play
The child displays play behaviour which lacks a target or focus.

In the middle of a game or play process, a child will often lose concentration because he suddenly focuses his attention on something else. The child lets go of his participation in the game or whatever it was he was doing and for a shorter or longer period of time, withdraws from the game and is occupied with something completely different.

Almost everything children undertake or participate in is turned into a form of play. This is true regardless of whether his undertaking is a trip into town or something which is more clearly play. Children's curiosity can lead to spontaneous fascination with something which distracts their attention from whatever it was they were involved in with other children or their parents.

Children and adults alike experience the situation where they concentrate on a game, e.g. cutting out and sticking. Instead of continuing to cut out and stick, the person-at-play suddenly begins to draw doodles and think of something completely different. Concentration evaporates and the person's thoughts whisk him off into quite another world.

A child can tumble about without really knowing why. He doesn't know what he wants or can be bothered to do. The heavy functionalism which is part of studies of children's play and play with toys is, in one sense, paradoxical because we often observe children's play as being incredibly light-hearted, from time to time irresponsible/dangerous - or just plain trivial. One is hard pressed to find literature describing children's play with toys as exclusively non-functional - i.e. literature which attributes children's play an exclusively non-transactional and expressionistic function.

Studies in play

There are several possible ways to approach a study in play as a phenomenon (see HdS, 1). These, somewhat concisely, include:

- What basic pedagogical, psychological and social conditions are associated with play in relation to general human development?

- What are the functions of play in relation to teaching and education - norms, roles and rules?

- How can empirical research programmes be incorporated and carried out in play?

- How can play be used in relation to learning, work and experience?

Common to most play theses is the idea that play is a means by which to achieve something else. It is less commonly seen as a naturally occurring form of human expression.

Toy researchers are usually motivated by general psychological, pedagogical and sociological theories and use terms such as id, ego, instinct, cognition, social culture, socialisation, etc.

Dramatists and pedagogical drama teachers, who are definitely involved with play, are motivated by theatrical theory and art history. They use terms such as idea, dialogue, characterisation, environment, event, tension, etc.

Between these two groups there are some intrinsically human forms of expression - such as imitation, insight, identification, imaginative capacity, fantasy and feeling which could be said to connect the two groups.

Historical studies of play (see HdS, 1) suggest that play is always part of a specific cultural historical phenomenon and that play is always subject to external life conditions. A game in all the different variants in which it is played is always subject to an incalculable number of intercultural, ethnic, geographical, economic, political and social conditions.

Certain types of toys and games have not always had the same importance in all societies but, when certain games survive, it is children who elegantly hand them down from one generation to the next.

According to Aries (1975), the value and significance of children in different societies and historical eras has varied and the value and significance of their toys has changed. Over time, innumerable explanations have been attributed to the term/phenomenon and these have been affected by the traditional phenomenological attitudes and dependent on the needs of the different political systems and ideologies for suitable explanations.

In the past, the meaning of play has undergone frequent revision. According to Kreuzer (HdS, 1:7-29), the meaning of play is currently again the subject of revision. One way in which to explain play with toys while respecting the impressionist functions in children's play is featured in a number of cultural and social anthropological doctrines of play and in the so-called ecological or eco-pedagogical doctrine.

On the basis of these doctrines, with this kind of a "relative" way of explaining play with toys and simultaneously relating them to the more traditional explanations, this book links up these explanations about toys and play:

Play and development

In concise form, ideas about "free play" and the child's "own activity" ripen on the basis of Frøbel's play theory (1782-1852).

Frøbel invents and refers to a number of play forms which are only used in kindergartens in order to stimulate the children's feelings for freedom, unit, fellowship and community.

The majority of theories about play accept the basic concept that play can *stimulate children's development* in several ways although many theories express some doubt as to the value of adult participation or direct involvement in children's play. The basic argument is that adult intervention inhibits children's spontaneous play and development.

Play and learning

The basic tenet here is that through play and imitation, the child assimilates; consolidates structures he has already learned. (Assimilation: the child adapts to his environment of his own accord.)

Piaget (1951) defines play as an assimilative process - learning as a process which demands assimilation and accommodation. (Accommodation: the child adapts his cognitive structures to fit his environment.)

According to Piaget,the difference between play and intellectual behaviour is that the assimilation process dominates play and that the child thus adapts objective reality to fit his subjective inner self.

Piaget demonstrates that play and imitation are not one and the same thing because imitation is the opposite of play because it is dominated by the accommodation process. But both play and imitation are of course important processes in the child's intellectual development.

With reference to Piaget's description of the above, Smilansky (1968) points out, however, that the influence of environment in relation to the child is probably more important than Piaget suggests.

She believes that there are six capabilities/competences which a child has to command before he can participate in role play:

1. The child must be able to imitate and play a role in word and action.

2. The child must be able to make substitutions in play (e.g. a spoon is a telephone).

3. The child must be able to transform environment to action by means of verbal descriptions.

4. The child must possess a certain degree of perseverance, must be able to maintain a role or a theme over a period of time (at least ten minutes).

5. The child must be able to interact with another child or several other children within the framework of the game.

6. The child must be able to communicate verbally about the game and in the game.

Similarly, Schwartzman claims (1978:50-51) that Piaget completely disregards the significance of the socio-cultural environment in which play takes place.

Sutton-Smith (1966, 1971:326-342) points out that Piaget does not allow for the fact that play can be a creative process in which the child learns about reality on an entirely different level and in new ways.

Bruner (1962, 1972) shows that giving one's imagination free rein with the structures of objects, instruments and environment is a prior condition for the problem-solving, intuitive processes in play which are dominant in any situation where experience or learning takes place. Also, Garvey (1977) gives examples of the constructive significance of play for learning. Common to these last-mentioned theories about play and cognition is that they attribute a significant importance to toys and props for the child's development and learning through play.

Play and socialisation

The motivation here is that, through play, the child learns roles and behavioural patterns which always belong to the adult world.

In particular, Leontjev (1977) shows that play is a reproduction of the adult world and that, in "let's pretend" play, the children themselves think up only very little that is new or original. The role of the adults or the role of the game is to teach the child the society's correct functions and symbols and this is achieved via direct involvement - control, correction - in the child's play.

Elkonen (1971) indicates that the basis for abstract thought is founded through play, where children develop the ability to liberate themselves from the stereotype character of play and instead turn the activity into targeted working processes.

Vygotskji (1962, 1967) plots an individual course for himself within this theoretical sphere and explains how a child's ability to change his personal relationship to his environment occurs as the value of the action in play is gradually apportioned greater significance than the value and significance of the situation or object itself.

However, what these theories have in common is that, during their development, they were subject to the general political ideology which (in the Soviet Union) was quite literally enforced but which has now more or less died away and incidentally bears no influence whatever on the content of this book.

Play, psychoanalysis and play therapy

The motivation here is that play is the most important means available to the child for working through his own problems relative to the world around him.

We are concerned here of course with children in serious difficulty and with aberrations. Through play, these children can in fact work through and experiment with solutions and possibilities, negative as well as positive. Play is used as a diagnostic instrument for learning about the causes of the child's frustrations, blockages or angst, prior to formulating therapy with or without the participation of a therapist.

The question of whether therapists ought to participate actively is problematic because the child's trauma is related to relationships with his close family and immediate environment.

In the beginning, these problems were tackled by Anna Freud (1946), Axline (1947), Klein (1959), Smilansky (1968) and more recent points of view have been expressed by Winnicot (1971), Lindqvist (1977) and in particular detail by Singer & Singer (1976), etc.

Smilansky (1968) indicates, among other things, that many children need to be taught to play - both to learn to play and to learn the processes and techniques of play, through learning to see themselves as both actor and audience in their own game. Through play exercises, the child gains insight into the world of his own fantasy and imagination and in doing so, he learns about his own opportunities and limitations. (See earlier section).

Winnicot (1971) shows with his theory about the third room - which lies between the inner psychic reality and the external material world - how, through play, the child mixes the external phenomena with fictive imagined images from his own dream world.

Therapeutic attitudes and certain forms of limitation are, however, also applied to normal children.

The sources of inspiration for developments of this kind include in particular Erikson's theory as applied in three widely different directions, represented e.g. by Heinsohn & Knieper (1978) - who see a correlation with forms of Marxist upbringing in the former DDR, Schmidtchen (1978) - who sees possibilities in connection with family therapy and treatment and Wood (1984) - who is inspired to see correlation between these and the teaching of art and art therapy.

Wood shows how play in the form of community drawing and painting tasks for children - on the basis of a specified motif - automatically demonstrates to the teacher or therapist the psycho-dynamic terms in the process itself, thus reflecting the participants' (children's) inability or lack of will to be personally active. These psycho-dynamic terms can later be discussed or analysed.

Play and drama

Role play is play where the children are imitators, actors and/or instructors. Acting out a role and drama are trained theatrical play with the children as

actors and where the instructors are usually adults. The distinction between the terms is significant.

Ward (1930, 1952 and 1957) and Siks (1958) make no distinction between role play and dramatic play. Both authors in fact call role play “dramatic play” and see adult participation as an important factor in developing the play through dialogue and play, including hints and ideas, songs, music, stories, sketches, visual and aural impressions through which the children gain new nourishment for developing their fantasy and imaginative capacities. Play between adults and children is intended to give mutual development and inspiration.

By contrast, Slate (1965) describes play as a special and original art form which is deeply moral and aesthetic in expression and which some children master better than others. According to his theory, there are two basic forms of expression in play, personal and projective:

In the personal form, play is a physical, completely personal expression of the different, at times artistic, forms of expression, such as the ability to sing, act, dance, play, master equipment and props, move the body, etc.

In the projective form, play is the use of socially and environmentally oriented impressions gained from outside oneself and these remain external but - through improvisation and fantasising - the child attempts to internalise them.

Developments within play and drama over the past 20-30 years have, however, reduced role play and drama to the state of trained performance or demonstrative (total) theatre or circus games with children as actors and the adults as instructors: The theories often have strong political, pedagogical undertones.

In particular, the theories developed by Boal & Magner, who, according to Ebert and Paris (1979), show how teachers, by studying children at play, can come up with new ideas for role play through which to make children aware of the injustices in (capitalist!) society and in everyday problems.

Bolton (1979) makes a direct connection between his drama theory and Vygotskji’s because role play can demonstrate how the child’s personal relationship to his environment can be changed by giving him knowledge and abilities in relation to actions and practise which are organised by an adult.

At the end of the 1980’s, this strongly politico-pedagogical strain has been partly supplemented and partly substituted in particular by new romantic children’s drama with both classical and modern fairy tales, myths and children’s literature as its text basis - but that too is staged by adults.

Beyond the sphere of instruction and theatre, children continue to play their traditional role play with themselves as directors, actors and audience, principally inspired by many TV series for children and adults, comic books, PC games and toys.

From time to time, adults are allowed to participate, most often as the audience but under the influence of the family's lifestyle and way of life.

Play, culture and social anthropology

As mentioned earlier, play can also be seen as a form of culture when it voluntarily, originally and artistically represents culture. Schwartzman (1978) gives us the most comprehensive overview of this phenomenon but Stevens (1976:11-12) describes many of the same areas and reaches the following conclusion about play in a social anthropological light:

1. Play is reflected in and an expression of cultural values
2. Play is instruction in social roles
3. Play facilitates the development of motor control
4. Play is a freeing mechanism.

In social anthropological studies, "culture" is analysed within the framework of five theoretical perspectives, viz.;

- antiquarianism
- evolutionism
- diffusionism
- functionalism and structuralism

Antiquarianism - includes the ancient, often sporadically collected descriptions of customs, rites and ceremonies in "strange and unfamiliar" cultures, including play and games. Collectors were often millionaire ambassadors, teachers or explorers. Some of the early accounts are, however, sketchy and prejudiced. Others are unique cultural inheritances which give valuable information about play and games traditions.

It is a well-known fact that Freud refers to many of these collected accounts in his book "Totem and Taboo".

Evolutionism - includes the theoretical perspectives concerned with the development of cultures. In earlier times, the motivation for these was categorised in one of three perspectives:

- Cultures develop stage by stage on the basis of specific deterministic laws.
- Cultures develop from simplicity to complexity.
- The similarities between the various cultures and societies are greater than the differences because, wherever he is in the world, a human being has the same fundamental needs - a fact which explains the parallel and independent development of a variety of cultures/societies (cultural relativism).

Hall (1906) described how, through play, the human being recapitulates the development of Mankind.

Edwards (1973) describes how sport develops from simplicity to complexity and Ibrahim (1975:40) describes how games and sport in particular are associated with certain social classes in a society.

Diffusionism embraces the ways in which cultures have spread, including how knowledge of the various games first occurred and then disseminated.

There are three points of view on this:

- that play spreads naturally and independently. (It just has to be useful.)
- that play spreads out from a cultural power-house.
- that play spreads within a specific geographic area (and goes no further).

And not only toys are spread for different reasons: stories, songs and melodies spread too.

In connection with an overview and account of the various studies of collection and play (1978:94-96), Schwartzman stated that adaptation is subject to certain laws, dependent on the nature of the eco-social systems.

Functionalism includes functional analyses of society. The idea behind this is that:

- Each culture can be described in the light of its own functional and internal systems. (Thus certain types of play can be described as cultural play, connected to a specific culture/society.)
- Social behaviour exists to maintain the social structures of a society (where it is the function of certain games to contribute to the players' gaining knowledge about what is correct behaviour).
- A society is a total network of social connections (which means that certain games are legal or illegal, depending on the social framework in which they are played).
- Cultural characteristics are an important constituent of a society's functions (which is emphasised by the games being played in a special or particular way, depending on local traditions, way of life or lifestyle).

and

- The function of cultural characteristics is to ensure and/or fulfil individual needs within the society (thus certain games become a safety valve for the needs of the individual).

Structuralism and functionalism are in many ways two sides of the same coin.

Structuralism describes the nature of the mutual relationship between things and how a unit is built. Functionalism describes how things work.

Sutton-Smith (1974:a:10) states, however, that, where structural and functional toy analyses are concerned, no structural system can in itself

ensure the correct overview about play or a game. There are simply a variety of structures and systems and each system speaks for itself.

This will be described further in the presentation of the five theses on play (the relativistic theories of play).

One could describe the descriptions of Buydendijk (1933), Huizinga (1958) and in particular Caillois (1961) as *"dissolved"* or almost *"antifunctional",* as these authors believe that play is defined by the form taken by the process or activity.

In this connection, Caillois states that a totally expressive state can in fact develop but that, at the same time, the situation brings the person-at-play into a state of dissolution, chaos and loss of consciousness.

An extension of this is Sutton-Smith's (1984,b) description of these "dissolved play processes" which he characterises as self-effacing, ecstatic, anarchistic and leaderless, as control, as "a sensible explanation" and as lacking a specific cause.

I doubt, however, that they always lack a cause!

The great need to find and experience situations and events which contain these dissolved play processes and other similar (crazy) play states seems, however, to be an inevitably strong characteristic of human nature. There are several explanations for why these special situations or events are sought after and why they occur:

Geertz (1972) describes these situations as a direct result of suppression. When an individual finds himself in a situation in which he is completely powerless to flee from his needs (which suppress him), he regenerates in an attempt to find renewal in all the triviality by using intuitive patterns of abstraction, expressed from time to time as grotesque actions.

Derida (1970) explains the phenomenon which he calls "radical play" as an unconscious and impulsive revolt or struggle against the ordered structures in the world (i.e. in society) in which nothing existentially interesting happens, apart from aesthetics or randomness.

Turner (1969) calls them for "limioid inventions": In his social anthropological world picture, they represent a "reserve decision" which atones for the looming and ever-present threat of group conflict - due to the boredom of everyday life or the sadness of a society in which problems are predicted to take a change for the worst - unless other alternative reserve possibilities, changes or variations occur.

However, to a great extent, the content of Turner's theory is built up on Buber's philosophical work "I and Thou" (1959) and on his existential theories about the dialogue between the I and the Thou, the I and its surroundings.

Turner also calls the phenomenon “intuitive perception of a non-transactional quality in inter-human relations”

Gadamer (1982) explains that it is the desire of the person-at-play to give himself up to the game and to seek its “spirit”. Play has its own unwritten laws and “illogical” logic in which the person-at-play can unfold in an alternating playing with and playing against the other participants in the game. As play is, at the same time, an expression of the participants’ shared free will earnestly to have fun, abandon and submission become a conscious intention.

In any circumstances, it is not easy to differentiate between play (fun, uncommitted as the definition of the word suggests) and earnestness, even though in the reality of everyday life the terms are clearly differentiated.

Nor is it easy to classify toys and play. Over the years many different types of play classifications have been drawn up. An outline of these would be a bibliography in itself which doesn’t fall within the scope of this book. (See also chapter 16.)

Play and gender

Gender is understood to be:

– *a biologically determined social category*

since biological gender is a fact which can be used to categorise people into two kinds: males and females. Gender as a social category makes reference to the psycho-social development of the individual as a person with a gender-specific identity.

For example, Haavind (1988:255-258) states that cultural processing of the *symbolic significance of gender* creates humans who are aware of gender.

The human being’s collective and individual self-reflection and empathy for his fellows as beings which act intentionally makes it possible for individual human beings to connect their gender to two systems of identity development.

Society is affected by gender. Social participation demands that the individual understands the intentions and meanings which are natural for gender-affected aspects of society. In order to understand these, an individual must develop an identity which is, naturally, also gender-specific.

In this context, identity is defined as:

a coherent understanding of one’s own possibilities for exerting an influence on significant aspects of the immediate surroundings.

However, gender identity is in fact not unalterable and quite definitely not two-fold but rather a flexible and multifaceted understanding of the person as boy,

girl, man, woman in relation to others. Furthermore, the fact of belonging to a certain gender presents opportunities of which some will be easy and others more difficult to achieve.

There are some interesting studies which support the various theories about gender differences in play with toys:

Biological factors
Erik Erikson (1979) emphasises that differences in children's play are a result of the biological - more specifically the morphological - differences between the sexes.

He discovered that boys build "vertical constructions" which involve active play themes while girls build "frames and fences" which involve static play themes.

Girls' scenarios reflect passivity and enclosure as an expression of the female genitals whilst the boys' constructions reflect the penetrating and upward nature of the male penis and its active sperm cells. I consider Erikson's arguments for these differences to be extremely controversial - bordering on the ridiculous!

Bodil Bruhn (1991) tests Erikson's theory with two groups of Danish children aged 8-10 and 10-12 years (from the LEGO home town - Billund) .

The conclusions were more subtle:

The reason for the differences in the buildings (which Erikson identified) were consistent with the primary physiological differences between the sexes - "the weight of emphasis in the male is external, erect and penetrating - and mobile. In the female, the weight of emphasis is internal, "static" more than on external spheres. (…) The question is not, however, whether there are biological differences between the two sexes but what significance these differences can have. (…) It was interesting to note that I was able with great accuracy to assess whether a model was built by a boy or by a girl just by looking at how the model was built," Bodil Bruhn (1991:22).

Mayer-Bahlburg et al (1988) have documented the relationship between children treated with a synthetic female hormone progesterone and a reduction in violent play.

Their results suggest that the differences between girls' and boys' play is possibly be due to biological factors. Biological factors may have a bearing on children's choice of toys and of play with toys. For example, war toys allow active and violent toy processes which in itself suggests something about hormonal influences.

Socio-cultural factors
Parents tend naturally to pass their own gender roles and understanding of gender on to their children along with the toys they buy for them. Huston,

Eckerman & Stein (1990) and O'Brian & Huston (1985) indicate that parents tend to buy distinctly gender-specific toys for their children to the extent that parents themselves have very specific sex role attitudes - often motivated and stimulated by their education and work/career. This is of course one of the reasons why girls have dolls and boys have cars.

Parents also play differently, depending on whether the child concerned is a boy or a girl. Furthermore, they react differently to comments, facial expressions and touch from boys and girls respectively.

Roggman & Peery (1989) show, for example, that mothers' play with their children is more visual than fathers'. Parents contribute therefore to gender distinctions because their attitudes to their children's games and types of play differ.

Sex and roles in advertising and on packaging
Even though boys and girls play in different ways and prefer different toys, both types of toys and play environments affect children's behaviour. However, social learning relative to play style is not only limited to personal influences (effect of parents and playmates).

A number of media can be attributed influence. Where sex roles are concerned in connection with toys and play, attention must be paid to TV advertising and images on toy packaging. Some of the more important research projects in this sphere will be mentioned here. Several research projects' results suggest that toy advertising is a direct reflection of the conventional sex role definition.

Greer et al (1982) made two "pseudo-ads" which replaced real toys with abstract forms. One pseudo-ad was built up over some characteristics which were mainly recognisable in ads aimed at girls. The other was similarly constructed for boys. Both ads were shown to boys and girls. Children in all age groups took part in the research and all the children could identify and very clearly differentiated between the two different types of ad with "girl features" for girls/women and "boy features" for boys/men.

According to Greenfield (1984), TV ads are the greatest sinners in the presentation of stereotype sex roles (see chapter 7 Toy Advertising).

At the age of three years, American children who see most TV (intensive TV viewing for more the 4-5 hours a day) already have a more stereotype comprehension of sex roles than children who watch TV less frequently.

The children have learned these stereotypes from watching ordinary entertainment programmes, films and advertising (including advertising for toys and games).

Advertising for girls' toys usually contains many vague and ephemeral elements with quiet and serious background music.

For boys, the ads are usually filled with strong and sometimes violent sound effects, very loud music, spots and cuttings.

Schwartz & Markham (1985) analysed 392 photographs of children with toys in 12 toy catalogues and 538 photographs of children with toys on toy packaging.

Toys regarded as promoting sex-stereotyping to a moderate extent promoted stereotyping just as strongly in toy advertising as those which were evaluated as promoting sex-stereotypes to a great extent. This result indicates that the degree to which the toy promotes sex-stereotyping correlates closely to the gender of the child pictured with the toy in the catalogue.

A particularly comprehensive study was carried out by Kline & Pentecost in 1990. They studied 150 randomly selected toy ads selected from children's TV programmes in USA and Canada.

Their analyses of toy advertising on TV showed that there is an extremely clear gender-specific effect. The types of toys and the children presented with them showed a very high level of sex differentiation.

Play with dolls dominated in the toy ads directed exclusively at girls (84% of all ads). By contrast, only 45% of ads aimed at boys featured play with dolls and these consisted only of ads for action dolls (Masters of the Universe figures, G.I. Joe and the like).

Despite the very large number of ads for the various types of dolls, these ads almost never showed girls and boys playing together with dolls. In 91% of ads for dolls, the groups of children playing with them were single gender groups.

Animals: Only very few ads involving animals showed boys and girls playing together.

Cars, weapons, games and construction sets: 66% of the ads for games, cars and weapons depicted children playing in mixed gender groups.

Boys were depicted playing with a very much larger number of different types of toys and toy objects than girls. These included toy cars, weapons, construction sets and electronic video games. Ads for games, however, which accounted for 10% of the total, did depict girls and boys playing together .

Kline & Pentecost indicate that there is a difference in the way in which girls and boys are depicted in relation to their toys.

Girls are shown in "interactive and identity-confirming communities" with their toys, i.e. that they assume a separate identity which conforms to the identity of the toy.

Boys are presented in a way which indicates that they identify with their toys, i.e. that they assume the being or character of the toy as part of their own being/character. In the My Little Pony ad the girls didn't become ponies but assumed a referential role and identity relating to the ponies. If boys played Batman, they became Batman.

Seventy-five toy ads shown on British TV in the Christmas period 1988 were analysed by Smith (1990, 1990). The ads were sex role stereotyped and coded aggressively.

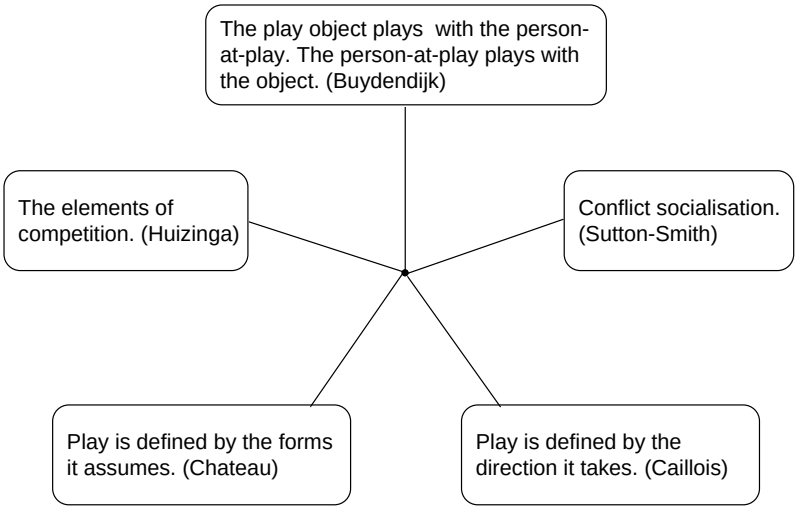
There was an equal distribution in the number of girls and boys. Ads for dolls and cars were exceptions. There was no sex differentiation in the ads for other products.

Boys were more often depicted in competitive play and girls tended to be shown co-operating with each other. The boys were more active than the girls. The most striking finding in the British study was that in 74% of the ads the speaker or commentator was male.

CHAPTER 10 THE RELATIVITY OF PLAY

Is play some form of cultural and social anthropological phenomenon in human development, life and socialisation, developed under the right environmental conditions and with the prerequisite materials?

The following theories deal with this question and apportion the environment - including the nature of toys - great but varying significance.



Play, object and play

Play is not only that the person-at-plays with something - but is also that "something" plays with the person-at-play. Buydendijk (1933)

When adults observe children's play and their incredible activity and vitality, they are often amazed by the children's concentration, perseverance and tenacity.

An expression often used to describe (participants') children's concentration in play is that they are "in a world of their own" and that this explains their devotion to play.

Play itself (within its environment and context) has been described as "an enclosed space", relative to the open space around it. It is quite obvious to the observer that the person-at-play experiences something during play which he doesn't experience when he carries out or completes a targeted activity. A piece of work which is carried out consciously and with concentration is quite a different type of action than play.

Work is carried out by means of power and self-discipline and demonstrates mastery (hegemony) over the situation. If work is successful, its environment

is put into order in a logical way exactly as the person intended his environment to be.

“What significance does this have for the content of play in relation to other activities?,” asks Buydendijk (1933:9). He also indicates that play involves a number of dimensions in terms of content and experience, indicated e.g, by the way in which spontaneous actions are carried out in play in contrast to deliberate actions carried out in other contexts.

While a lack of experience is not sufficient explanation for human beings’ spontaneous actions, having experience is not a sufficient explanation for their conscious, intentional actions, Buydendijk explains (1933:9) - motivated by his idea that the person-at-play relates:

- emotionally, passionately to his environment (Greek “pathos” - feeling, passion).

The opposite would be to relate:

- rationally, consciously (Greek “gnosis” - recognition, knowledge, deeper insight).

The relationship between the two terms alters and develops as feelings, passions and fascination express the child’s being in actions and play while recognition and experiences, knowledge and insight are more characteristic of the adult. In Bujdendijk’s explanation, the contrast between gnosis and pathos, intention/spontaneity, self-consciousness/forgetting oneself, power/powerlessness, distancing oneself from/devoting oneself to is elementary to the very nature of play because it brings elements of tension and surprise, hurdles to be overcome. (See Huizinga’s explanation of Buydendijk’s theory.)

Huizinga (1963:51) mentions that Buydendijk uses a variety of expressions to describe the nature of play: sense, consciousness, mind, thoughts, opinion, understanding and spirit.

Åm (1984,1989) - inspired by the work of Buydendijk - indicates in her study of play in kindergartens that children’s social fantasy play always contains this contrast because there is an area of tension between power and emotion. (She calls this “deep play”: it was Geertz (1972) who coined the phrase.)

This area of tension in children’s play expresses transactional aspects in the form of negotiations: who is allowed to participate in the game?, who will make decisions?, who gets to play the good roles?, who will have which toy?, etc. Play is a game full of contradictions concerned with status and resources because the participants seek to maximise certain values and one of the most important of these values is hegemony, power.

Schwartzman (1978:237) studied children’s conversation in order to find the power structures in play and social groups. She uses the terms text/context

(play content/play framework) to explain that some children are by nature more powerful than others, more prone to use commanding body language and special expressions by means of which they either enclose other children within or exclude them from the play group. Schwartzman was inspired in particular by Bateson's metacommunication theory (1972, 1978) where metacommunication in play is used on two levels:

- Firstly, to establish, maintain and develop play by means of order and rules.

- Secondly, a parallel form of metacommunication controls the relationships of power, position, roles, persons and objects so that disorder and contravention of the rules of the game do not gain the upper hand.

However, metacommunication is not play but rather an incredibly good way to explain the many facets and qualities inherent in play.

In play, as in all social relations, it is important that the child learns how to find his place in the hierarchy. The process also involves coping with relinquishing power, devoting oneself directly to others, being subject to the domination of others and subjecting oneself to the influence of others simply because "power is legitimate force" (Dumont (1966:153)). According to Åm (1991), "power" is always present. I totally disagree.

To sum up, using Buydendijk's basic attitude to play, the relationship can be expressed as follows:

When something plays with the person-at-play, that "something" can be other persons-at-play, toys and the environment. Play occurs between two poles:

Hegemony	**Emotion**
Gnosis	**Pathos**
knowledge, recognition, ability	feelings, passions
self-awareness	forgetting oneself
co-operation	collaboration
deliberate actions	spontaneity

When the person-at-person accepts that he must give up the transactional aspect - negotiations (i.e. how far a playmate, the toys or the surroundings are to be allowed/not allowed to exert power and influence) and experiences and "forgetting himself"- we can say that this person-at-play becomes:

- *"a different person"*
- in *"another world".*

The human being at play - Homo Ludens

Huizinga (1938) formulates the most radical theories about the nature of play by accounting for how social processes are basically controlled by the same processes as play.

Motivated by Buydendijk's (1933) argument that animals play in exactly the same way as people and that all the basic elements of play are to be found in the animal world, Huizinga states that play is something other than just a purely physiological phenomenon or psychic reaction. Play breaches the boundaries of purely biological or physical reality and therefore becomes a meaningful function - because in play "something or other" plays a role which "gives the action meaning" (1963:9).

Play is therefore a great many things and an unequivocal definition is impossible. Play does, however, have two elementary basic motivations:

- *competition* a race to reach a decision) and

- *demonstration* during which something is produced (from new), reproduced or copied (imitation).

More or less every kind of action includes play and play is part of all levels of life, visible or invisible, overt or covert.

Play is therefore a form of folk ritual, a cultural, symbolic common medium which reconstructs important or significant events on innumerable levels. In play, the events are "re-enacted" as rituals, cultural phenomena which sometimes even gain religious aspects, possibly even replacing the religious ceremonies of ancient times. In this context it is important to differentiate between the various "(play) ceremonial forms":

- Memorial ceremonial games which re-enact the more significant historical events of the past - often with famous names in the leading roles. Examples: historical moments and cross-national symbols.

- Response ceremonial games capture in particular current events of a traumatic kind, present-day events which are of interest to very large sections of the population nationally or in the local area Examples: royal funerals, disasters.

- Recreational ceremonial games are copies of greater, more significant institutionalised rituals or events which overwhelm or postpone everyday time and space and become play. Examples here are carnivals, national football matches, the more important recreational public holidays, royal weddings, etc.

- Transformative ceremonial games reconstruct and re-enact events containing social (cultural, political) events of special significance to the

persons-at-play. These are events which in some way reorganise the day-to-day order of things in a local community, alter the way of life of groups or sectors of a community or which have brought about a re-interpretation of existence and daily life.

- Examples on the individual level are weddings, births, loss of a close relative or friend. On the global level, the Apollo moon-landing, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

In his etymological studies, Huizinga compares the word play in a number of different languages: Ancient Greek, Sanskrit, Japanese, Chinese, Blackfoot Indian, Semitic, the Romantic and Germanic languages.

He lists the following:

- light-heartedness
- insignificant
- competition
- concentration
- erotic play, coquetry
- masked games, laughter and ridicule
- fraud and simulation
- taking risks

His broad (and more personal) definition of play is, however, tinged by his own contradiction. Apart from the words listed in his analysis, he also describes play as voluntary, fun, having its own time axis and characterised by its own rules and pleasures but he also describes play as differing from the demands of daily life. At the same time, he states, with reference to organised play (and sports) that:

"With increased systematisation and discipline in play, over time some of the pure play content is lost. This is especially apparent when players are divided into amateurs and professionals. The play group naturally splits off the players for whom the game has ceased to be play, " because when a human being really wants to play, he has to play like a child!"" (1963:199)

In his descriptions of historical examples of "play", he refers to examples of slanderous competitions which aimed to destroy the loser's position in society, trials of suffering and perseverance as part of special rituals and ceremonies, tests of strength in the form of exaggerated and potentially lethal wagers, fights in the line of battle and fights to the death. Most classical Greek competitions were a fight to the death with the sole intention of demonstrating the superior nature of the competitive game and that the most bloody Roman gladiator contests were pure entertainment, toying with human lives, etc.

According to Huizinga (1963:52), the examples are intended to emphasise the meaning of the word because:

"Play is positive, seriousness is negative. Seriousness is defined as the negation of play and that definition is exhaustive, so seriousness is non-play and that's that. By contrast, the meaning of play is in no way defined by "non-seriousness" and the definition is anything but exhaustive. Play is something quite unique and the concept of play is on a much higher level than the concept of seriousness. Because seriousness seeks to exclude play while play can very easily include the concept of seriousness within itself."

Huizinga indicates, therefore, that everything he sees as play has two sides. If not, then it is not play:

*	*
fun	tense
voluntary	unselfish
full of joy	bloody
childlike	fateful
spontaneous and wanton	unloving

There is, therefore, something completely contradictory and generally discordant about Huizinga's description of the concept of play.

Energy, discipline, time and space

> *What is characteristic of play as an activity is not the energy the child puts into it but the direction of that energy.*

In 1946, Chateau sees the term play, as described by both Huizinga and Buydendijk, as something very important and serious in the world of the child. Chateau presents play in the form of a complete and comprehensive theory about how children see play and the importance play can have in childhood under certain preconditions, because what characterises play is not the energy the child puts into it but the direction of that energy.

Chateau splits the theory into three areas:

- energies in play
- play discipline
- play in time and space

Each area will be described in the following:

Where *energies in play* are concerned, he differentiates between children's and adult's ways of playing, the different ways in which they use energies in play. He also describes the different games played at different levels through childhood. At the different levels on which play occurs, play itself is filled with energies which the child during childhood has to try to master through

preparatory and developmental practice (play). By practising, on the strength of astonishing perseverance, the child learns self-discipline, ethics and orderliness.

There are rules for the process and the work involved in the energies in play and these are observed and controlled during the play process by other participants and, in the case of solitary play - by the child himself.

The child feels he owns and is responsible for the energies in play and that he alone is responsible for the order and rules of play. The burden of responsibility can, however, mean that the child is vulnerable, lonely and prone to inferiority complexes if his parents, older siblings or other children make clever or slating remarks about the child's way of playing or the characteristics or process of the activity.

In addition, the child develops his own personal power over the game and can often give the impression that he has overweening ambitions for forcing his rules of order and discipline in the game on others.

At the same time, the child's demonstrating his power is an expression of his belief that he can get by on his own (where even the most demanding aspects of play or an activity are concerned). However, this demonstration of power also expresses experimentation, trying out different degrees of difficulty in order to find fresh solutions to new and difficult problems.

A game or activity can, therefore, also be a serious, incredibly challenging and difficult task which can only be accomplished by missing out on other things in everyday life. Order, rules, discipline and a sense of proportion are necessary if the child is to succeed.

The *discipline* which occurs as part of play consists of the child experimenting and practising - very seriously and with deep concentration - bringing order, rules and system into play. The child is often in doubt about the relative values of systems of order and rules, their meaning and quality. He will therefore often change tactics during the play process which explains why order and rules sometimes seem to work only sporadically. Order and rules are regulated in relation to the other persons in the game and in relation to the toys used in the game. The child also persists in his attempts to build up his own personal discipline and world picture which ensures that he develops his own sense of proportion and power over the play process.

However, the child inevitably runs into a large number of obstacles in the process. These are challenging, disruptive (irritating) and contradictory.

Among all the obstacles he encounters, the child's own egocentricity is the most important. However, problems associated with being more or less dependent on others (friends, siblings, as well as parents) and with being subject to the norms and rules which govern his surroundings are also significant.

Furthermore, the child encounters obstacles related to correlating his personal needs and experiences gained in his own play with the traditions and ceremonies of everyday life which are self-perpetuating and which demand that the child imitates them in a disciplined learning process (e.g. personal hygiene, maintaining silence on taboo subjects, showing consideration for others and keeping to agreements, etc.) - and *which are not play*.

In play, children give each other a mutual value and significance and are also each other's guarantee for maintaining order and discipline and adhering to the rules. They confirm this during the game by describing their own and others' actions in (sometimes very long) dialogues (or songs), thus legitimising the rules.

As mentioned, children are participants, controllers and audience and are therefore well aware of the honesty and dishonesty in each other's actions. Honesty and dishonesty are two sides of the same story, formalised in play by mutual confirmation, repeated time and time again and they often end up being ritualised.

Co-operation between the persons-at-play is only successful if the participants are willing to renounce sovereignty, i.e. willing to give up their own personal attitude to order and discipline. At the end of the game, they will all say that it was a good game even though they cannot precisely remember what they played.

According to Chateau, play in time and space has several dimensions. Chateau accounts for how the energy rhythms in play are subject to changing factors in life and existence and to how play is determined by time and space. Children have their own cultural environment (which is often not visible to the adult eye), their own sociology and (child) culture which thrives on its own and which is subject to its own independent limits, rules and order.

The limits for special improvisations and games are extended on special occasions, on social/family occasions, festivals, celebrations and seasonal ceremonies, when the adults can accept wantonness of a kind they are unwilling to accept in everyday life where different sets of rituals must be respected.

The limits for games in everyday life are subject to the different norms, rules and rituals in everyday life, in the same way as time and place (spaces) affect the quality and processes in play. The limits of play also alter in relation to Nature, the changing seasons, ecological conditions and changing circumstances, including the physical and psychological circumstances.

Chateau classifies play as either individual play or social play and according to the degree of realism it contains (Chateau:349-350). Individual play is split into three main groups:

- play without rules
- play which concretises intelligence

- self-active play

Social play is divided into two main groups:

- play with rules
- co-operative play

which - in fact - is limited to being:

- figurative: (“let’s pretend” play)
- objective (objective in relation to the possibility for sustaining the process through to a result)
- abstract (indiscriminate and arbitrary).

Within each of these main groups, Chateau gives examples of different play, which, as mentioned above, can be played on several different levels, depending on the child’s individual stage of development.

Chateau attributes certain energies, characteristics, qualities and values to play in advance. The child takes up each of these, uses them and cannot do without them if he is to develop into a social individual in his particular society.

To sum up, these can be listed:

- renunciation, asceticism
- seriousness
- perseverance
- inclination
- activity
- immediacy
- competition (testing, seeking, limiting)

Chateau describes the child’s attempts, through perseverance and renunciation, to gain opportunities for testing out his own strength in the energies within play, the complex problems in different situations, using a variety of useful objects.

Chateau’s attempts to formulate a comprehensive theory of play in which he draws attention to the factors which characterise play as an activity (i.e. not just as energy put to use but the direction the energy “travels” within the limitations of environment and the game) is an extension of Caillois’ descriptions of the different forms of play.

Play forms, production and quality

Play is defined by the forms it takes. Caillois (1958) returns to Huizinga's description of the problems inherent in play, i.e. duplicity and contradiction.

Caillois stated that play can never be defined in advance, simply because it is defined by the forms it takes (Caillois, 1958:16).

There are therefore innumerable permutations because no-one can state precisely how a game will progress, develop or which forms it will take, depending on the various ages and stage of development of the persons-at-play and in relation to psychological norms, etc. etc.

Caillois' way of describing play is highly original:

The Form -	play takes (Caillois names six forms) will, during
Production -	occur in a certain atmosphere because any game has certain dynamic characteristics (Caillois names four types). These characteristics can then be accredited with
Quality	depending on the social and cultural environment in which the game occurs.

Defining what is good or poor quality takes place when the game is underway on the basis of the process, the persons-at-play, the observers or controllers. (Caillois names three frameworks within which quality evaluation takes place.)

Caillois defines the following six "play forms":

1. A *free* form - where the person-at-play cannot be coerced into play without the game losing its appeal as pleasurable recreation or a fun/happy activity.

2. A *separate* form - where play is restricted to precise limits of time and space, designated in advance.

3. An *uncertain* form - where neither the play process nor result is decided on or defined in advance because the persons-at-play have a degree of freedom to "explore and invent", to use their initiative and imagination.

4. An *unproductive* form - where play creates no good useful tools or new constructions or elements of any kind but which ends as it began. The participants do not expect a result or feel a need for anything valuable to manifest itself.

5. A *regulated* form - where play is subject to rules which suspend the ordinary norms, rules or laws, temporarily introducing new rules or laws which are valid and unchallenged.

6. A *fictive* form, where play is accompanied by a special form of consciousness of “an alternative reality” or a “complete unreality” as opposed to the reality of everyday life.

In fact, there are only slight differences between Huizinga’s and Caillois’ theories about the different forms of play. The symbolic value and marginal utility of play is not discussed as both authors imply that this cannot be discussed because:

play is humanity - humanity is play.

The two authors also agree that play is a life function which cannot be completely defined - neither in logical nor in biological terms.

The concept of play hovers beyond thought, the sphere in which the human being usually expresses his spiritual and social life structures. Paradoxically, therefore, the fourth play form, the unproductive form, may appear to be the most useful and original form of action, activity or play (as long as it is part of a developmental and progressive philosophical evaluation which usually and necessarily ends up indicating “progress”) because it is cannot be evaluated on the basis of its marginal utility nor does it have any predetermined target and therefore releases incredible “energies” which can also be used in other spheres.

Any play or game can be “produced” or occurs somewhere between two conflicting poles which Caillois characterises using Greek terms:

Paidia **Ludus**

Attitudes and behaviour are characterised by violence, noise, laughter and tumult	Attitudes and behaviour are characterised by concentration, perseverance and stamina

Agon
competition

Alea
chance

Mimicry
simulation/copying

Ilnix
euphoria/dizziness

The different forms of quality in play include three aspects:

- **cultural**
- **institutional**
- **corrupt**

Any play/game occurs somewhere between the two poles and might move to one side or to the other during play. Certain games occur naturally in a certain atmosphere and have certain dynamic characteristics and it would be a breach of normal rules and even an expression of poor ethics to doubt the position of such a game.

Caillois (1958:46) accords the games four different dynamic characteristics, also using Greek terminology. These are described as:

Agon - competition, race - demonstrates who has mastery over whatever it is the competition or race is about. During or at the end of the process, there will be a winner and a loser.

Alea - chance - demonstrates/results in a practical decision which can change the end-result of a process where there is a conscious search for a settlement and where the result cannot be predicted.

Mimicry - simulation, copying - demonstrates/produces a copy of an original, compares something which is previously familiar or copies events, situations or people.

Ilnix - euphoria, dizziness, intoxication - demonstrates/produces how the persons-at-play are brought into some kind of trance, euphoria, dizziness or are intoxicated by doing some particular thing or participating in a particular process.

The four different dynamic characteristics overlap each other during play. How or where the games are played is significant. Differing circumstances may apply, ranging from time and space to the dispositions of the participants and preconditions for the situation or event.

Examples of the three forms of *quality* are listed below:

Cultural forms - on the borderline to social life:

Competition	sports
Chance	lottery, casino, betting on horses, wagers
Simulation	carnival, theatre, cinema, idol worship
Euphoria	slalom, ski jumping, flying trapeze, record-breaking
(Observation	- see below)

Institutional forms - socially integrated:

Competition	scientific or open competitions, examinations
Chance	investing on the Stock Exchange
Simulation	uniforms, etiquette, ceremonies, representative work
Euphoria	Work in which dizziness has to be overcome
(Observation	- see below)

Corruption:

Competition:	violence, terror, abuse of power, harassment, cheating
Chance:	superstition, astrology
Simulation:	expressing indifference, coldness, exaggerating one's own capabilities
Euphoria:	alcoholism, narcotics addiction
(Observation	- see below)

Even though the examples are from the adult world of play/games, it is easy to relate these terms to play and games in the child's world.

During play involving both adults and children, there is a certain amount of "rubbing off" from the adult to the child which the child later tries out in play/games with other children… and has to face the consequences. (Strange to note that, along with the four dynamic, i.e. active, qualities in play, Caillois also describes a fifth *passive* quality: observation. Observation is a natural occurrence within cultural, institutional and corrupt forms of play.)

The cultural and social forms of play are presented by Buydendijk, Huizinga and Chateau whilst *corruption* as a play form is presented for the first time in Chateau's work.

In most games it is legitimate to cheat your opponent within the limitations of the rules but it is seldom legitimate to cheat on players on your own side.

People play only what they want to play and only for as long as they want - if not, then play is no longer play!
eg
Caillois' definition and categorisation of play also includes the many forms of corruption in which play becomes a vague entity, dependent upon the personality structure and personal "style of play and ethics of the person-at-play" (which a child gains in a variety of ways, i.e. from TV series, books and magazines, toys, etc.). The cultural and social environment in which the child is growing up forms the basis for his use of the different forms of play. Limitations, rules and barriers (often a product of the adult perspective) are tested and re-tested by the child through play. He doesn't stop playing until he has discovered and experienced the entire content of the game, its qualities and opportunities.

In order to get as much as at all possible out of a game, the child can therefore resort to "corruption, magic and imaginary characteristics" - because it is only a game. Play consists of the person-at-play confirming and describing his own and others' actions and imaginary pictures through dialogue and account. One consequence of placing the concept of corruption in play is that the concepts of morals and ethics follow in its wake.

CHAPTER 11 PLAY AS PARADOX

Play between text and context, conflict and existence, order and anarchy.

Brian Sutton-Smith criticises theories whose perspectives are restricted to the content and function (text) of play.

He believes that the astonishing dynamism of play and the wide variety of circumstances and variable premises in and under which play occurs and develops (context) are of extremely great importance.

Brian Sutton-Smith's works therefore include a synopsis of theories to date. He develops them further, integrates them and gives examples via studies of a popular and anthropological kind.

Sutton-Smith calls play a relativistic existential phenomenon in which nothing is given in advance. Play and games involve children and adults alike in a constant, existential conflict socialisation as all games and play contain complex contradictions and involve deep emotions.

Text and context

In order to create an overview of the many elements of play, Sutton-Smith applies the relationship between text and context in communication as it has been described by Bateson (1955) in his theory of communication. The simple theory is that any game (the text) functions as commentary on or interpretation of what is happening in the circumstances and beyond the framework of play (the context).

As earlier mentioned, Bateson calls that aspect of communication which is the experience of how the text is interpreted by the person-at-play *metacommunication.* Play is therefore seen as a unique phenomenon for comprehending the depth and nuances in all human communication. (See Chapter 12: Genre relation and object transformation.)

Applying Bateson's concepts, if the person-at-play is to be able to play at all, he must by definition be able to comprehend the often complex relationship between text and context in play. (There is, however, no guarantee that the observer is able to comprehend this - unless he is informed in advance of the complex aspects of the game in question.)

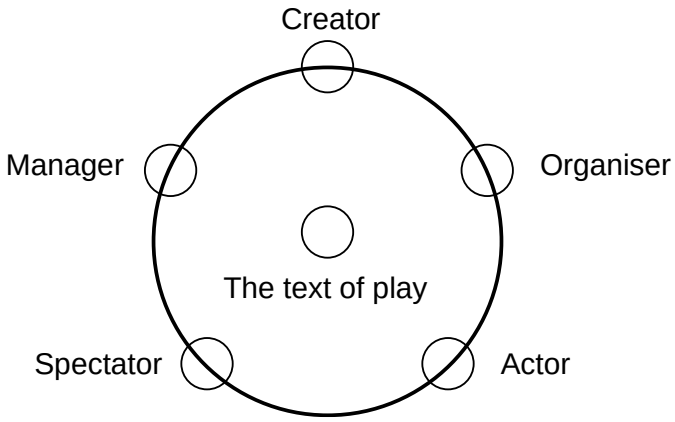
As Huizinga indicates, the "group-at-play" naturally rejects persons for whom the game is no longer play. In other words (in relation to toys), the person-at-play naturally rejects anything he can't play with. There is, however, something paradoxical and contradictory about the metacommunicative message of play because "the processes in which we are currently engaged

do not constitute that which ought to be constituted by the processes constituted by the processes." Bateson (1955:177-193).

Åm (1987:115-124) describes this too:

The paradox is found in the fact that the word "constitute" is applied at different levels of abstraction used synonymously. The person-at-play contravenes the laws of logic. According to Bateson (1955:193), this is due neither to ignorance nor to human imperfection because the origin of play is the human capacity for creating paradoxes within communication."

Communication - "quadreologic communication"



Sutton-Smith calls any game "unique" - because it occurs, progresses and dies out. When the game is played again, the new game is subject to a new time in a new place and with new persons-at-play in a new structure. The many variables make it wrong and indeed impossible to say much at all about the game in advance, for (to quote Caillois) play is defined by the forms it takes.

Sutton-Smith also brings text, context and metacommunication into what he calls "quadreological" ("four-cornered") communication in role play.

He lists four terms characterising the different positions of the persons-at-play within the game and describing the communication which occurs in relation to the distribution of roles.

Role play always consists of four parts:

1. The Author or CREATOR of the story of the game and the persons/roles is the person who makes up the story and selects the possible content with conflicts, intrigues, etc.

2. The ORGANISER or instructor decides how things will take place and undertakes to correct anyone who does things incorrectly, instructs and at intervals frequently “leaves” this own role during play in order to take over others’ roles.

3. The ACTOR is the person who plays a role, reacts, changes his voice and behaviour, etc.

4. The AUDIENCE, the spectator is also part of/included in the game and is selected or permitted to “watch” or observe the others - some of the time. In most cases, the person concerned will look for an opportunity to read the signals or interpret the communication within the game.

Especially where controlled or organised play at school or in child care institutions orplay with adults as participans or observers is concerned, many people have told Sutton-Smith that he lacks the fifth “role term”, i.e.:

5. The MANAGER or controller (referee) who certainly does not have to be an adult but may be a child with a certain status.

The manager decides, leads and distributes roles and functions within the game. This role is, of course, a general leadership role but - as with the other roles - the persons-at-play can take turns at playing the manager role.

Regardless of how many participants there are in a game (a game could be individual play where the person-at-play plays all the roles himself), the person(s)-at-play must retain perspective over all the roles and functions in addition to relating to the text and context of the game in their communication. During the play process the game will certainly be given a new text (re-texted) and may also be given a new context (recontexted).

The metacommunication, the unique aspect of the communication of play, contains the message about how the text is to be interpreted.

Conflict socialisation

Sutton-Smith then incorporates text, context and metacommunication into his theory of conflict socialisation and play.

He has collected a long list of terms and arguments which we can trace back not only to historical and cultural anthropological theories but also to a broad variety of basic conditions which will be discussed in the section “The Play Phenomenon” in Chapter 13.

And all this is in turn integrated with modern psychology. Some of the literary examples which form the basis for Sutton-Smith’s ideas will be mentioned and justified here.

From the sphere of evolutionism, Sutton-Smith cites Bakhtin (1965) who describes and analyses a number of brutal types of medieval competitive games, also described by Rabelais in the 16th century. These descriptions also formed the basis for both Huizinga's and Caillois' evolutionary studies of play and games. In addition, Sutton-Smith cites Mead (the complete works), Bateson (1956), Turner (1969), Geertz (1973), etc.. He also cites comprehensive collections and interpretations of the many historical forms of play and games compared - by means of modern sociological methods - with those of today. These include Opie & Opie (1959), Abrahams (1969) and popular memorabilia collectors such as Culin (1975), Gomme (1894, 1898), etc., alongside Sutton-Smith's own classic New Zealand collection and classification (1959).

Many of the analyses are cited in a large number of descriptions in articles, the majority of which are collected in the major 1971/72 publications: "The Folk Games of Children" and "Child's Play".

Sutton-Smith is motivated by the list of contradictions which can be drawn up on the basis of the earlier cultural historical studies and anthropological treatises. He makes thus a clear distinction between play and games:

	Play	**Games**
*		*
	– informal	– formal
	– disorderly	– organised
	– co-operation is characteristic	– competition is characteristic
	– normal practice makes its mark	– regulations make their mark
	– encourages gathering	– encourages grouping

The points of view behind these characteristics which represent a very important description of the similarities and the differences, are, however, blurred or completely interconnected in modern existence. Sutton-Smith suggests that it can, therefore, be difficult to identify or make clear distinctions between the two forms.

It is worthwhile examining why this is so.

Rubin, Fein & Vanderberg (1983) present (according to Sutton-Smith (1985)) an overall psychological overview of what play is. This overview builds on broad and concise principles concerning what modern psychologists can agree upon as a description of play, i.e.:

1. Play is motivated by instinct.
2. Play is characterised by attention to the process itself rather than to its conclusion.
3. Play is directed by organically dominant questions.
4. Play moves toward instrumental behaviour.
5. Play is free of externally imposed rules.
6. Play involves active participation of the participants.

By comparing the above with the collection of words on play in Huizinga's etymological studies (ibid.) and with the socio-cultural key words related to play found in works by e.g. Geertz (1973), Turner (1982) and Gadamer (1985), Sutton-Smith presents the following:

From Geertz, Turner, Gadamer:	**Psychological key words:**
- trivial	- tension reduction
- frivolous	- abreaction
- immature	- arousal modulating
- childlike	- neural priming
- narcissistic	- metabolic recuperation
- nonsensical	- need stimulation
- free	- heart rate variability
- unreal	- non-prototypic variability
- unnecessary	- proximal zones
- disorderly	- variable transformations
- indiscreet	- self-generative processing
- fluid	- foregrounding
- open	- manipulation of frames
	- paradoxes, etc.

Attempting to identify the basic requirements for a thematic comparison may seem a daunting task. It would include vastly different terms from vastly different scientific disciplines using vastly different terms and metaphors.

> *Sutton-Smith's distinct point is that play and games have had very different significance at the social level over the last two centuries but that the significance of play has increased considerably, especially within the last hundred years. How great the significance of play and games is today is reflected in particular by the definitions given by Rubin, Fein & Vanderberg.*

Order and anarchy

Sutton-Smith gives examples of the significance of play and games in a description which utilises themes in play and games, themes which he believes are more important for modern analyses of play and developmental trends for play within modern society:

Play:

- play as *freedom*, as opposed to force
- play as *imitation and production*, as opposed to pretence
- play as *mastery (hegemony)*, not as laziness
- play as *co-operation and co-ordination.*

The essence of play can thus be summarised in these few words while the way in which play occurs is always an interaction between two possibilities: *order and anarchy*.

Mankind's eternal search for safety and security, for a guarantee that things in his day-to-day environment function in a foreseeable and orderly way is fundamental to human existence. Disorder and chaos create problems and conflict but also add knowledge, insight and experience.

In creative and intelligent play, investigation or experimentation, intuitive behaviour will, therefore, always be apparent but will end up becoming targeted as the game ends in a predictable "result".

Interpreting and understanding the play's text and metacommunication present the person-at-play with new and existential forms of consciousness.

The Existentialist philosophers' descriptions of the meeting and I/Thou, I/It and the choice between permutations and solutions - the confrontation on the borderline between order and anarchy - turn these experiences, these existential moments, into something elevated and essential. Sutton-Smith's genius was that he connected the theory of play's text, context and metacommunication with the principles of Existentialist philosophy and deconstructivist terms (see next section).

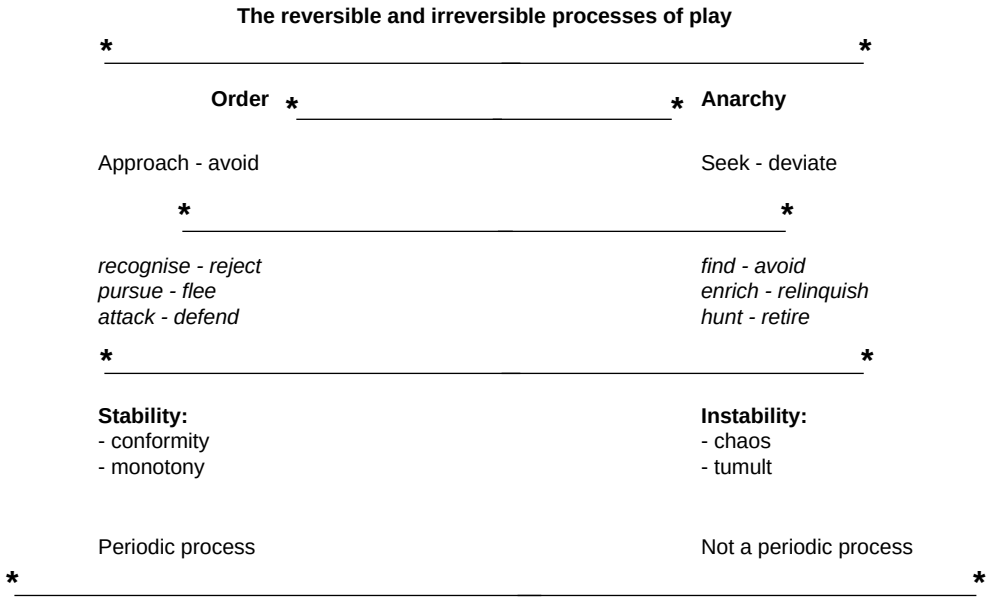
And for this reason it is wrong to assume that play with strict regulations which have to be observed or play with rules is more structured than "free play".

Anyone who observes play and games can easily be misled by external rules and attitudes. However, impenetrable patterns of action, based on the terms described above, are always concealed behind the structured pattern of any game, organised form of play or set task.

And for this reason setting free play on the one hand and participation in play with rules or in solving a set task on the other as two diametrically opposed opposites is entirely wrong. Both forms of play involve the contradiction between order and anarchy.

The child seeks, constructs and experiments with a form of self-discipline which is simply a demonstration of the will to self-denial in order to be able to participate in or carry out a certain process and to enrich himself with perspective and influence. The child therefore voluntarily acquires a natural form of knowledge and recognition of the extent of his own powers.

Play must therefore be seen not only as something "easy, spontaneous and simple" but also as a "heavy and complex process" which is full of contradictions and deadly seriousness, requiring self-discipline, exhaustion and self-denial. Play is always dignified and significant.



Constructivism and deconstructivism

In the previous paragraph, the term “play” was placed squarely within a play-theoretical and philosophical ideological field.

I take the liberty of labelling the finest examples of his conscious dissolution of the stereotype solutions and definitions of what exactly play is Sutton-Smith’s “deconstructivist models”.

Deconstructivism is, of course, the opposite of constructivism - but in no way synonymous with destructivism. Contrary to what many people unfortunately believe, deconstruction and destruction never have the same aim, and because so many people make that mistake, I will account here in more detail for the position of deconstructivism in modern play theory.

When Sutton-Smith explains what play is in terms which appear to a very great extent to be deconstructivist, it is not because he sees himself as a deconstructivist or as a disciple of the founding fathers or literary deconstructivism, Derida and de Man. However, Sutton-Smith has in fact utilised many of the elementary principles of deconstructivism.

In this book, I have used many of Sutton-Smith’s terms describing forms or explanations for toys and play - regardless of whether they are deconstructivistic or not.

1. Deconstruction is not a destructive method -

which emphasises that nothing can be stated categorically about the text of play and that play cannot and must not be interpreted. However, the form or way in which deconstruction is used emphasises the specific, unique,

individual and existential aspects of play, whatever its content and whatever process it undergoes.

The question as to what specific aspect of play is unique and what is general or trivial is, however, one of those questions which general theories and ideologies are unable to answer. When play is played and interpreted, it is often attributed significance which is in complete contrast to the person(s)-at-play's understanding of and intentions for the game. Put in another way: the persons-at-play cannot expect to exert an influence on how their play is interpreted, read or texted.

This explains why deconstruction is a form of analysis and interpretation which, when supplemented by other general methods, can contribute to increasing respect for the classic term "great play".

In the meantime, however, the deconstructivist method is particularly critical of unequivocal interpretations because it relates to aspects of play which may have both positive and negative significance for evaluation of the text of play itself.

2. The use of deconstruction does not erase the significance of the language or the explanation.

The relationship between language and reality in modern linguistics is tripartite:

- a sign in the form of a relationship between three phenomena: index, icon and symbol

- the *primary sign*, *the object* to which the sign refers and *the interpretant*, who communicates the primary sign's relationship to the object.

Between the index, the icon and the symbol, there is "space for interpretation", which makes possible the use of diffuse or abstract images about the internal relationships between the three phenomena (assuming, that is, that fantasy is involved).

If we interpret the sign as "the linguistic sign", this is the *word* itself - and the *imaginary image* it evokes. The sign's *reference* is that which corresponds to the imaginary image in *reality*.

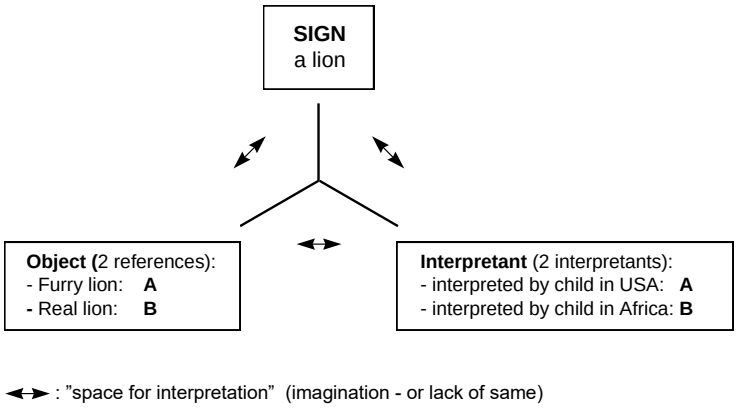
These relationships are not destroyed when we used deconstructivist forms of explanation in our analysis! But it constantly presents us with a problem: how far does the imaginary image really correspond to reality?

An example: If a child at play thinks of an animal and calls the animal by its name, this name will not always evoke the same image in the child's imagination as it does in the adult's. And if an American child thinks of an exotic animal, he will not have the same imaginary image content as an

African child who lives side by side with the animal and knows it well. Meaning is always dependent on context. See model.

Any word, including its imaginary content, acquires its meaning from its position in a sentence or statement. Words define one another but cannot always define themselves without help from another person. Meaning is therefore not inherent in a word - despite the fact that many meanings of words are interpreted quite similarly within any given culture.

The most difficult problem in this discussion of the relationship between sign and imaginary image arises where an imaginary image does not refer to the physical reality but to something fictive and "diffuse". Whenever this is the case - and in other cases where dream images are used as imaginary images - it is not a question about whether or not we can communicate but rather a question of *having the will to do so and how we achieve it.* (Re the term "will", see discussion of the missing term in Habermas' universal pragmatism in chapter 2) - Re how and by what means we underpin our arguments and statements, see **Dialogics and communication** in Chapter 1).



Sutton-Smith reserves judgement on whether the interpretation of a certain game is always an unequivocal sign (or signs) referring to something very specific or an expression of the child's being in a exact, specific, categorical psychological situation. By reserving judgement, he demonstrates his own deconstructivistic form of criticism of the dogmatic interpretative methods and systems.

For example, he (Sutton-Smith:1971:298) explains how Piaget - in interpreting the child's so-called senso-motoric stages - entirely forgets that the child's imaginary images are not limited to facts about reality which Piaget considers concrete and provable. Children are able consciously and unconsciously to leap between fantasy and reality, between the concrete, the abstract and the diffuse - to cheat, experiment and deliberately choose the wrong "solutions" (to see what will happen) - and they don't ask adults for prior permission to do so.

Sutton-Smith has also contributed to a more differentiated picture of the general understanding of Freud's texts, thereby putting a cat among the pigeons of popular psychology.

Research into toys and play over many years has covered what toys and play are and not what toys and play are about. This fact simply illustrates the difference between construction and deconstruction and suggests the natural significance of deconstructivism.

Thus, Sutton-Smith's work has engendered a significant shift in the paradigms of research and scientific investigation into play and toys. His suggestions for many previously unimagined opportunities for the formation of new theories are naturally motivated by deconstructivism.

CHAPTER 12 THE PLAY CLASSIFICATION

The premises for play registration and classification are:

Collection and registration of forms of play according to what they relate, i.e. how they are *texted,* relies on play being explained clearly and concisely in just a few words, possibly a short sentence, alternatively in a single word or expression which can characterise and thereby clarify the text of play. The question also is whether that which children and adults call play really is play, play sequences or interrelation of a more general kind.

In this connection, we take the perspective that what children and adults call play, regardless of:

- whatever the text indicates -
- whether “play” is in fact “only” play sequences
- whether “play” is in fact work/interrelation or relaxation/interrelation
- the extent of parental involvement, presence or participation,

will be registered and classified as play! And, incidentally, text and context are not two separate entities but overlapping and integrated.

Over the years, a great number of registers have been produced. Summarising these would amount to writing a complete biography in its own right and thus goes beyond the scope of this book. This book’s play classification is intended to underline the bond between toys and play. It is therefore inspired by the work of Borotav (1974) and Rossie (1987). Both Borotav’s and Rossie’s classification models are motivated by a desire to illustrate the bond between toys and play. And as my own intention is to secure that same bond, my model is also influenced by Schwartzman (1978) and Einsiedler (1986, 1990).

Two examples of basic analyses of the text of play - genre relation and object transformation. The different classification models are associated with a variety of systems of analysis, each of which points to the particular aspects of any given form of play. This book does not seek to illustrate what stimulating effect any given form of play has on children’s general development but seeks rather to illustrate what kinds of play certain families with certain life styles select or reject in their play/interaction.

The two classification models in this book, one for toys and the other for play, are intended to illustrate the bond between toys and play despite the fact that play forms in themselves can in no way be interpreted as play/games in which toys or tools are prerequisites. The following pair of examples are analyses which have contributed to inspiring production of the models in this book.

Genre relation

In her research into the power relationships within children's play and interrelating groups based on children's mutual communication, Schwartzman (1978:210-245) was faced with the same difficulties concerning the premises for registration: What constitutes play and what is the clear text/context of play? Schwartzman chose to allow "the facts (to) speak for themselves" (1978:247).

In considering the various relationships between the persons-at-play, she has been inspired by Turner (1969:37-42) who describes the relationships between the participants in play as ritual processes which often do have the characteristics of play.

Where body language and speech are concerned, she is inspired by Garvey & Berndt (1975) - their research into "children's organisation" of "let's pretend"-play. The same relationships and conditions apply to play and interaction within the family, between parents and children, between younger and older siblings who are the target groups for this book's research.

Schwartzman uses Bateson's metacommunication theory and the terms "text/context" (content/environment and the environmental framework) to explain that, in their mutual relations, some children are more powerful than others. They employ dictatorial body language and certain verbal terms by means of which they either incorporate other children into or exile them from their play groups.

Metacommunication is apparent in two ways:

- **as a way in which to establish, maintain and develop play using order and regulations**

- **as another, parallel way in which to control power, position, relationships between roles, persons and objects so that disorder and contravention of the rules of the game do not get out of hand.**

Metacommunication between children within play is demonstrated when they use a number of controlling, directing or manipulating statements. On the basis of her own investigations, Schwartzman lists nine different types of statement:

- constructive statements: (Let's play!)
- connecting statements: (Can I play too? - I'll be baby!)
- rejecting statements: (No, you can't join in! We're not doing that!)
- disintegrating statements: (I don't want to do this anymore! Let's do/say this instead!)
- defining statements: (I'm the baby and you're the mummy!)
- accepting statements: (I was the baby, I lay there sleeping!)
- declining statements: (I don't want to be baby!)

- maintaining statements: (You make a good baby, so we'll carry on playing!)
- reformulating statements: (Why don't we….. instead!)

These statements are used by the children to keep the play process going or to develop it. They are not used in the same order but function on the same level as a kind of key to communication in order to keep all the options open.

The distribution of power and influence between the persons-at-play is maintained via the participants' mutual relations and positions.

In this book, power and influence are maintained via mutual relationships and positions between parents and children and between older and younger siblings (or playmates) which again depend on the individual personality and gender of the persons involved, their position in the family group, their dispositions and abilities, etc. There are, therefore, three elements in the text/context of play:

The play genre:
number of participants (size of the group), the play diad, triad or group, which is either symmetrical, asymmetrical or confrontational

The model for relationships:
(in this book's analysis): parents, the child, siblings and playmates (both adults and children)

Play themes:
vary. They can be formal or informal, depending on the genre and relationships involved.

PLAY GENRES		
Genre	**Model for the relationship**	**Play themes**
1. Asymmetrical dyads	* Parent-child * Older/younger siblings	* Informal * Play between siblings * Family play
2. Asymmetrical friendship groups	* Teacher/pedagogue - child *Older child - younger child	* Formal * Play school, witches, wicked step-mother, “I know better”
3. Symmetrical dyads or groups	* Friend-friend * Group-group	* Informal, everything * Informal/formal * Name games, getting to know each other
4. Metacommunicative relationships	* Mixed relationships, where the relationship is called symmetrical but is in fact asymmetrical	* informal/formal * (All kinds of play)
5. Group confrontations	* Good boys/bad boys * Good girls/wicked witches	* Cowboys and Indians, Batman, witches

(Table partly based on Schwartzman (1978:244))

Play is therefore unpredictable and can be interpreted in different ways. Its themes are filled with many different impenetrable aspects.

Object transformation

Einsiedler was inspired by both Garvey and Schwartzman. On the basis of his research into the complexity of toys and the influence on fantasy play in particular, his theory of object transformation promotes the bond between toys and play. Furthermore, he uses almost the same semiotic principles as earlier described in this book in the section on the value and evaluation of the play object. With reference to Einsiedler (1990), play can be seen either from an *ecologica*l or from a *cultural perspective.*

From both perspectives, toys, the conditions for play (text/context) and the age of the children involved significantly affect e.g. the outlook, abilities or attitudes which the person-at-play is able to gain from play.

Einsiedler (1986) states that play is dependent on the level at which metacommunication between the persons-at-play takes place because it maintains, develops and brings order and system into the game and adjusts the internal roles and relative positions of the participants. In addition, Einsiedler describes the significance of toys for the game which is dependent upon their design and complexity, i.e. :

- *the degree of reality* - how realistic a toy is (high or low degree of realism, similar/dissimilar to the real thing) and

- *the degree of complexity* - how complex or "technical" it is relative to the age of the child (high or low degree of complexity, very complex/technical or not).

He also describes the situation - i.e. this connection between the metacommunication and the degree of realism and complexity of the toy - also as a factor which determines the intensity of play between persons-at-play. All of this he terms object transformation.

Object transformation can either be positive or negative, depending on the genre, relationships and play themes, the ages and stage of development of the persons-at-play, the design of the toys and the way in which the toys are used in play.

Object transformation is part of the play process in the following model:

- Metacommunication

The persons-at-play talk about the game and its content and bring order into the relationship, maintain and develop and adjust their mutual roles and positions.

- Verbal representations and fantasy actions

One of the persons-at-play creates imaginary situations or contributes creative ideas and images which the participants discuss verbally, reject, copy, improve and carry out or exemplify in play.

- Roles

  The persons-at-play select, assign and accept roles and positions and seek to correlate these with the roles and positions of the other participants.

- Object imitation:

The persons-at-play pretend to be something, e.g. an animal or an object (if that is their role) or signal changes (e.g. "There is now coffee in my cup.")

- Object transformation

The persons-at-play evaluate an object (or toy) and stipulate conditions for its use. Any object which is to represent something else (e.g. a stone or an aeroplane) will be employed in the game and referred to by the name of the thing it represents.

Following this, the fixed and agreed principles of the play's text, the roles and positions of the persons-at-play and the toy's or toys' position and stability within the play process are investigated, researched and tested - a balance between metacommunication and object transformation. Depending on the capabilities of the persons-at-play and the complexity of the toy(s), this will take some time, after which the game will proceed:

- possibly less imaginatively and including motor activity in order to test and gain knowledge and experience
- as observation and conversation
- not introducing new things and elements into the process but merely maintaining and repeating and finally bringing the process to a conclusion.

Einsiedler (1990) divides play into four main groups:

- *psychomotoric play* which develops the person-at play physically and psychologically at both the individual and the social level, dependent on the play or game's construction and the extent to which certain props and implements are indispensable.

- *fantasy and role play* where, from the age of 4-5 years, the toys become especially significant for the children.

- *building and construction play* which places special demands on the toys and where, furthermore, object transformation is dependent on the type of toy or how it has been manufactured.

- *play with rules*, which, in many cases either is not or is only slightly dependent on the toys, implements or props used.

According to Einsiedler's results, children's fantasy play and development are affected more by the realism of the toy than by the degree of complexity, technicality or complexity of its design. Toys which are highly realistic and highly complex promote more imitation in play which can be interpreted such that this type of toy more than other types of toy texts the child through play. Some types of fantasy play, especially socially developmental types, occur more frequently when they are texted (where text = the content or story of play) by toys whose design and structure are less realistic and less complex. From the age of 4-5 years in particular, children show a greater interest in toys so that the object transformation is, in many cases, decisive for the play process.

Einsiedler's four categories and his results suggest that play has special characteristics and significance within a certain area which is very interesting for the fields of pedagogy and psychology. It is especially useful in connection

with this investigation because certain life form and life style segments select or reject certain forms of play.

The play classification model

This book's play classification is intended to underline the bond between toys and play. It is therefore inspired by the work of Borotav (1974) and Rossie (1987) whose classification models were developed from the perspective of the bond which exists between toys and play. This book's model was produced on the basis of connections between them and Schwartzman's (1978) and Einsiedler's (1986, 1990) models.

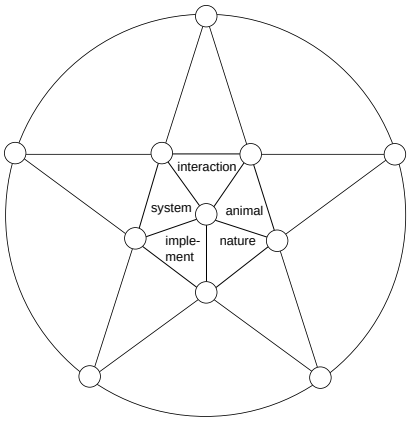
The classification used in this book has been produced in accordance with the same principles as the toy classification because 401 Danish children and their parents responded to the question:

> Give the names of the games you play with your Mum and/or Dad (Name several)

From the questionnaire material collected from parents and children, approximately 2500 games were registered. Many of the games were mentioned repeatedly. Some of the games were described in many different ways and called numerous different names. The classification is therefore built up on the text of play.

In many of the games, certain specific toys are used, whose classification in the toy classification suggests a natural reference to a particular form of play.

The play classification can be characterised in just a few words, as follows:



CLASSIFICATION OF PLAY AND PLAY WITH TOYS	
5 main groups	20 sub-groups
PLAY AS A FORM OF INTERACTION	* intimate play * play with playmate/friend, party games * care/nursing/childminding play * guessing games, teasers, hide-and-seek * tag/hunting/war games * dolls/doll support play
PLAY WITH AND ABOUT ANIMALS	* pet animals - play with them * toy animals/support play
PLAY WITH IMPLEMENTS	* look/listen/learn play * work/job play * play with tools/collecting/pastimes * play with toys/play with toy tools
PLAY WITH SYSTEMS AND STRATEGIES	* construction/support play * Art/cultural play * games * athletics/sports * play with props
PLAY IN AND ABOUT NATURE	* trips and excursions * nature activities (play in natural environment)
PLAY IN AND WITH IMAGINARY IMAGES, DREAMS AND “INNER VOICES” - has not been registered	

The play classification: main and subsidiary groups

FORMS OF INTERACTION Private Play	- seven subgroups - played by family members on their own, parents, child, siblings - and express private and intimate interaction - described as: ordinary everyday life ordinary private play tickling play with parents play with siblings messing about, having fun fighting for fun kiss and cuddles play tumbling about/being together
Play with playmates/friend/party games	- free play with playmates/siblings on an everyday basis and participation in parties and gatherings with siblings, friends and playmates - described as: free play party parties birthdays
Acting/performing/presenting	- includes play and performance within music, theatre, dressing-up, etc. with all the associated props and instruments - described as: acrobatics cinema circus dancing puppet theatre fairy tale play/theatre pretty ladies music/song/playing music rhyming role play fairground magician dressing-up

Care/nursing/childminding play	- includes caring for infants and sick children - described as: kindergarten doctors caring old people hospitals nurses crèche
Guessing games/teasers/hide-and-seek	- includes play with and without rules - described as: Blind Man's Buff teasing Hunt the Thimble guessing riddles Pictionary guessing things guessing the smell songs and singing games hide-and-seek (forms of hiding) guess why Mum is angry "You're getting warmer" (find an object)
Tag/hunting/war games	- often rowdy games texted on the basis of confrontations - described as: Action Force Cowboys and Indians animals/dangerous playing "tag" war Masters of the Universe girls catch the boys Cops and Robbers playing "tick, you're on"

Dolls/support play	- play with dolls and teddy bears, dolls' house, etc. - described as: playing with dolls, dressing-up dolls, dolls, ponies, etc.
ANIMALS Live animals	- two subgroups - includes play with animals, pets and domestic animals which were mentioned as toys (even though many parents and children indicated that animals are not toys and are not meant for playing with) - apart from pets/domestic animals, described as: riding dog training animal exhibitions and cattle shows
Toy animals/support play	- includes figures, ornaments, series animals, etc. and symbolic animals - described as: farm animals Noah's Ark safari zoo
TOOLS Look/listen/learn games	- four subgroups - includes games concerned with learning, playing school, etc. - described as: homework reading stories (telling stories, word and spelling games and school)
Work/job play	- motivated by a variety of jobs, work, business (possibly the child's parents') - described as: baker driver ladies hairdresser

	emergency services grocer post office restaurant waiter
Tools/collecting/pastimes	- includes games which can also be a kind of work or service in which real tools, implements and toys are used. - described as: helping indoors/outdoors postage stamps drawing/cutting out/sticking textile hobbies computer play (play with) arranging (collection) working in the workshop pottering about in the kitchen
Play with toys/play with toy tools	- where toys are used directly from the toy classification groups transport/machinery, props, farming, etc. - also described as: cars, tractors, three-wheeler playing with toys (unspecified) racing track, train and train set
<u>SYSTEMS</u> <u>Construction/support play</u>	<u>- five subgroups</u> includes play with system, technical and construction toys and materials for shaping objects (clay, Plasticine, dough) - described as: building play DUPLO play with bricks LEGO clay, Plasticine, dough Playmobil
Art/cultural play	- play and creative activities with words and pictures - described as: writing poems painting pictures writing stories

	drawing
Games	- all types of games with rules/problem-solving/decision-making games (defined more precisely, see “games”)
Athletics/sports	- athletic and sport play which are motivated by sports disciplines - play and activities in water - described as: badminton playing ball football gymnastics running training swimming messing about in the swimming pool practising sport balancing (girls) - with gymnastics equipment
Play with props	- motivated by activities requiring special props but which are not disciplined, playground play - described as: darts flying kites elastic Frisbee swing building a den (indoors) “tick-off-ground” croquet mini-golf skating (rollerblades) skipping pole tennis
NATURE Trips/excursions	- two subgroups - trips and excursions into natural environment which can include specific activities - described as: camping trip cycling trip

	hunting fishing trip nature walks walking in the woods walking on the beach excursions
Nature activities	- outdoor, free play in natural environment or park/garden, seasonal or all the year round - described as: bonfire/fire/lanterns building a den outdoors playing outside free play in open spaces treasure hunt winter games

Games children and parents play together

The following three tables illustrate, with reference to the play classification, the games children and adults play together.

Table 6.3.1. lists the games of children aged 4-10 years and their parents. No distinction is made between girls' and boys' play or between play with Dad and/or Mum. The play overview is general.

The dominant form of play is play and use of implements and interaction between parents and children. The weight of emphasis is on entertaining, subtle and private situations occurring between children and their parents, along with guessing games, teasers and "hide-and-seek"-type games. Intimate forms of play, most often "curling up in bed together" in the form of "kiss and cuddle" play and "chatting together", are included here.

Play in the form of work situations where tools are employed and which resemble play are also registered as this kind of activity consists of processes which have something to do either with household chores or with play/learn situations. Shared sports activities, including parental presence as spectators at children's training sessions or sports matches are registered too.

Furthermore, we note that it is the quieter activities which most often occur between children and parents: games, LEGO/DUPLO, reading a story, drawing/cutting out/sticking/colouring, etc.

Table 6.3.2. shows the activities small children engage in with their parents, split into boys' and girls' activities.

Interactive play forms are the dominant forms here too but this applies to a greater extent to girls than boys. The significant difference between boys' and girls' play is that girls play dolls and care/nursing/childminding play with their parents, activities which boys only very seldom play with their parents.

Another very significant difference is the construction/support play which, even at this early stage, demonstrates the contrast between boys and girls.

Looking at individual play forms, the quiet forms of creative play are particularly dominant among girls, For boys, the most popular activities are hiding games, football and play with LEGO bricks.

Table 6.3.3. illustrates older children's activities.

Where girls are concerned, the interactive forms of play continue to dominate. As for the boys, activities within general and structured systems, athletics/sport, games and construction functions now dominate.

The use of implements in connection with household chores, most often with their parents, is maintained at the same level for boys and girls. However, a clear differentiation in the choice of individual activities is also apparent.

Table 6.3.1. 4-10 year old children's play with their parents

Play forms are split into main groups and subgroups.

No. of children 399. The children and parents could mention up to 5 play forms they played at the time of the survey. 859 play forms were registered.

Percentage figures are calculated relative to the total.

MAIN/SUBGROUPS	No.		Percent	
Interactive forms	315		36.7	
guessing games/teasers/hide-and-seek		110		12.8
private/intimate play		69		8.0
acting/performing/presenting		60		7.0
tag/hunting/war		42		4.9
dolls/support play		21		2.4
care/nursing/childminding		8		0.9
playmates/friends/party games		5		0.6
Implements	247		28.8	
tools/collecting/sewing		119		13.9
look/listen/learn		57		6.6
work/job		39		4.5
toys/toy tools		32		3.7
Systems	242		28.2	
athletics/sport		89		10.4
games		65		7.6
construction/support		57		6.6
props		26		3.0
art/cultural play		5		0.6
Nature	46		5.4	
trips/excursions		33		3.8
nature activities		13		1.5
Animals	9		1.0	
toy animals		8		0.9
live animals/play		1		0.1
The 15 most common individual forms of play:				
games (unspecified)	65		7.5	
LEGO/DUPLO	50		5.8	
read a story	46		5.3	
drawing/cutting out	44		5.1	
singing/singing games	39		4.5	
hide-and-seek	38		4.4	
playing ball	33		3.8	
mummies/daddies/babies	24		2.8	
shopping	23		2.7	
playing tag (outdoors)	22		2.5	
tag, catch-me-if-you-can, etc.	21		2.4	
dolls/teddy bears	20		2.3	
pottering in the kitchen	20		2.3	
workshop	19		2.2	
fighting for fun	14		1.6	

Steenhold (1993,d)

Table 6.3.2. 4-5 year old children's play with their parents

Main and subgroups expressed as percentage figures.
No. of children: 158. The children and parents were asked to name up to 5 play forms which they played at the time of the survey. Percentages are calculated relative to the total.

86 boys - 242 play forms		72 girls - 192 play forms	
	Percent		Percent
Interactive forms	38	Interactive forms	47
guessing games/teasers/hide-and-seek	14.5	guessing games/teasers/hide-and-seek	14.1
private/intimate play	8.3	private/intimate play	10.9
acting/performing/presenting	7.4	acting/performing/presenting	9.9
tag/hunting/war	6.6	dolls/support play	5.7
dolls/support play	0.8	tag/hunting/war	3.6
		care/nursing/childminding	2.6
Implements	31	playmates/friends/party games	0.5
tools/collecting/sewing	13.6		
toys/toy tools	7.9	Implements	31
look/listen/learn	5.8	tools/collecting/sewing	14.6
work/job	4.1	look/listen/learn	7.8
		work/job	7.8
Systems	26	toys/toy tools	1.0
construction/support	8.3		
athletics/sport	8.3	Systems	17
games	4.5	games	5.7
props	3.7	athletics/sport	4.7
Art/cultural play	1.2	construction/support	4.2
		props	2.6
Animals	3		
toy animals	2.5	Nature	4
		trips/excursions	2.1
Nature	3	nature activities	1.6
trips/excursions	2.1		
nature activities	0.4	Animals	1
		toy animals	0.5
Choice of individual play forms	No.		No.
Boys: 244 play forms		Girls: 192 play forms	
hide-and-seek	18	drawing/cutting out/sticking	16
LEGO/DUPLO	18	singing/singing games	14
football	13	mummies/daddies/babies	12
reading a story	12	reading a story	12
singing/singing games	12	dolls/teddy bears	11
drawing/cutting out/sticking	12	games (unspecified)	11
games (unspecified)	11	hide-and-seek	9
shopping	9	shopping	7
train/train set	9	playing ball	6
pottering in the kitchen	8	pottering in the kitchen	6
workshop	8	LEGO/DUPLO	6
tag, catch-me-if-you-can, etc.	7	dancing	5
cars/tractors	6	ladies' hairdresser	4
mummies/daddies/babies	6	doctors	4
fighting for fun	6	tag, catch-me-if-you-can, etc.	4

Steenhold (1993,d)

Table 6.3.3. 6-10 year old children's play

Main and subgroups expressed as percentage figures.
No. of children: 241 - Children and their parents were asked to name up to 5 play forms they played at the time of the survey. Percentages are calculated on the total number of play forms.

119 boys - 191 play forms		122 girls - 234 play forms	
	Percent		Percent
Systems	41	Interactive forms	38
athletics/sports	13.6	guessing games/teasers/hide-and-seek	14.5
games (unspecified)	12.6	private/intimate play	6.8
construction/support	11.0	acting/performing/presenting	6.4
props	1.6	tag/hunting/war	4.7
Art/cultural play	0.5	dolls/support play	3.4
Implements	27	playmates/friends/party games	0.9
tools/collecting/sewing	13.6	care/nursing	0.9
look/listen/learn	7.3		
toys/toy tools	4.7	Systems	29
work/job	1.0	athletics/sport	13.2
		games	8.1
Interactive forms	24	props	3.8
guessing games/teasers/word games	7.3	construction/support	3.4
		art/culture	0.4
private/intimate play	6.3		
acting/performing/presenting	5.2	Implements	26
tag/hunting/war	3.1	tools/collecting/sewing	13.7
playmates/friends/party games	1.0	look/listen/learn	6.0
care/nursing/baby sitting	0.5	work/job	5.1
		toys/toy tools	0.9
Nature	8		
trips/excursions	6.3	Nature	7
natural activities	2.1	trips/excursions	5.1
		natural activities	2.1
Animals	1		
toy animals	0.5	Animals	1
		live animals	0.4
Choice of individual play forms	No.		No.
Boys: 191 play forms		Girls: 192 play forms	
games (unspecified)	24	games (unspecified)	119
LEGO/DUPLO	19	playing ball	17
football	15	drawing/cutting out/sticking	11
reading a story	13	hide-and-seek	10
playing ball	6	reading a story	9
helping out	6	singing/singing games	9
fighting for fun	6	tag/catch-me-if-you-can, etc.	8
workshop	6	dolls/teddy bears	7
car/tractor	5	helping out	7
computer games	5	LEGO/DUPLO	7
drawing/cutting out/sticking	5	cycling trips	6
going fishing	4	mummies/daddies/babies	6
Nature play	4	shopping	6
singing/singing games	4	badminton	5
badminton	3	handicrafts	5

(Steenhold (1993,d))

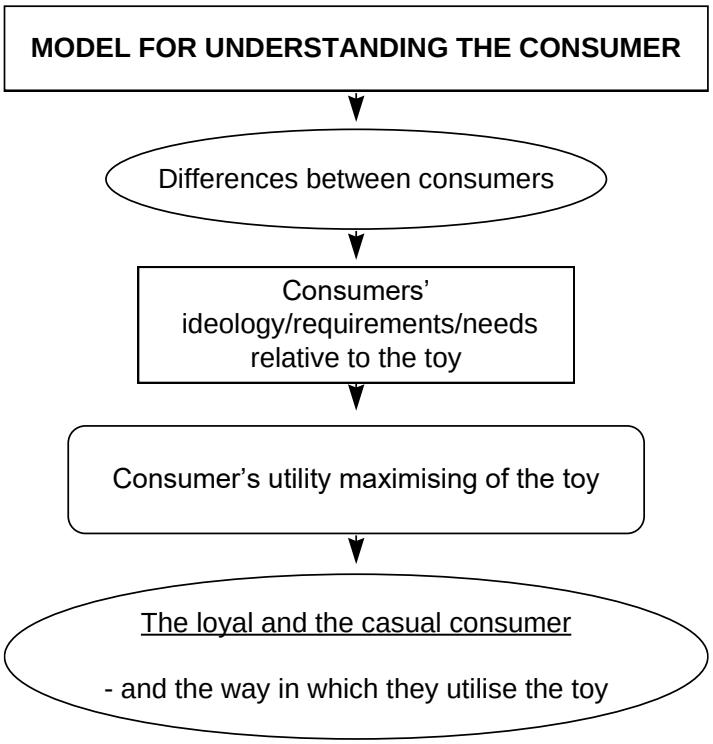
PART IV

CONSUMERS, TEXTS AND CODES

PART IV CONSUMERS, TEXTS AND CODES

PART IV CONSUMERS, TEXTS AND CODES

Introduction



Research undertaken in many different countries describes consumer groups', parents and family groups' attitudes to products which are used on a daily basis. The same applies to the different groups' general attitude, norms and values. International research institutes, e.g. AIM, Saatchi & Saatchi and many others like them, regularly publish overviews of the different groups' values, norms and needs at the international level.

The establishment of a Danish database was inspired, in particular, by studies based on Hofstede's theories (1980, 1984). Of the many studies of this kind, two articles by Schwartz & Bilsky in which they account for the universal psychological structures of human values are especially interesting. However, the difficulty with the codes in these studies was that, in several instances, they were very difficult to apply to the situation in Scandinavia - and only indirectly applicable to the question of toys and play within families.

Despite the difficulties, several of these studies did, in fact, form the ideological basis for the establishment of the Danish database used in this book (Steenhold, 1993d, entitled "*Toys, Play and Games, Lifestyles and Views of Humanity*"). (Tables from a database, based on information about

toys collected from 401 Danish children. UNI.C database lodged at LEGO A/S, Billund, Denmark).

Consumer behaviour and understanding the consumer

We describe the elementary aspects which bring us to an understanding of the consumer's toy purchasing behaviour from the perspective of a relatively simple attitude to the decision-making process undertaken by the consumer.

In this part of the book, we use the terms (as titles for individual chapters) in a model which is intended to illustrate the decision-making processes undertaken by the consumer.

It is widely recognised that buying a toy involves more than merely choosing it. The consumer often speculates long and hard in advance of his purchase. There are also a number of other processes which continue after the product has been acquired.

Acquisition of a toy can be explained on the basis of behavioural theories (most often purchasing behaviour). Firstly, the process of purchasing behaviour can be described on the basis of theoretical behaviour models.

Secondly, acquisition of a toy can be described on the basis of consumer selection models where close attention is paid to selection among alternatives, i.e. the choice between several different versions of the same toy.

Common to both these perspectives is that they are motivated by the consumer's engagement and emotional involvement - the desire to have a toy - and that they assume that there is a suitably wide variety of products to choose from!

Engagement and involvement can, of course, be explained on the basis of the consumers' different circumstances, lifestyle, view on life, basic values, etc. in addition to their attitudes to play and creative activity. All of these things are described in this book in relation to toys. (Various products within the same category, often only distinguished by insignificant differences, are not described in detail in this book.)

The circumstances described are then open to criticism but their justification lies in the model which will be described in the following and employed with the intention of mapping out the origins of distinct consumer engagement and involvement.

Introducing the model for understanding the consumer

The concept of “product positioning” is formed on the basis of a clear understanding of how consumers of any toy product *understand, obtain* and *collect information about the toy.*

Furthermore, the concept is formed on the basis of how all this information is stored in the consumer’s consciousness and recognition of the toy.

In a situation where he has to choose, the consumer evaluates a toy from the perspective of the prior information he/she possesses about the toy, about other toy products which might also be able to meet requirements and a number of associations related to possible opportunities for using the toy.

Processing this information and producing an analytic overview *of all of these many and varied pieces of information and processes connected to consumer decisions when acquiring a toy* - are basic premises for product positioning.

I am astonished how little of all this is taken into account in the theories concerned with positioning.

The many connections between the reasons why both children and adults as consumers process information about toys and their positions are therefore the basis for this model for understanding consumer circumstances.

Existential consumer needs

Where the individual as consumer and user is concerned, it is, I suppose, relevant from an anthropological point of view to ask what distinguishes Man from other mammals. The obvious answer (see **Relativity and logic** in Part 1’s introduction) is:

consciousness, reason and imagination.

In his book “The Flight from Freedom” (Flykten från Friheten (1945)), Erik Fromm accounts for the fact that modern Man does *not* in fact live the healthy, vegetative existence in ecological harmony which would give rise to these three factors.

On the contrary, these three factors are the root cause of Man’s extremely problematic attitude to life.

Characteristic for Fromm is that he presents “consumer Man” in his modern, industrialised society as *alienated*.

By this he means that Man is alienated from his day-to-day activities, his work, the “human” side of himself, the objects of his consumption. He is foreign to his fellow men, a stranger even to himself. In fact, alienation, in its extreme consequence, results from a situation where social and economic

conditions impede satisfaction of fundamental biological needs. Alienation is a psychological condition which has developed within (modern) capitalist society.

MODEL FOR UNDERSTANDING THE CONSUMER

Consumers' individuality between freedom and alienation involves his ability to master personal, existential factors:

- deep and sustained personal relationships
- personal identity
- day-to-day orientation
- exclusive knowledge
- play, hobbies and work
- dialogical relationships

The consumer/individual seeks to find balance and harmony between these six factors.

Imbalance means that the consumer/individual uses energy to create a balance.

This description of modern Man's existential problems must, of course, be seen as subjective. It is, however, also qualitative and, in any case, a long way short of a sociological analysis of modern Man's complex situation.

A more precise method would be to view the concept of alienation (in Fromm's sense of the word) as the outcome of certain factors in human existence and of specific social conditions.

Existential problems really only become significant once biological needs *have* been satisfied.

According to Fromm, apart from *fundamental needs*, Man has *five other needs* which he describes as existential needs and which occur because the human being is a unique, existential being.

I have taken the liberty of applying these five needs - which I have moderated and supplemented with a sixth - to the user in the role of consumer. It is the consumer's/individual's seeking to fulfil and to create a mutual balance and harmony between these concepts on the basis of individual eco-social circumstances which makes him a self-aware, reasoning and imaginative consumer.

Imbalance means that the consumer/individual expends energy in an attempt to create a balance - and is therefore exposed to becoming unselfconscious,

unreasonable and stereotype as an individual, as a consumer and as a human being.

These six needs can briefly be described as:

- *Deep, sustained personal relationships* - a necessity - coming into contact with other people by establishing social relations on the basis of individual opportunity.

- *Personal identity* and the need for this is a consequence of the consumer's self-awareness, viewing oneself as an object, gaining an experience of self and creating content and belief in one's own existence.

- *Day-to-day orientation* (and "deep-rootedness") - is the need to have a frame of reference for information and news which are necessary for knowledge of everyday life in the local community, the ecosocial environment. Every human being has a fundamental need to "stand on his own two feet" and to know "where he's coming from".

- *Exclusive knowledge* - Fromm reasons that, as Man has reason and fantasy, he is not only able to sense his own identity and recognition but he also needs to analyse the world intellectually in order to make it meaningful and logical.

- *Play, hobbies and work* - or the need to be creative. These factors are connected in different ways to form a sense of community/belonging. The human being is an active creature which Fromm (1945:36) describes as "driven by a desire to reach beyond the role of the organism, beyond randomness, beyond passivity, by becoming a *creator*!"

- *Dialogical relationships* - covers communicative action on the basis of the dialogues which take place between human beings. Behind the conversation between human beings lies the bedrock of conscious knowledge and recognition of what is true and what is false, what is right, what is wrong, etc. about oneself and others.

To summarise, we can state that, as social changes and exchange of information now occur faster than ever before and as, at the same time, the struggle to ensure a protected and harmonious existence for oneself within safe margins is always one of the aims of human existence, the elimination of alienation must be the means by which we can achieve harmony - to the extent, that is, that this is possible.

But Life is just not that simple!

Being "alienated" can in itself be the driving force behind a conscious or unconscious positive change towards eliminating "alienation".

Values

The literature which has been the source of inspiration for this book includes theories concerned with the social oriented and concept-oriented dimensions of family communication. Examples include Løgstrup (1972), Gottfried (Ed) (1984) and sources to which they refer but also Bonfadelli's (1991) German bibliography "Familie und Medien" (Barlhelmes & Sander (1990)) and Varming (1988).

There are naturally differences in the families' basic values and views in this book's consumer description.

There are a number of general perspectives as to the study of values per se. These will be utilised in a number of systematic ways in the development of both sociological and market analytic methods.

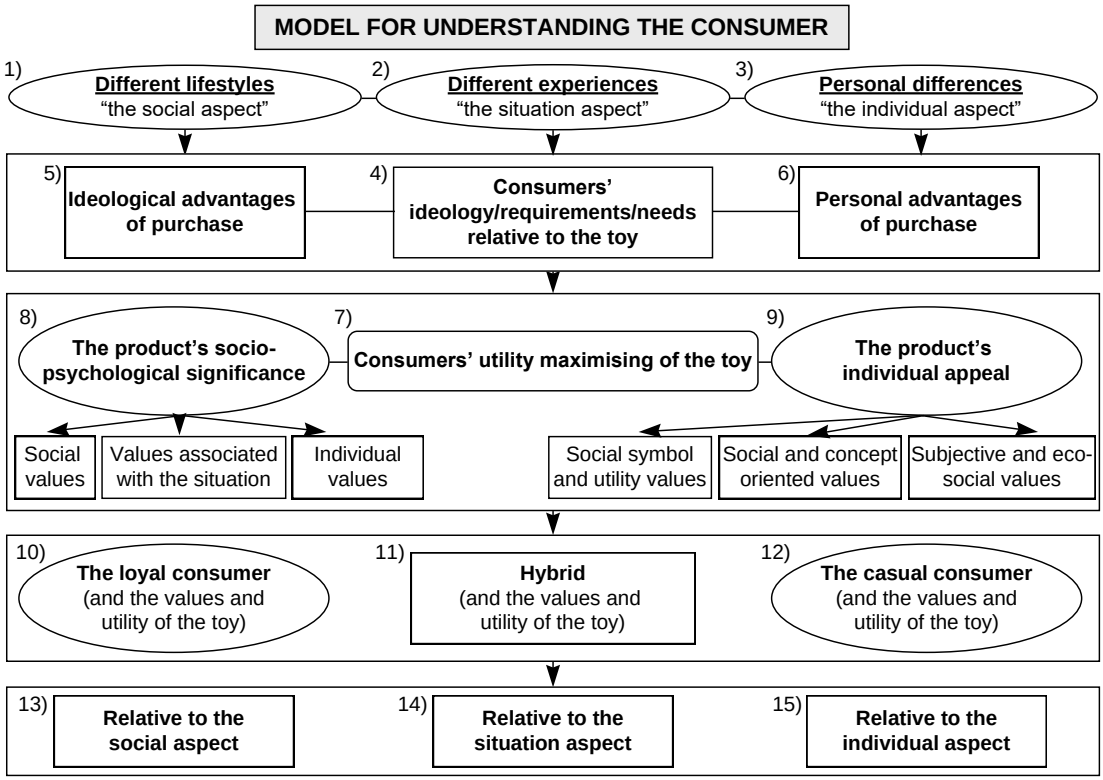
There are vast material differences, differences in the structure of everyday life, in how people experience the time and space available to them, etc. and great differences in the role children play as active parties in society.

These differences are apparent especially in the following four areas:

How do we view reality?
What do we believe about people and our own human possibilities?
What values are we most interested in promoting?
What norms and circumstances must be established in order ensure the feasibility of certain opportunities?

There will be some very brief explanations for these in this part of the book, partly because these four fields together define the context of *choosing toys* and partly because different authors describe them in very different ways.

Model description (complete model)



The complete model

*Model for understanding the consumer (*Introduction*)*
First and foremost, it is relevant to introduce philosophically the *existential* position of the individual and the *values* within the spectrum insight-ignorance (liberation-alienation) in relation to environment and to being a consumer. This was covered in the early pages of this introduction.

Consumer representative (Chapter 13)
Information and data from a Danish panel of 400 families (Steenhold, 1993,d).

Information about the modern Danish consumer, his circumstances and position will be covered here. The source for all table references is Steenhold 1993,d.

Then there are three areas of the consumer's immediate circumstances, i.e. of the kind which can form the basis for his toy selection relative to the toy's positioning. These three areas are:

1. Different Lifestyles - "The Social Aspect" (Chapter 14)
which includes the differences between social circumstances and lifestyles. The differences are outlined in theories relating to ways of life and environment.

2. Different Experiences - "The Situation Aspect" (Chapter 15)
including the differences between experiences of situations. The differences are outlined in theories about consumer situations and modern childhood 1990-2000.

3. Personal Differences - "The Individual Aspect" (Chapter 16)
includes individual differences. These are outlined in descriptions of a so-called "happy childhood" and includes the variable perspectives of this and the reasons behind the various attitudes to children within the families.

***

The Description of the model continues in PART V:
Consumers have ideal requirements which are described as various demands and needs in relation to toys. These are outlined in a brief section concerning the very heart of the matter:

4. Different consumer ideologies/requirements/needs in relation to toys (Chapter 17)
concerning ideal requirements.

Toys, play and games contain many different qualities which the consumers describe in different ways as the advantages of acquiring them. These are covered in:

5. Ideological advantages of purchase (Chapter 17)
concerning a variety of requirements and needs.

The next section looks at characteristics the consumers attribute to toys, depending on where and how they are to be used. The section is called:

6. Personal advantages of purchase (Chapter 17)
concerned with areas in which the advantages are sought demonstrated. The consumers seek visible evidence of the various personal benefits/advantages of purchase and acquisition of toys in five primary areas. These are described in this section.

***

Consumers maximise the perceived fulfilment of their needs by adapting the acquisition of a toy according to:

- the budget and price of the goods acquired
- their perception and mental images of the values connected to the experience and status acquired.

This maximising is explained by the set of attributes which are associated to the product. These are outlined in:

7. Consumer utility maximisation of toys (Chapter 18)
8. The product's/toy's social psychological significance (Chapter 18)
9. **Utility maximisation of *the individual appeal of the product*** (Chapter 18)

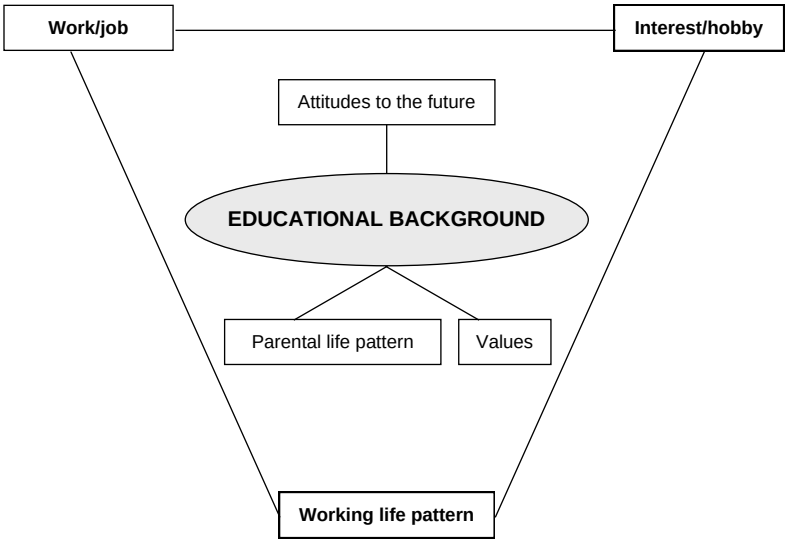
Chapter 19 describes the extent of the consumers' toy collections, their favourite toys and how their attitudes to the future also influence their choice of toys and play.

***

Boxes 10, 11, and 12 in the model outline how **loyal and casual users** respectively relate to the values and utility of certain types of toys. The weight of emphasis is on the loyal consumer who can be registered more easily (Chapter 20).

Boxes 13, 14 and 15 illustrate **in the form of an index**, **the consumers' qualitative comprehension** of what kind of social, situation and individual **values can be associated to certain types of toys** (Chapter 20).

CHAPTER 13 CONSUMER REPRESENTATIVE



Information and data concerning toys and play can be found in Steenhold (1993,d) and this is also the source for all table references.

The interviews and data from completed questionnaires received from 400 randomly selected Danish families were collected over a two year period and formed the basis for the description (in the form of tables) of segmentation relative to the toys' positions:

Which children and parents with a specific pattern of working life and family lifestyle select or reject certain types of toys and play certain types of games?

How do certain types of toys reflect certain values or emphasise a certain dimension?

What different types of toys are used, relative to gender and the family's lifestyle?

Information and data (See Appendix 1)

The following information was gathered concerning the child:

1. Gender, age, no. of siblings, particularly close relationship to one or several siblings
2. Home address, type of home and social status
3. The child's toys, mention up to 15 of these which the child plays with, including manufacturers' names and the approximate age of the toy.
4. Other toys, worthless items and computers, including how often child uses the computer and what he uses it for.

5. The child's favourite toy (my best toy), how old was the child when he received it?, did the child receive it in connection with a special occasion, how old is the toy?, does the child use the toy with other toys, and if so, with what?
6. Does the favourite toy have a nickname?, the reason why, how is it produced?, what is it made of?, are there any stories, songs or poems associated with the toy? (The respondents were welcome to send photos or drawings of the toy concerned.)
7. The extent of the child's toy collection, on what occasions does the child receive toys?
8. Where are the toys kept?, who tidies up?, for how long does the child play at any one time?, no. of play participants?, how is a game ended or brought to a conclusion?
9. How does the child play with other toys?, how often and for how long does the child play at any one time?, no. of participants, how is a game ended or brought to a conclusion?
10. What toys does the child want?, what kinds of toys?, why doesn't the child already have them? - Also what kind of toys does the child dislike?, reasons for not liking them, etc.
11. Playmates and games, including fighting and rough-and-tumble, war toys and their acquisition. Also play with Mum and Dad, how do they play? (play types) and what games do they play?, animals and pets.

The following two groups of questions concern each of the child's parents:

12. Parents' gender, age and no. of siblings. Educational background, profession/job, including a description of his/her own role/function in the working process. No. of working hours outside the home, holidays and days off. Tasks in the home including hobbies and special interests, a short description of these activities including amount of time spent on hobbies and interests.
13. Parents' attitude to the toys they had in their childhood, memories of their favourite toys in a given period, the nature of the toy and play with the toy and with playmates.

Parents' attitude to toys and play generally was also covered, along with their attitude to the future (based on their pattern of playing life and lifestyle).

Data collection

The data collection and registration of information about the child and his parents, toys and play took the form of a short interview or introduction and completion of a comprehensive questionnaire.

The questionnaire was prepared so that it was clear, precise and easy for the parents to understand. The layout was deliberately chosen so that the questionnaire did not look too "professional" or daunting.

The questionnaire had neither codes in the margin nor codes columns. The respondents simply had put a cross against their answers to the closed questions. They had four weeks to do this.

The respondents were welcome to enclose children's drawings, poems, stories and photographs if these were the source of inspiration for their responses. The material would also be used as documentation in connection with discussions of the research results.

The assistants or interviewers were all volunteers, either trained in child welfare, teachers or student teachers. They participated in the data collection after thorough instruction (in the form of a training course or instructive lecture) about the objectives of and thoughts behind the research.

Motivating the parents to participate was achieved by talking to them (sometimes in their own homes). There was a short interview with the child and parents together and the parents were instructed how to complete the questionnaire. This interview was best restricted to less than 30 minutes' duration.

The idea of involving the mother/father in the research was to ensure that there was someone on hand to check the child's answers and to create an opportunity for letting Mum/Dad become equal partners with the child in answering the questionnaire about toys and play. Children don't look for any underlying objectives. They just want to give "correct" answers and are often inconsistent relative to previous responses. In most cases, the children and their parents knew the interviewer as this person was a family member, a neighbour or the child's own teacher.

In the case of younger children, if the interview took the form of a conversation where the child showed the interviewer around the playroom and presented his toys, this was motivating and helpful. The child himself often started by demonstrating how a toy worked or how he played with it.

For the older children, greater linguistic fluency was significant and, based on their school experience, the children tried to give "correct" answers.

In these situations, parental participation was therefore excellent. The aim of many of the questions was to register parents' attitudes via their answers. The questionnaire was therefore left in the hands of the parents for several weeks so that they had plenty of time to talk about the research and write explanations and answers to the half-open questions before it had to be submitted/returned and subjected to the checking procedure.

Coding

The author took care to code all the questionnaires personally. The data from the questionnaires was typed onto a computer using the SIR (Scientific Information Retrieval) data system.

The data was extracted from SIR and tabulation and analysis carried out in SAS (Statistical Analysis System). The material has been summarised and analysed by means of frequency tabulation and numeric tables. Where relevant, X^2-tests were carried out in order to check the homogeneity of the groups and independence between variables.

The children were split into two groups - one according to gender and one according to gender/age (4-5 year olds in one group and 6-10 year olds in the other) - which means that some analyses contain a total of two groups and others a total of four.

Age distribution means that the groups were homogenous in terms of the stage of development the children had reached. In approximately 75% of cases, the mother was the participating parent. In approximately 20% of cases, both parents participated. In only a few cases did the child participate without parental assistance or only with his father.

The children

We sought to gain a balance between the number of boys and girls represented in the different age groups. The idea of the question concerning special attachment to older/younger siblings was to gain information about the significance of play with siblings.

Only 17% of the participating children were only children. The remainder had siblings and of these 63% responded that they were closely attached to their brothers/sisters. Play with siblings is therefore a significant factor in many children's lives.

The mutual attachment between siblings is expressed in a variety of ways. They share toys and playmates and the area available for playing in and around the home. They play together because the age difference is often minimal and they have the same relationships within the family, circle of friends, acquaintances, neighbours, etc.

Only very few children play alone or isolated with their siblings while 26% (most of these only children or children with very small or very much older siblings) play only with playmates. The majority of children play both with siblings and with playmates.

82% of the children attend some kind of child day care institution or are looked after by a childminder, attend school and/or children's after-school club.

The children's mutual communication and the degree to which they influence each other with regard to toy purchases and play with toys is therefore generally very significant. In addition, in this research, there is no segregation of the sexes which might have special significance for the children's choice of

toys and play. Other factors which may confirm this will therefore be examined in the light of the information collected.

5% of the children attended play group or similar kind of organised play once a week so only 13% of the children gave no information at all about how they were looked after outside the home, after school or looked after by someone at home.

			Boys 51%		Girls 49%	
Total no. of children	401	100%	86	119	73	123
Age			3-5 years	6-10 years	3-5 years	6-10 years
No. of siblings						
0	68	17%	18	16	15	19
1	230	58%	50	67	40	73
2	83	21%	14	31	14	24
3	15	4%	3	4	3	5
4	4	1%	1	0	1	2
No information	1		1			
Special attachment to one or several siblings						
No	117	37%	23	33	19	42
Yes	195	63%	39	64	37	55
No information	89		24	22	17	26
Playmates						
I have no playmates	2	-	2	0	0	0
Siblings	8	2%	4	1	2	1
Playmates	104	26%	25	30	21	28
Siblings + playmates	287	72%	55	88	50	94

The parents

Table 3.3.2.1. The Parents

Total no. of parents: 698	Fathers:315		Mothers:383	
AGE DISTRIBUTION				
20-24 years	0		3	
25-29 years	22		60	
30-34 years	107		162	
35-39 years	121		113	
40-44 years	46		35	
45-49 years	15		7	
50-54 years	3		1	
55-59 years	1		0	
No information			2	
EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND				
Further education: long course	62	20%	29	8%
Social/health/education	33	11%	139	36%
Commerce/administration/service	38	12%	117	31%
Skilled/technical	154	49%	24	6%
None/other	29	9%	74	19%
No information			2	
PROFESSION/JOB				
Routine	61	19%	95	25%
Skilled/technical	118	38%	26	6%
Contact/communication/customer	87	28%	189	49%
service	36	11%	7	3%
Decision-making	5	1%	5	1%
Artistic creative	9	3%	61	16%
Other				
WORKING LIFE PATTERN				
Wage-earner	210	67%	341	89%
Self-employed	39	12%	28	7%
Career	66	21%	14	4%
PARENTAL LIFE PATTERN				
Housewife	2	-	31	8%
Supportive	1	-	18	5%
Shared responsibility	300	95%	277	72%
Single parent	12	4%	57	15%

Age distribution (Table 3.3.2.1.)

The majority of mothers are between 25 and 35 years old while the fathers are 30-40 years old which is in accordance with the Danish Statistics Annual Figures for 1990, table 48, Average Age of Danish Parents.

Educational background (Table 3.3.2.1.)

In the questionnaire parents were asked to state what kind of education or training they had received and at what level.

On the basis of this information it was possible to categorise the responses in five broad educational background categories.

In this research and analyses, parents' educational backgrounds are generally registered assuming that there are differences between the basic school education and further education level of different groups of workers/professions. There are often great differences between the mother's and the father's education.

Education generally has an effect on the type of job opportunities open to an individual, his/her interests and extent of his/her insight into and understanding of certain existential and social questions.

Education is also a contributory factor in the formation of individual style and personality structures.

Further education: long courses - including further education within humanities, social studies, biology, technical studies and sciences.

Social/health/education - including training in the educational, social and health sectors.

Commerce/administration/service - includes training within both public and private sectors.

Skilled/technical - also includes agricultural, market gardening, forestry, fishery and maritime trades.

None/other - includes many and varied things but the majority within this group were people with no form of formal training or education.

The distribution of education between parents follows the traditional pattern we would expect.

Fathers are more likely to have a background in further or skilled/technical education than mothers. Mothers represent the lion's share within social/health/education and in commerce/administration/services.

Profession/job (Table 3.2.2.1.)

Where profession/job/position are concerned, the information is based on the following questions the parents were asked to answer:

Profession/job: Write in a few words what your job is all about

Work/job/business activities are registered in six categories. Other information about the special characteristics of the work itself - what it is all about - is significant because environment, circumstances and the opportunity for social relations with colleagues, professional and personal development all significantly affect human well-being, engagement and points of view. The various key words used here to describe work functions within the six categories are culled from the respondents' responses to the questionnaire.

Routine - examples include piece work in a factory, production line work with few or no opportunities for conversation or co-operation with other workers during work. Also includes seamstresses, conveyor-belt production line workers, cleaners, drivers, etc. This category also includes service work in stores, kiosks and shops where contact to other people is limited - e.g. sales assistant, salesman, sales representative, cash register operator, bank teller, etc.

Skilled work/technical - where the working process includes independent action and decision-making. This group includes decision-making personnel at lower and middle management level, e.g. within a number of trades, technical maintenance and repair work, data operation, agriculture and fisheries, etc.

Contact/communication - work in close contact with others, patients or clients, children and young people. In this research, the group included teachers, pedagogues, nurses, junior doctors, social workers, social advisors and policemen.

Another group within this category are service, commerce and communication at a higher management level where contact and relatively close co-operation are necessary.

The group also includes commerce, sales and casework where this takes place at a higher level with a certain client group or where there is close co-operation between the implicated parties, administrative and functional leadership and management.

Decision-makers - includes high-level academic work, teaching, development, prophylactic and other forms of care, research, leadership and decision-making in the public and private sectors.

Also included here are the high-level technical academics and technical functionaries, high-level decision-makers within industry, construction and accountancy, technical and electronic planners, research workers

Artistic/creative - includes practical, creative activities at all levels: authors, artists, designers, actors, musicians and composers, etc.

Other - All other forms of work not mentioned above. Also includes the unemployed, those with no special interests or engagements and "free wheelers" who draw attention to the fact that they do "absolutely nothing".

Five times more men than women are employed at a higher level in a decision-making capacity.

Working life pattern (Table 3.3.2.1.)

In this research, information about how parents earn a living is used to contribute to the overall impression they gave, partly during the interview and partly in connection with the overall impression given by the family's responses. The method was analysis of the way the individual families' earned an income in order to survive. The dominant means in Danish society is capitalist production. Production of handmade goods is subsidiary.

Certain production methods demand certain ways of living but certain ways of living also presuppose the presence of organised social structures i.e. economic, judicial and political structures.

Production methods and life patterns contribute to the creation of the individual's personal style of working or doing business which - to some extent - exerts an influence on everyday life and family life and similarly affects other family members to a greater or lesser degree. In this research the ways parents earn a living, against the background of their education and employment, were characterised as one of the following three types:

Wage-earner - Not as clear cut a category as the other two. The pattern of work is more variable and therefore more difficult to classify.

The person in paid employment sells his time and earns a wage which he spends in his free time. Work is a means and free time is an end. A wage-earner has no ownership rights in the company and the price level at which the company pays for his time is usually the result of professional or political negotiation between a trades union and an employers' association. Loyalty is often demonstrated as solidarity with one's fellow workers or with the trades union and extra work is rewarded with overtime payments or "time off in lieu".

Freedom and free time - which are strictly separate from work - are spent spending money and realising oneself via hobbies and pastimes of different kinds or via alternative individual work or activities.

Self-employed - Here the person concerned works within his own privately-owned small/large company or production unit as an "independent specialist", who either produces raw materials (e.g. as in agricultural farming) or is involved with technical or electronic product development. The self-employed person is resourceful, independent and his own master. Responsibility and skill in the way he carries out his work are the best guarantee for being able to maintain and develop independence and competitiveness.

Where freedom/free time/work are concerned, the family and free time are often inseparable and the self-employed person does not have much freedom. His (or her) business, work and family are typically all rolled into one.

Career-oriented - The person's work patterns are characterised by his own demands on himself, commitment, challenges, responsibility and flexible working hours. The job most often involves problem-solving and decision-making and he/she is often rewarded if his/her results are good.

He/she gives first priority to loyalty to the employer or to the company and the aim is to gain success in a job which can be a good springboard to a new, more exciting or better paid job. For the career-oriented person the ideal freedom is flexible working hours (i.e. deciding for oneself when to get the job done) and free time as a "reward" for a job well done.

The career-oriented person spends his free time pursuing pastimes which are most often carefully selected, worthy and prestigious activities and relaxing in ways which strengthen and develop the personality. The family is the career-oriented person's support base.

Concerning patterns of working life and ideals about bringing up children: Parallel to his own research on the daily life of the family with children (Bjarne Hjorth Andersen, 1991), Hjorth Andersen (1993) also measured the *variable ideal about children's upbringing*.

The ideal is concerned with being capable of obtaining and promoting the family's own particular symbol and utility values through the children's upbringing, these values being qualitative results of this capacity.

In a research report entitled *"Can you ask people about their way of life*?", respondents were asked to choose a maximum three characteristics (out of a total eight different characteristics) which they considered particularly important that they teach their children.

The eight characteristics were these (the figure at the far right is the percentage share of responses):

1. 2. 3.	independence responsibility consideration for others	78% 68% 45%
4. 5. 6. 7.	good behaviour imagination tolerance obedience	39% 28% 27% 9%
8. 9.	prudent with money none of these characteristics are important	2% 0%

It is interesting to note that in the distribution of responses, the three most frequently chosen characteristics (1, 2, and 3) correlate relatively closely to the three patterns of working life. The responses from:

> *wage-earners and*
> *self-employed people*

were relatively similar and contrasted to responses from the career-oriented people. The desire for *"socially-oriented virtues" like good behaviour and obedience were most prevalent among the self-employed and the wage-earners*, while

> *career-oriented people were more concerned about imagination and tolerance*. (See also the pattern of family communication.)

Concerning working life patterns generally
*T*he distribution of the three working life patterns was, for men and women respectively: wage-earners 67% and 89%, self-employed 12% and 7% and for the career-oriented pattern 21% and 4%.

There have been two earlier Danish research projects concerning working life patterns whose research base was a representative sample of the population. Hjorth Andersen's result was 58%, 16% and 27% (Hjorth Andersen (1991:134)) while Djurfeldt (1989) arrived at 44%, 15% and 41%. Neither Hjorth Andersen nor Djurfeldt made the split men-women.

There is however, no correlation between the results of these two research projects. With reference to his own work, Hjorth Andersen has admitted that it is difficult to make (working) life patterns fit in with the conceptual and ideological contexts which life pattern researchers have developed.

The treatment of working life patterns in Steenhold (1993,d) used in this book probably underestimates the percentage of self-employed. If that is so, then the wage-earning group is inflated correspondingly. On the other hand, the career-oriented working life pattern is far more easily calculated.

Parents' life patterns (Table 3.3.2.1.)

The last decade has provided us with a rich selection of bulletins announcing the immediate collapse of the family unit, due to the increased divorce rate and the growing number of single parent families. However, as a rule, Danish children are still living in a traditional nuclear family unit with both their biological parents. More than 75% of Danish children live in such a family unit, just over 15% live with their mother only and the remainder (10%) live in a step-family, i.e. where one of the biological parents is replaced by a step-parent (1993).

As with the concept "work", the concept "family" is regarded in different ways. In most family units, both parents work outside the home. The children go to school or child day care institution or are looked after outside the home in some other way most of the day.

For some parents work, i.e. their job, is not the central factor in their lives. The central factors are being together, living together as a family and working in the home. For these parents wage income and working life are not the most significant things in their lives although they do contribute to supporting the family's existence. Family life, relaxation with one's partner and children, different ways of spending time together, play and activities and the practical everyday household chores (like washing, cooking and home maintenance) are the important things in their lives. However, as the family unit and family life are accorded different values and significance, parents have also different "role value" in the family unit itself.

For this reason, this section will not attempt to outline the characteristics of four types of "women's life patterns" as described in Christensen (1989*) "Life Patterns in Denmark*". Instead, this section covers "parental life patterns" in which the different parental roles within the family with children can - despite sex and tradition, education and work - be randomly distributed.

Housewife life pattern - One of the parents, most often the mother, is the "housewife" and is wholly or partly supported by her partner. Household chores include looking after the nuclear family's house/home, building and maintaining family contacts while the other parent, usually the father, goes out to work.

There are, however, a number of variations of this role:

- the home or family contact can either be a means or an end for the housewife

- the home and family contact can form an entity and are one of the housewife's aims in life
- the family can be a means which gives the housewife an opportunity to pursue her own interests, hobby, etc.
- and finally, these three first aims can form a cohesive entity.

In any case, the housewife does not normally expect to be a "slave" to either her partner nor to her children.

Support life pattern - One of the parents, in this research most often the mother, is wholly or partly supported by her partner. She co-operates with her husband, supporting him, collaborating to project his image or career so that he can be successful in his work. She is not dependent on having a job so she has time to pursue interests of her own which might well be an interesting part-time job. She doesn't see his job's demands as pressure but as interesting, exciting challenges which she greets with enthusiasm, interest, loyalty and engagement.

Shared responsibility life pattern - In this life pattern, which is the most common in families with children, both parents go out to work. They will often spend the same amount of time at work which demands just as much engagement as the family. Their family and their place of work are two mutually independent units. What is required of both parents in terms of demands, obligations and chores in the home and for the family is the same for both parents and they therefore divide responsibilities equally between them. There is no significant differentiation between men's work and women's work in the home. Relaxation and activities of very different kinds take place with partner and children after work and at weekends, possibly with other family members, friends, neighbours and their children.

Single parent life pattern - Where a single adult is responsible for supporting himself/herself and a child/children. The single parent has to cope with all the household chores on his/her own or with the children but also decides alone how time, resources and activities are distributed.

These are the concepts of life patterns and parental life patterns in their "pure" forms, as used in research. However, two parents' individual life patterns can conflict, giving rise to misunderstandings, problems and conflicts within the family unit. Coexistence and a mixture of the different parental life patterns within the family are, however, contributory factors to the development of society and culture.

Re parental life patterns - The number of fathers who live a "housewife life pattern" is probably greater than the table suggests. In their responses these fathers suggested that they ought to be categorised under "shared responsibility". Despite the evidence of several research projects that there is a tendency towards a more even distribution of daily obligations in the family unit, women continue to bear the lion's share of the burden.

The equality idea has apparently gained most ground in academics' families and in families where both parents are trained within the social/health/teaching sector.

According to Hjorth Andersen (1991:19), 40-49 year old fathers participate less frequently in household chores than younger fathers. The older the children, the more frequently they participate in daily chores in the home. Children in single parent families help most with daily household chores.

Parents' holidays (Table 3.3.2.3.) Steenhold (1993,d)

The laws about holidays are not adhered to by all parents, probably because many of them have extra sources of income in their holidays. According to Hjorth Andersen (1990:2), 11% of parents in families with children have some kind of work other than their principal source of income. 14% of men have a source of extra income as opposed to only 8% of women.

At the opposite end of the scale, 24% of fathers and 29% of mothers state that they have more than 30 days holiday a year. Despite the fact that total free time increased between 3 and 5 weeks a year, there is nothing to indicate that the parents believe that they have more free time - quite the contrary!

Parents' working hours (Table 3.3.2.3.) Steenhold (1993,d)

The general attitude is that time can be split into working hours and free time although not all parents structure their daily lives in this way.

According to Hjorth Andersen (1991:51), 67% of the parents in families with children are able to make this split while 17% of the fathers and 16% of the mothers cannot do so. There are good grounds for assuming that the parents who cannot make the split are also those who work hardest.

Earlier research projects (Hjorth Andersen (1991), Platz (1988), Andersen & Holt (1990)) have indicated that parents in families with children work a great deal, on average approximately 40 hours a week for men and 33 hours a week for women. As table 5.2.1. indicates, children do not affect their parents' working hours to any significant degree.

Andersen (1988:50, fig. 3.2.) states that the total average daily number of working hours for men and women in the 25-44 years age group is between eight and nine hours for paid and unpaid (i.e. household) work. This is at least one hour per day more than any other age group.

The fathers' average working day is long: 9.25 hours at work plus an additional average travelling time of 45 minutes. This applies regardless of whether the fathers have small or slightly older children.

Household chores take up just under 1.5 hours of the fathers' day when they have small children and one hour when the children are of school age. In the case of mothers who go out to work, their average working day is a couple of hours shorter and travelling time shorter than fathers'.

According to Platz (1987), the total number of weekly working hours for families with children is approximately 75 hours, distributed as just over 40 hours for men and a little over 30 hours for women.

Hobbies and interests

The research revealed that both the self-employed and the career-oriented people see freedom and free time as relative concepts.

The wage-earners see the pursuit of hobbies and interests as synonymous with freedom and free time and as part and parcel of family relaxation.

The term "free time" can be described in four different ways, which, however, in no way accurately reflect how parents spend their leisure time:

- time to spend income on personal consumption
- time to spend large portions of one's income on personal consumption and purchase of consumer goods for the family and on investments in one's own personal expansive free time
- time available for the pursuit of an important hobby/interest, to participate in social club or organisation in which one's family can also participate (actively or passively) - additionally can be a practical, supportive arrangement.
- time spent with the family in private interaction and family activities and experiences for all members of the family together.

In this research, parents were asked: "Do you have a hobby or special interest? Something you enjoy - maybe a sport, a pastime, the family, something you collect, a practical or theoretical interest - tell us about it!"

If the parents named more than three activities/hobbies or interests, only the three most important of these were used in the research analyses. All the free time activities mentioned are included and all the interests and hobbies registered in the research material.

Activities in the research have been split into 9 main groups. The main group "Hobby/creative interest" is then subdivided into a number of sub-categories. All the activities are described in just a few words - as indeed the parents themselves described them.

Parents' interests/hobbies (Table 3.3.2.4.)
- and time spent on these, see tables 3.3.2.5. and 3.3.2.6., Steenhold (1993,d)

The parents were asked to name three important/significant hobbies or interests.

Parents have a wide variety of interests in their free time and these research results corresponded to Andersen (1988) who registered free time in Danes' everyday lives. As there is no research material available covering what effect parents' interests/hobbies have on children's choice of toys and play, this research has also registered how much time parents estimate they have available for their hobbies/interests.

The table indicates, however, that fathers spend far more of their free time on different hobbies than mothers, who spend time on the family, home and garden.

The research did not provide documentation as to whether certain groups of parents pursue special interests or hobbies more than other groups but there seems to be a tendency for this to be the case.

The most important aspect is how much money parents spend on interests/hobbies as some parents can certainly afford to invest more in a hobby than others. This is a question about how the family prioritises its financial resources.

Family
Interaction/interrelation within the family, interest and participation in partner's and children's everyday lives, work and activities.

Friends
Interaction with friends, neighbours and acquaintances

Sport/exercise
All ball games, including individual games, swimming, body-building, workout, dance, ballet, athletics, riding, martial arts, self-defence, relaxation/meditation and gymnastics

Song/music
Music/singing lessons, choral singing, playing in an orchestra, etc. Going to musical concerts and performances. Singing/music studies.

Video/photography/TV - as technician
Drama and other performing arts, amateur theatre, film, video, going to theatrical performances and film club presentations - as technician

Performance/theatre - as performer
Drama and other performing arts, amateur theatre, puppet theatre, film, video - as a performer. Going to theatrical performances and film club presentations.

Education/culture
Tutoring/lectures in connection with one's education, a desire for development or to gain knowledge, interest in a variety of (school) subjects, the arts, social studies, etc.

Politics/organisations
Political work, party/organisation worker. Trades union and residents' committees, etc. Active in citizens' groups.

Idealistic/religious work
Participation in international and inter-cultural work, Amnesty International, Red Cross, active in grass roots movements. Leader in idealistic, uniformed youth group. Active church member, evangelism.

Humanitarian/Care work
Voluntary care work, caring, visiting, voluntary humanitarian social work in support organisations and groups.

Hobby
Classes or participation in hobby or creative interest

Artistic activity
Drawing, painting, printing, making natural dyes, woodwork

DIY/house/gardening
DIY and maintenance work. Day-to-day repairs and maintenance of the family's property, home and garden

Food/drink
The finer points of cookery, wine-making

Cards/chess/games
All forms of games

PC/word processor/communication
Computer games, programming and participation in classes or other activities connected with these.

Models/technical
Building models from building sets, model railway, electronics and mechanics

Collecting
All forms of collecting, e.g. stamps, coins - and keeping pets, running kennels

Nature/hunting/fishing
"Trips" into natural surroundings, ecological/nature interests, rambles, experiences in natural environment, excursions

Do-it-yourself
Crafts and major carpentry/masonry etc. work on family property, the home and garden, sometimes doing the same for friends and acquaintances

Camping/travel/sailing
Camping trips, sailing trips and family holidays

Parents' time resources

Parents' time resources are a very significant factor and they must be mentioned here in order to meet the requirements of the International Time and Motion Study Research Guidelines, Ås 1982.

Parents spend time on a number of different activities which can be defined in practical terms by:

- location (where an activity occurs)
- interaction (the person(s) they are with) and
- behaviour (what they do).

Time/activities are split into four main groups:

1. Necessary Time - time spent on the basic, personal needs for rest, eating, personal hygiene which can be opportunities for being with one's children in close, private interaction, which is contact and play in a valuable combination. This is the kind of play between parents and children which is referred to in the play classification as "intimate play". This is not a hobby, more an "interest".

2. Contracted Time - is the time parents spend at work, in study and education, including travelling time connected with these activities.

Children's roles in these activities are limited with the exception of children whose parents are self-employed and where parents state specifically that the children participate in work by "helping indoors and outdoors", the play classification's "tools/collecting/sewing".

3. Committed Time - includes daily obligations in connection with the family's everyday life, cleaning, shopping, looking after children and practical activities including home maintenance and gardening. Many of these activities can be carried out with the children. Also included here is a large group of activities which include obligatory and play characteristics. (These forms of play are listed under "Tools/collecting/sewing".)

4. Free Time - the time remaining when all the parents' other activities are completed - time they are free to spend as they choose.

Activities included here are individual and the individual person carries out these activities without obligation and for the sake only of his/her own personal enjoyment. Play and interaction in free time can, of course, take place with children but many parents tend rather to see this as duty rather than pleasure.

Much of parents' free time is also spent outside the home and without involving the children. Many parents have an idea that free time is something which they prefer to enjoy without children. Other parents would

never dream of e.g. going on holiday or spending free time without their children.

There are no overviews showing how parents in families with children combine the four forms of activities mentioned above but the figures for the use of time in Steenhold's tables (1993,d) are best regarded as tentative.

Parents' interaction with their children in their free time is (seen from the adult perspective) by no means necessarily a pleasure and the time children and parents spend together is often limited and involves several different activities simultaneously.

Qualitative interaction - measured in time spent - is not an easy thing to measure and the quality of the activity itself cannot be measured by its content.

Children's assistance in single parent families is of far greater importance for the efficient functioning of everyday family life than it is in homes with two parents. There is nothing in the families' responses to tell us whether this is play/interaction or duty/work.

Attitudes to the future - as a value

By contrast, where the families' attitudes to the future are concerned, each family - on the basis of collected information about them - is divided into one of the three basic outlooks on life, as suggested by Schousboe (1990,1990,1991).

Attitudes to the future cannot, however, be described as a life pattern in their own right but can and should be described as a value (in a general, scientific perspective).

Schousboe, however, does not hesitate to call "attitudes to the future" *a life pattern category*.

On the basis of basic categories, it is then possible to define three fundamentally different bases for people's arrangement of their lives although the three different forms of existence are manifested in innumerable variations. In practise it is often difficult to differentiate between a family Schousboe characterises as a "day-to-day life family" and a "socially engaged family".

The basis for Schousboe's argument is that the different families' dreams about what constitutes the good life go in different directions.

In ancient times the predominant philosophy was that the good life was best if it resembled existence in the distant past. In the Renaissance, the prevailing idea was that existence was best when it closely resembled an ideal, dreamland, utopia.

In present times and in our culture, there are ambivalent views as to what constitutes the good life. Some people refer to “the good old days before the world went mad”, others believe life is good as it is and others still believe that the good life lies somehow somewhere out in the future.

Each in their own way, the families’ attitudes reflect social developments.

- from the farmhouse production of raw materials, a cyclic existence with a seasonal pattern where the maintenance of life was contingent upon tomorrow being just as good as the day before yesterday -
- to the industrial society’s production idea where producing something new from something old is connected with ideas about growth, renewal and change.

This suggests that the different perspectives on life differ in terms of how families view opportunities for the future. Basically, it is possible to categorise the families who took part in this research into the three different perspectives on life as expressed by their different ways of life and lifestyles. Schousboe describes these three perspectives on life as:

The day-to-day family - sees the future as unlikely and undesirable. They believe that the good life is a life devoid of change and renewal.

They want tomorrow to be like yesterday. This perspective on life is reminiscent of the classical farmer’s life philosophy but, even though they are traditionalists, they do not seek a return to the good old days. The hallmarks of a rich and happy day-to-day life are peace and security built up around the family group with no big upheavals. The decisive factors for this kind of life are security of employment and good health. Only good fortune or bad luck can determine whether unemployment, financial difficulties, illness or death are to be the causes of destruction of the good life.

Only very few people believe that they have any influence on their own existence. According to Schousboe (1991:6), probably 50-60% of all Danes have a day-to-day life family perspective.

The socially engaged family (25-30% of all Danes) worries that dangers, such as environmental disasters, war and revolution, unemployment, technological advances and increasing internationalisation, threaten the good and secure life. They do not believe that bad luck or Fortune will decide future developments but are, even so, in some doubt as to whether they themselves can do anything about it. Such a family may seem to have traditionalist and conservative attitudes and morals.

They believe that social engagement and public debate are the best guarantee and precondition for making the best decisions.

Well thought-out plans of action are intended to prevent the most unfortunate consequences of developments which are inevitable. The socially-oriented

family will often want to maintain status quo or to turn the clock back to the days before the world went mad.

The enterprising family (10-20%) believe that the future depends on their making an effort. Enterprising families are concerned with creating their own individual existence. They are industrious and engaged in personal projects and want more than anything else to produce good, demonstrable results. They dare to compete, take chances, “stick their necks out”, try new things and are always on the look-out for opportunities for finding and trying new things. Their existence is - in different ways - filled with industry, creativity and life. They are constantly - in different ways - on their way “into the future”.

Existence can be very different - ranging from a career abroad, total engagement in the work of an organisation or movement or an active family life in the country with children, animals and a variety of interesting projects to work on. Flexibility, creativity, readiness to change and the ability to see the wider perspectives are characteristics particularly closely connected with industriousness.

In her description of the different family life patterns, Schousboe draws attention to the fact that we seldom find people whose life pattern is not a mixture of several patterns. However, it is possible to state that one life pattern dominates at the expense of the other two.

Relating Danish conditions to the international perspective, Schousboe (1991:7) states that “one can to a considerable extent find the same basic attitudes and norms in other Western countries. There are, however, great differences as to the dominant family pattern group in each country.”

In Denmark there are a great many socially-engaged consumers while the enterprising group is significantly larger in countries like e.g. France, Northern Italy. In the US, American families are “officially” not allowed to be anything but enterprising. Even so, as in Scandinavia, people should preferably appear to stand shoulder to shoulder and act like responsible day-to-day people.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the lives of day-to-day people will always be firmly anchored in a set of local, regional and national traditions which are also valuable.

Table 3.3.3.08. Families’ attitudes to the future

Total no. of families: 401		
Attitudes to the future - Total no.	399	
Day-to-day	270	70%
Socially engaged	90	20%
Enterprising	39	10%
No information	2	

Most Danish children live in a nuclear family. The children who took part in this research (Steenhold (1993,d - table 7.3.)) do too.

The same difficulties occur in registering the families' attitudes to the future (using Schousboe's categories) as occur when registering working life patterns.

There are as yet only a few, sporadic analyses based on Schousboe's concepts of attitudes to the future - and their results are widely divergent figures for the extent and proportions of the attitude patterns.

In this research doubt as to how far a family is a day-to-day family or a socially engaged family has resulted in more families being registered as day-to-day families. So there is some uncertainty as to how big this group actually is. Categorising the enterprising families is an easier task.

The majority (70%) of families in this research were categorised as day-to-day life families, firmly anchored in solid local and national traditions but with a certain amount of social engagement.

Comparative overview

The following overview shows the relative sizes of the various family groups:

Table 3.3.3.01. Families in this research

Total no. of families:	401	
<u>Family form</u>		
Single parent family	69	12%
Two parent family	332	88%

As earlier mentioned, the perspective for this research is the idea that **parents' educational background** creates fundamental conditions for certain jobs, etc., and that their educational background is the base from which they gain insight and understanding for certain life styles, social attitudes and beliefs.

This is why the index for educational background is used here as a basis for presentation of a general overview:

Example of the presentation formula: (deviation in no. XX/XX: 1-2, approx. 1%) <u>Mothers'/fathers' educational background</u>
Education/training no./total = XX% and of these: X% work/job X% working life pattern X% parental life pattern ---------- attitude to the future: X% day-to-day family life pattern X% socially engaged family life pattern X% enterprising family life pattern

From this formula, we can deduce that there are great differences between the individual groups. And the differences are expressed as many nuances!

FATHERS' EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUNDS

FURTHER EDUCATION - LONG COURSE: 62 of 315 fathers = 19%

WORK/JOB

- of these
  - 8% decision-makers
  - 10% contact/communication/service

WORKING LIFE PATTERN

- of these
  - 12% career-oriented
  - 5% wage-earners

PARENTAL LIFE PATTERN

- of these
  - 19% shared responsibility

ATTITUDE TO THE FUTURE

- of these
  - 6% day-to-day family life pattern
  - 8% socially engaged family life pattern
  - 5% enterprising family life pattern

SOCIAL/HEALTH/TEACHING: 33 of 315 fathers = 10%

WORK/JOB

- of these
  - 9% contact/communication/service

WORKING LIFE PATTERN

- of these
  - 9% wage-earners

PARENTAL LIFE PATTERN

- of these
  - 8% shared responsibility
  - 2% single parent family

ATTITUDE TO THE FUTURE

- of these
  - 4% day-to-day family life pattern
  - 5% socially engaged family life pattern
  - 1% enterprising family life pattern

COMMERCE/ADMINISTRATION/SERVICE: 38 of 315 fathers = 12%

WORK/JOB

- of these
  - 6% routine
  - 5% contact/communication/service

WORKING LIFE PATTERN

- of these
  - 8% wage-earners
  - 3% career-oriented

PARENTAL LIFE PATTERN

- of these
  - 11% shared responsibility

ATTITUDE TO THE FUTURE

- of these
  - 9% day-to-day family life pattern
  - 3% socially engaged family life pattern

SKILLED/TECHNICAL: 154 of 315 fathers = 48%

WORK/JOB

- of these
  - 35% skilled/technical
  - 6% routine

WORKING LIFE PATTERN

- of these
  - 36% wage-earners
  - 9% self-employed

PARENTAL LIFE PATTERN

- of these	47% shared responsibility
	ATTITUDE TO THE FUTURE
- of these	36% day-to-day family life pattern
	7% socially engaged family life pattern
	6% enterprising family life pattern

NONE AND OTHER: 28 of 315 fathers = 9%

	WORK/JOB
- of these	6% routine
	2% skilled/technical
	WORKING LIFE PATTERN
- of these	8% wage-earners
	PARENTAL LIFE PATTERN
- of these	8% shared responsibility
	ATTITUDE TO THE FUTURE
- of these	8% day-to-day family life pattern

MOTHERS' EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUNDS

FURTHER EDUCATION - LONG COURSE: 29 of 383 mothers = 7%

WORK/JOB

- of these 4% decision-makers

WORKING LIFE PATTERN

- of these 5% wage-earners

PARENTAL LIFE PATTERN

- of these 7% shared responsibility

ATTITUDE TO THE FUTURE

- of these 2% day-to-day family life pattern
  1% socially engaged family life pattern
  4% enterprising family life pattern

SOCIAL/HEALTH/TEACHING: 139 of 383 mothers = 36%

WORK/JOB

- of these 32% contact/communication/service

WORKING LIFE PATTERN

- of these 32% wage-earners

PARENTAL LIFE PATTERN

- of these 28% shared responsibility

ATTITUDE TO THE FUTURE

- of these 20% day-to-day family life pattern
  11% socially engaged family life pattern
  4% enterprising family life pattern

COMMERCE/ADMINISTRATION/SERVICE: 117 of 383 mothers = 31%

WORK/JOB

- of these 19% routine
  6% contact/communication/service

WORKING LIFE PATTERN

- of these 28% wage-earners

PARENTAL LIFE PATTERN

- of these 28% shared responsibility

ATTITUDE TO THE FUTURE

- of these 25% day-to-day family life pattern
  3% socially engaged family life pattern
  1% enterprising family life pattern

SKILLED/TECHNICAL: 24 of 383 mothers = 6%

WORK/JOB

- of these 3% skilled/technical

WORKING LIFE PATTERN

- of these 6% wage-earners

PARENTAL LIFE PATTERN

- of these 4% shared responsibility

ATTITUDE TO THE FUTURE

- of these 4% day-to-day family life pattern
  1% socially engaged family life pattern

1% enterprising family life pattern

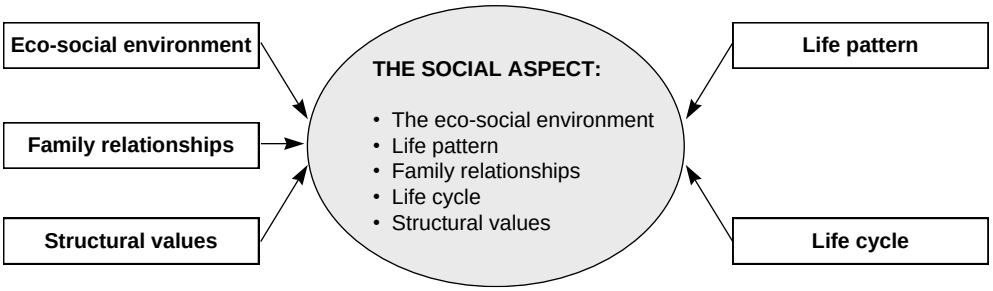
NONE AND OTHER: 74 of 383 mothers = 19%

	WORK/JOB
- of these	7% none/other
	7% contact/communication/service
	WORKING LIFE PATTERN
- of these	17% wage-earners
	PARENTAL LIFE PATTERN
- of these	12% shared responsibility
	ATTITUDE TO THE FUTURE
- of these	15% day-to-day family life pattern
	3% social engaged family life pattern
	1% enterprising family life pattern

THE EXCESS PERCENTAGES ARE DISTRIBUTED AMONG THE OTHER CATEGORIES!

CHAPTER 14 LIFESTYLE DIFFERENCES - “THE SOCIAL ASPECT”

1.



Returning to the description of the model:

As mentioned in the introduction, in a situation where he has to choose and evaluate a given toy, the consumer has several current needs and a whole catalogue of associations to all kinds of possible uses for the toy in question.

These needs and associations are of course motivated by some underlying elements which are the basic causes of differences in lifestyles, i.e. differences in social life, including factors such as life pattern, life cycle, environment, relationships and values.

A lifestyle is the sum of a person’s day-to-day activities, interests and opinions of himself/herself and surroundings.

This chapter will outline factors concerned with the social aspect as these can influence purchasing behaviour or “toy acquisition behaviour”.

Life pattern

Chapters 14, 15 and 16 covering the social, situation and individual aspects, are all, naturally, based on the life conditions of the families, their life patterns, production methods which are all significant factors for the social and cultural style individuals seek to adopt.

The ability to adopt social and cultural style is, in turn, dependent on life cycle and close personal relationships within the family.

When I write “culture”, I believe, like Gullestrup (1992:54): *“Culture is the view of the world, the values, the norms and the behavioural patterns - and the material or abstract production of these - which any human being inherits from*

a previous generation: and which, in one way or another, differentiates him from people from other cultures."

A culture can then only be defined once empirical research and analyses are able to discover the individual layers of culture's vertical dimensions.

At the end of the 1970s, theoretical analysis of the terms "cultural style" and "cultural capital" began to make their mark. Cultural style is a term used to describe ethnic and gender-specific culture forms while cultural capital is *resources, consumption and time.*

The comprehensive empirical analyses of Bourdieu (1979) concerning lifestyles in France have had a particularly strong influence on Scandinavian research. Bourdieu's analyses are, of course, strongly biased by French culture. The following brief synopses of Danish research with a Danish (Scandinavian) bias contain just as many interesting perspectives as the French study but differ in significant ways.

According to Skovmand (1985), Bourdieu describes qualitative cultural dimensions by analysing the relationship between symbolic power, cultural lifestyle, cultural capital and the associated exercise of economic and social power. In actual fact, he tries to prove that there is not only a struggle for power at the social and financial level but also a struggle for cultural capital which is the decisive factor in how consumers move within the cultural circuit.

The formation of cultural taste and cultural consumption in relation to toys (later described in this book as utility maximisation) is, according to Bourdieu, the result of socialisation and social, financial and in particular educational factors (which is why this book concentrates on lifestyle on the basis of educational background).

To return to the description of (Scandinavian and) Danish analyses:

Any cultural style is a special conceptual universe containing special ways of understanding culture and special cultural terms. A life pattern demands the presence of some particular social circumstances in order to be able to exist and function.

Two different professional traditions deal with the daily lives of the population and the distribution of social benefits.

- *The professional tradition which concentrates on living conditions emphasises the description and analysis of the distribution of resources and aims to create greater equality.*

- The life pattern tradition emphasises a deep understanding *of the cultural and value differences between some of the dominant groups in the population*.

Life pattern analyses normally employ a stratification model as an index for "living conditions" and then classify the population. Without the index, the analyses are meaningless. The conditions and circumstances for a "life pattern" and for certain "living conditions" must also be part of the calculations.

E. J. Hansen (1978-80, 1990) and a number of subsequent research projects (Buchert (1981), Groth & Møllegaard (1982) and especially Højrup (1983), plus the more recent Gullestad (1985) and Holtedahl (1986)) form the basis for the description of consumer groups by integrating the two forms of analysis described above.

Research into "living conditions" and life patterns have been particularly important sources of inspiration in the preparation of the life pattern and lifestyles index in this book. There are vast differences between the research mentioned. Even so, they can all be classified as one of the two forms of analysis.

Their sum total is the concept of lifestyle because together they narrow down the focus and identify qualities which certain groups of the population seek to demonstrate, expound or communicate: the symbols they surround themselves with and the attitudes and values they wish to promote. All in all, the research is a question of defining the image each group has of itself and which is confirmed by the other groups, the image which forms groups' and individual's identities.

An integration of the two professional traditions and a presentation and definition of the concept as used in this book is outlined below:

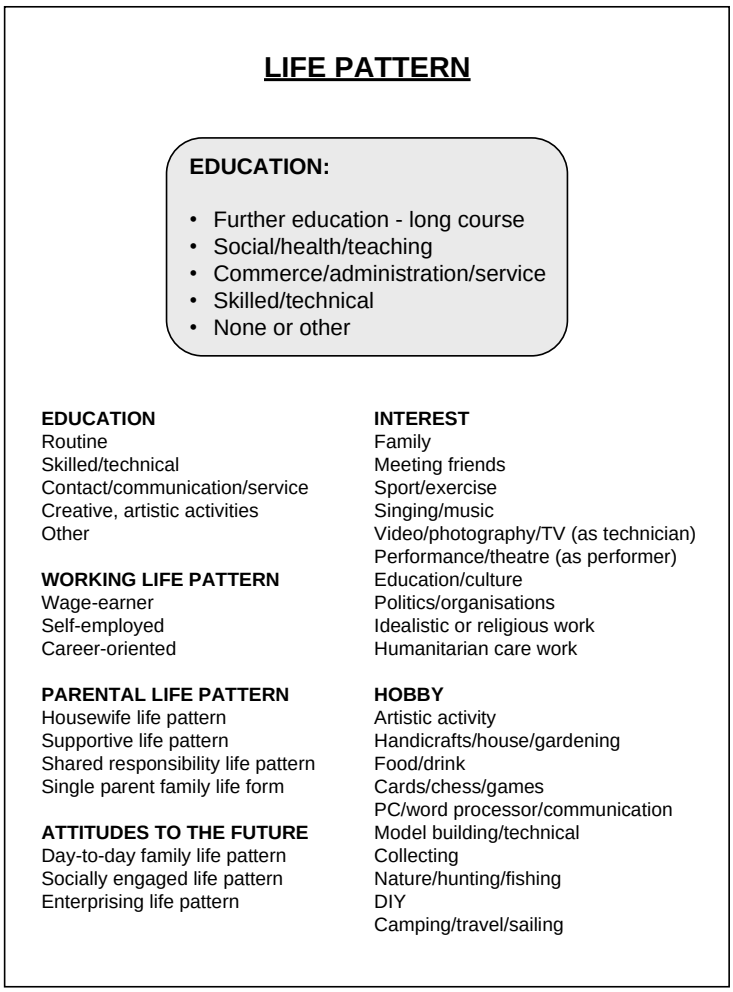
1. "Living conditions" and values

Danish society is built on collective consciousness of a common culture and language used by all groups of society and this facilitates interaction and integration. Society is split into a number of groups, so-called strata. Each stratum represents a homogeneous sub-group.

Analysis and research into the conditions for life in Denmark, normally undertaken by the Danish National Institute of Social Research, are carried out as stratified analyses in which the population is split into three or five strata, employment groups, social groups or classes. The tendency to use three or five strata as an index is based on the assumption that Danish society is a homogeneous society made up of homogeneous subgroups, with clear class distinctions, a common language and culture and an extremely small immigrant population of foreign ethnic minorities (less than 5% of the total population).

The three or five groups are subject to a certain degree of differentiation and distinction. The classification of life patterns is made up of categories where the variation within a category is less than the variation between categories.

The members of the various groups regard the various value norms of the other groups with respect but they are often erased by close contact between the groups.



"Living conditions" research is carried out especially by the Danish National Institute of Social Research (Dines Andersen:1989, Bjarne Hjorth Andersen:1991, E.J. Hansen:1984). The index's categories concerning parents' educational background and work/job were partly established on the basis of French social research covering the educational background and employment of the population - see Dines Andersen (1987), Bunnage & Hedegaard (1978), Fridberg (1981) and E.J. Hansen (1984,1990) - and partly on a British stratification model (GRO (General Register Office):1951) which is often used in international medical publications.

The categories for the index for educational background and job are built up on the basis of the living conditions and preconditions for these. The advantage of using a stratification model as the index in the LIFE PATTERN

model is that the result is a more closely defined type of parent. Furthermore, it is possible to compare results achieved from one group with results coming from another.

It is, however, not always easy to define certain parents' groups as they appear in the index in the LIFE PATTERN model.

The research index concerning parents' hobbies and interests is formulated directly after Andersen (1987).

However, by looking only at "living conditions" - how the family with children is equipped with a home, parents' employment, education, hobby, etc. - we get an incomplete picture of how the family relates to toys and play.

When parents account for their own life pattern, they do so not only in material terms but also in terms of what they require in the way of life values, explained via existential descriptions/comments concerning how they see toys and play, free time, hobbies and general family togetherness.

Bjarne Hjorth Andersen's research into the daily lives of families with children (1991) distributes families according to family social groups (three and five groups), profession/job, free time and "togetherness". By complete contrast, Rahbek Christensen's studies of life patterns in Denmark deal with three types of life pattern and a variety of women's life patterns connected with them.

2. Life patterns and values

There are clear cultural contrasts within Danish society and each is connected to its own particular universe of meaning, concept and value.

These universes of meaning, concept and value are anchored in conditions for existence, created on the basis of a person's educationional background, work and pattern of working life - "production method", their day-to-day life pattern including hobbies and interests and the parental life pattern and beliefs about the future.

The term "production method" can briefly be described as the background and way in which the family earns a living.

In this perspective, life pattern analyses are carried out on the basis of analyses of the production method and its multiple and complex causes. Even where a wide variety of different social and environmental factors (and production methods) creates almost identical conditions for existence and understanding of life for very different families, the same factors can also result in common, everyday practises and ideologies which can support life patterns.

The literature covering life pattern-oriented research and which has inspired this section includes work by researchers into popular culture and by social anthropologists (Lone Rahbek Christensen:1987,1988 and Karen Schousboe:1990). (Dines Andersen's research into schoolchildren's daily lives groups children according to their social background or group (five groups in all) by age and gender and is, as earlier mentioned, a good example of a Danish "conditions-oriented" stratification model.)

Each life pattern is motivated by one of the following four perspectives: psycho-social make-up, view of culture/life, attitudes and random beliefs and socio-financial resources.

The descriptions of consumers differentiate between parents' core values, the attitudes and opinions they express about toys, their value and about play. A few parents and parents' groups have definite value systems which steer their attitudes and behaviour towards the fulfilment of certain ideals and aims relating to toys and play.

These values are most often determined by **education**! Education controls the individual person's attitudes, opinions and behaviour in many different ways. Values and education create the foundation for a conscious selection and rejection of toys and play in connection with bringing up children within the family unit.

Through these values, parents express their social and cultural understanding and voice more or less explicit requirements, wishes and dreams connected to e.g. play with their children, play with toys, time and space in which to play, etc.

Values are often implicit - or at least they are not always clearly expressed. Attitudes and opinions, on the other hand, *are* clearly expressed but are in many cases inconsistent and diffuse. What is apparent is that the stability of parental values is demonstrated via their social and cultural background. For example, parents' dreams about "the good life" do not always point in the same direction because the human being is influenced very early in life by childhood life patterns or culture.

Life patterns are based on different social and cultural values and structures within society and they have different functions and requirements in relation to each another and to society as a whole. This explains why certain sub-cultures or special living conditions in a specific local society are not the soil from which a certain lifestyle can grow. In actual fact, different lifestyles can exist at the same time and in the same place, despite the fact that they make opposing demands on each other and on society.

Production methods, family culture and values

The preparation of the three main categories of the index for parents' production methods and life patterns, termed parents' working life pattern in

the index, was motivated by Danish research into “life patterns in Denmark”: Christensen (1987,1988) and Højrup (1993,1995). All three are motivated specifically by production method analyses.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

- family cohesion and identity
- identity of the individual family member
- integration in life (understanding life as an entity)
- direction of progress
- social reference group, lifestyle
- security, cosiness, peace and quiet, intimacy
- independence, self-sufficiency
- common sense, level-headedness
- control and mastery

Family relationships

The **parental life pattern** category is a relatively new concept which is based on analyses of parents’ roles as parents within the family unit. These take into account the many different forms of *family relationships* including responsibility for children. (See also *Today (1996) in “Modern Childhood”* - Chapter 15.)

The categories have been revised and adapted to the analyses of toys and play on the basis of several research projects related to life patterns, living conditions for families with children and close family relationships, including Bjarne Hjorth Andersen (1991), F.K. Hansen (1990), Dencik (1988), Christoffersen (1987), Christensen (1987), Sommer (1984) and Højrup (1983).

Schousboe’s (1990:56-65) research and analyses cover (young people’s) **attitudes to the future** and their angst, inclinations or expectations about future developments, their dreams about change or renewal in the future and their understanding and recognition of what constitutes “the good life”, including “freedom and free time ideals”.

Within the field of general scientific knowledge, this category is really “a value” which may or may not be characteristic of a life pattern category - but it is indeed not in itself a life pattern!

In her accounts of various lifestyles, Schousboe is also aware of the fact that people whose view of life isn’t complex are few and far between. It is nevertheless possible to state that one view of life predominates at the expense of the others. Personal instrumental values and characteristics, such as flexibility, creativity, readiness to accept change and a capacity to see the

wider perspectives, are, for example, particularly associated with industriousness.

Mankind will always be anchored to a complex set of ethnic, national, regional and local traditions and each factor will in its own way represent conditions under which development can take place. These many and varied conditions are fundamental to living conditions and life patterns.

Segmentation is based on this assumption because, while we know that no two people are the same, we also know that some of us are more alike than others. This is what makes segmentation possible. Segmentation consists of finding and utilising differences and similarities within a market, e.g. the toy market, and using them to achieve greater consumer loyalty (and improved competitive edge for the toy manufacturers).

Any toy manufacturer wants to satisfy consumers' desires and needs - preferably right down to the level of the individual child's needs - and that is how he creates consumer customer satisfaction.

The eco-social environment and life cycle

Ecology is currently a buzzword!

Many ecological problems, old ones and new ones, have been the subject of much investigation, discussion and research. The only difference between old and new ecological problems is the way in which they are solved, depending on time and conditions.

The problems and questions are not new but new remedies have cropped up which can be used to solve them.

Cobb (1977) demonstrates *one approach to the problems* in her book *"The Ecology of Imagination in Childhood"* which discusses the relationship between a child's environment and fantasy-based creative play.

Fantasy and consciousness - both factors which are firmly rooted in the life cycle of the individual - are significant to the relationship between environment and play. By life cycle, Cobb means:

LIFE CYCLE

- birth
- childhood
- childhood encounters
- encountering knowledge
- encountering recognition
- puberty
- youth
- infatuation
- love
- adulthood
- existential encounters
- differential encounters
- senility
- continuous process
- discontinuous process
- more random events

She is inspired by Bateson (1972) and sees children's play as a part of a dynamic ecosystem, Nature and culture created by Mankind. She emphasises (1977:24) that plants, Man and animals must be seen as part of the same eco-system which is entwined into a net of related energy systems - that the child gains impressions of reality through his nervous system and sensory organs in ways which are directly and organically part of Nature's own dynamic forms of energy. Nature's heartbeat and pulse, the changing of the seasons and the tides are - and will always be - two sides of the same coin.

Seasonal play, the pendulum-like action of the swing and analogous physical movements and many examples of certain ways in which to use words and music are used to demonstrate this idea.

The child's senses are stimulated in and by Nature and Nature's own senses are organically extended into the child. Cobb describes the forms by which the child understands senses and fantasy in play as *biocultural* because they are physical life expressed as various cultural forms and symbols.

The development of imagination and culture is designed to be part of the biocultural balance between Man and Nature, body and soul and thought.

Within the context of an entirety of which the child is as yet unaware but of which he is part, through play the child experiments in an attempt to find solutions and answers about reality. The child feels at home in this well-balanced eco-system and, according to Cobb, this is no great mystery because the child feels that he and his play are inherent to the entirety.

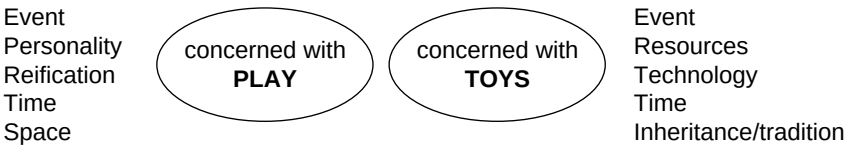
As a kind of "natural instrument", the child gains knowledge about reality through ecological learning chains, pulse, feeling, thoughts, body movements,

breathing, light and air, etc. All of these are expressed in the harmony between the child's inner and outer imaginary world. In turn, harmony is an expression of the balance between the child's ego and the world in which he lives and thus play becomes part of the ecology of the child's mind.

It goes without saying that destroying the fine balance in the ecosystem between Nature and childhood's creative recognition is catastrophic and will necessarily have far-reaching consequences for the child in adulthood.

The eco-social environment and its context

There are five strata:



Beyond the boundaries of the eco-social environment, there is an EXTERNAL ATMOSPHERE AND A UNIVERSE which is uncontrollable NATURE and local geographical conditions, which, in turn, are subject to the arbitrary randomness of being.

The eco-social environment has outer boundaries or "shells" which determine and limit.

Within these limitations, play has fantastic processes and permutations. And the same applies to toys. The limits for both toys and play are outlined in the model's five strata.

By INHERITANCE/TRADITION we mean the inherited and transmitted norms, rules and traditions for how a toy can be developed and put to practical use on the basis of its original form.

By EVENT we mean the current occurrence which is the instigator or motivation for ideas for product development or formation of a game or toy.

By PERSONALITY we mean the person-at-play's position in a life cycle, his personal experience, abilities, capacities and actual opportunities during the process of the game in question.

By RESOURCE we mean the different kinds of opportunities and sources of help available for the formation or production of any given toy.

By SPACE we mean the conditions of the spatial framework or location in which play occurs. This includes, among other factors, the so-called structural values.

By TECHNOLOGY we mean the tools available for design and fabrication/production of a toy.

By TIME we mean not only 1) the actual point in time in which play takes place but also 2) the dimensions of time and experience in which play is placed and 3) the temporal conditions for manufacture/production of the toy.

By REIFICATION we mean the thing/object (toy) which the person-at-play plays with in giving them value within play/game.

Ecology criticism
The following are some examples of practical ecological criticism:

Uni Bronfenbrenner (1981) asks a central question: "How can we human beings become more human?" Human beings' relating to one another has no longer an unequivocal motive, is no longer "monocausal" due to a lack of agreement to rights and access to resources on both the inner and the external level. We are aware and recognise that there is a limit for material growth and a limit to how much need and suffering we can stand to see others exposed to.

This has definite consequences for the conditions under which children grow up in "the global village". We are faced with many new and incalculable problems on a global scale. New methods must be employed to describe the problems and find solutions to them, new socio-ecological research disciplines including strictly empirical, complex statistical systems, the latest biological discoveries, complex mathematical methods, new electronic gadgetry, etc.

Bronfenbrenner theorises his own ecological ideas on the basis of the most ancient cultural peoples' natural philosophies in relation to the individual human being's responsibilities and relationships to:

1. himself and his closest family, defined as patterns related to activities, roles and relationships
2. his close family and relationships between people
3. his natural surroundings, defined as power structures and systems, and
4. the universe, defined as a global and universal responsibility.

The theory is made up of four systems within which human beings function. Bronfenbrenner calls these *the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem and the macrosystem.*

Based on Bronfenbrenner's ideas, Jacob (1987:43) brings these problems into social anthropological and socio-cultural perspective.

He outlines the problems occurring between:

- “subject”
- environment
- structure
- change/transformation

These problems lie in the social ecological preconditions for existence - ecology and Nature - ecology and socio-cultural conditions - ecology and the individual.

How do we analyse and solve these problems? When we view “toys and play, life patterns and lifestyles” in a socio-ecological perspective, we have to study the following:

- Plants’ and animals’ positions in the world’s ecological system
- Is there also a place for them in “the ecology of the individual human being”?
- Or what does natural experience mean to the individual human being when he lacks natural recognition and natural objects in his play and his recognition of the world?

If we relate Bronfenbrenner’s socio-ecological concepts to children’s play, we can illustrate his different environmental systems. The literature outlined in the following is concerned with this question:

THE ECO-SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

MACROSYSTEM contains:	and their:
Economic systems	Structures
Political systems	Degree of development
Judicial systems	Speed of change
Cultural systems	

EXOSYSTEM contains:	PLAY TAKES PLACE WITHIN:
Values	Educational systems
Norms	Mass media
Rules	Communications systems
Cultural contexts	Traffic and transport systems
	Shopping centres
	Local planning systems
	Local social systems

MESOSYSTEM contains:	PLAY IS PRACTISED WITHIN:
The home	Family constellations
Immediate surroundings	Style of upbringing
Place of work	Type of communication
Institutions	Type of experience
	Media and consumption (including toys)

MICROSYSTEM contains:	ENVIRONMENT/CONDITIONS FOR PLAY:
The home	Free space
Immediate surroundings	Sphere of activity
	Sphere of action
	Sphere of experience
	Space for learning/practising
	Playroom

CHILD, SUBJECT, PERSON, PARENT, SIBLINGS

The categories in the eco-systems and their influence on play. Partly based on Bronfenbrenner (1981).

Zacharias (1987:12:34:55) describes childhood and play in relation to the concept of ecology by emphasising the significance of the "scope" of play in:

- sociotope (immediate environment, the home)
- biotope (space) and
- the urbane environment (local society).

He criticises the innumerable attempts which have been made to define what play is. Play differs from one occasion to the next, he says (1987:16-17). Play reproduces itself in "a continually new and controversial version":

"It is uncontrollable due to the many invisible states and elements it contains - it is impossible to define how much of it is fantasy and how much reality which is due to the mutability of the significance and character of toys and chance objects (their instrumental, functional, symbolic and ritual meanings)."

These socio-ecological conditions are themes are often taken up in Steenhold (1993,d) and in this book.

Retter (1987) has another (and irresolute) approach to these socio-ecological problems when he puts them into a pedagogical perspective.

He doubts the value of evaluating child's acquiring knowledge, doubts the extent to which this knowledge is correct and necessary, doubts the insight gained by gaining knowledge, doubts the insight and experience gained through play, etc.

"because pollutants poison not only our water, air and earth but also the basis for our human experience and evaluation of the world around us."

Structural values

These pedagogical considerations connect play and toys *to basic ecologically-oriented values* which demand *parti pris* before they can be translated into the so-called "structural" values which include the layout and functions of the immediate environment.

STRUCTURAL VALUES

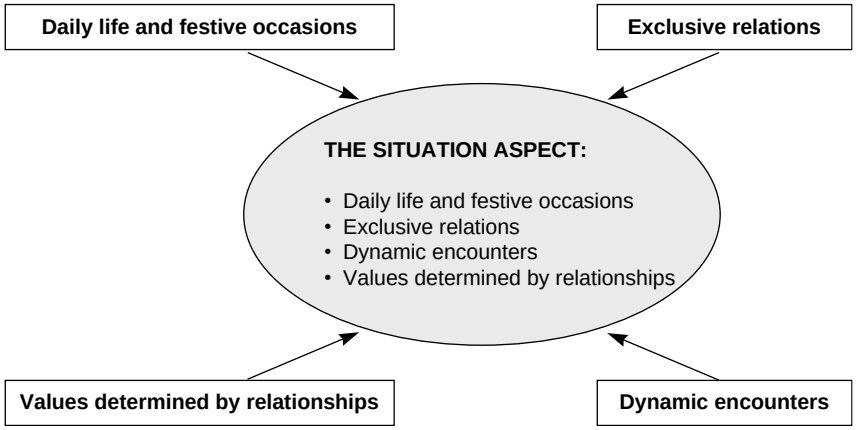
- **"layout and functions of the home environment"**
- **"environment functions"**
  noise, surroundings, play opportunities,
  use of the media, possibilities for being alone, etc.
- **"regulatory functions"**
  structure of time and space and
  the influence of the media on these, etc..

Finally, Bloch and Pellegrini (1989) discuss and analyse different conceptual definitions of play's *ecological context* (surroundings, conditions) and play's *external universal environmental and system-ecological atmosphere* - in such a way as to present these as *structural values*.

Similarly, Spanhel (1990, 1991, 1992) discusses this and suggests some principals for *system-ecological analyses* of children's play. These are discussed later in this book under *"Perspectives in the ecological approach to play".*

CHAPTER 15 DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES - "THE SITUATION ASPECT"

2.



The list of reasons why consumers acquire a toy also includes a desire *"to experience"* something new and *to bring oneself* into certain situations, suddenly *to be* in certain situations which are refreshing, create excitement and interest and which build relationships.

Experience is an important factor in modern childhood. Creating the experience is therefore an important element in a toy's existence.

"Translation of the experience" is needed in order to make the connection to the actual states which make up the situation experienced.

Immediate experiences of situations occur in either a spontaneous or a planned form through exclusive relationships, daily life and festive occasions and dynamic encounters which together emphasise the relationship values.

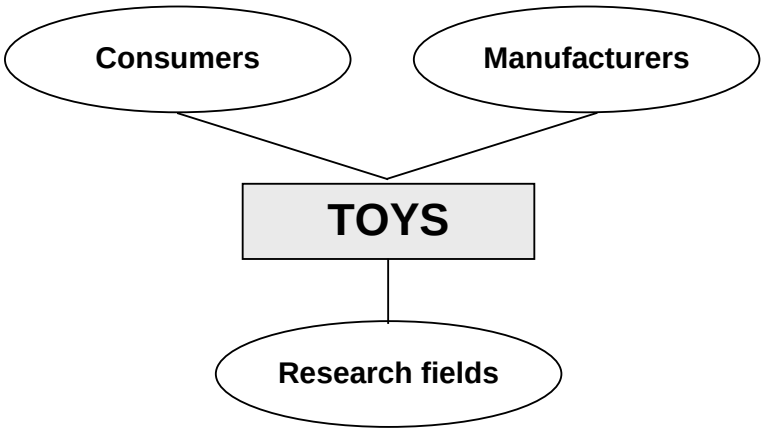
However, *consumer culture itself* requires translation because consumption per se is expected to be an experience.

For these reasons, this chapter focuses on the *differences we experience - the situation aspect* - by describing the "consumer's dilemma" (the very essence of being a consumer), problems connected with "cultural translation" and the concept of "modern childhood".

Consumers' situation

Over many years, research into play, and in particular into *children's play,* has been an accepted theme of humanist study.

Research into toys consists principally of three pivotal areas:



Within these fields, however, the following complex and negative tendencies are felt:

1. Consumer groups' sceptical attitude to toy manufacturers and to the toy market itself where some toy manufacturers have little credibility due to poor product development and lousy products.
2. Some specific fields and professional areas of study refuse to accept toys as useful, utilitarian, significant and serious. This is expressed through their failure to address the subject and reluctance to see toys and play with toys in an interdisciplinary or scientific way.

3. The lack of practical and theoretical methods for gaining an overall perspective of the great multiplicity of toys in the form of classifications, analysis models or interdisciplinary ties. Many of these methods have yet to be developed.

   This is apparent as many sociologist - and especially humanist - researchers show a distinct lack of interest in co-operating with the market and with the toy industry on the development not only of good products - good methods, good toys and good games - but also on basic research into topics and themes within toy theory at the interdisciplinary level.

However (despite being inanimate), toys - like so many of the things adults surround themselves with - do signify a promise of life and potential which partly qualifies the individual's relationship to things via a dynamic or humanising process and appear to be indispensable attributes to the identity of the individual.

Toys promote interpersonal exchanges and work as a kind of social glue in modern sociality.

Things enable us to demonstrate a sense of belonging in many areas: financial, cultural, social, etc.

As Bourdieu (1979) expressed it: "The essence of the dominance of dominant groups lies in their ability to define what is distinct and special in society. This dominance is expressed and practised through socially visible tastes which are the degree of mastery of the expression of these distinctions."

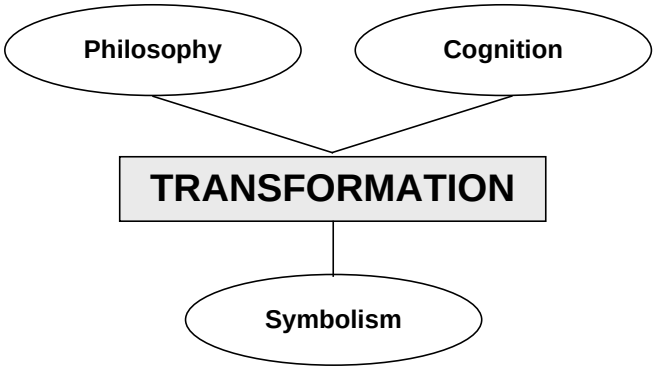
As for the toy market, it is important to note that over the past 25 years market research into toys and play has merely followed the principles of market research generally, i.e. to promote sales of the product - which in itself is not especially inspired or refreshing for a general understanding of the broad and general meaning of toys.

The way toys are marketed to children (and their parents), especially on TV, often seems intrusive, aggressive and destructive, especially to parents. This does nothing to encourage dialogue between manufacturers and consumers on the toy market.

Children concentrate a significant part of their childhood on play. Children's playing lives and existence within and outside the family unit concentrate on play with toys with siblings, parents and playmates. What is more, toys play an important role in children's and parents' common activities and interests. Toys are, however, in no way the only significant factor in children's lives, upbringing and development - and toys are in no way the only precondition for children's being able to gain knowledge, abilities and attitudes.

Toys, and most often educational toys, are naturally represented in social institutions. In school, however, with the possible exception of the first years, toys on the whole have no part to play in education. Toys - both good ones and bad ones - can, however, be used to renew and inspire in teaching situations. If they are to be used here, then we need to have both quantitative and qualitative data and knowledge about the basic significance, symbolic value and utility value of toys.

The main difficulty associated with much of the basic literature and studies of toys, play and lifestyles lies in the status of (social) anthropology as a scientific discipline and in the value generally attributed to toys as contemporary ethnographic data.



How then has the current author as researcher selected and deselected and with what motivation?

Where anthropological fields are concerned, the following three perspectives were mentioned in Part 1:

1. philosophical anthropology
2. cognitive anthropology
3. symbolic anthropology

There is, in addition, the continual process concerned with cultural transformation and transmission of the topic concerned. This is also problematic because the very act of incorporating an “unfamiliar” element with the aid of the familiar and “translating” (making the unfamiliar comprehensible (preferably also appealing) in its communicative form) is counterfeit.

Re 1. Philosophical anthropology

In the first anthropological form toys are accredited significant value as objects in the dialogue between the participants.

Toys, which are themselves part of this dialogue, must not only be seen as implements for play but just as importantly also as things which play with the persons-at-play.

The toys are not only things or objects which are played with but objects which are also determining factors for the actions and choices which sustain the play process. Children and adults at play support and communicate culture through their games and the toys used in them. At the same time, the person-at-play is also a cultural developer because the nature of play is that it automatically gives life to new values which in turn create new symbols, thought processes and combinations of concepts.

Re 2. Cognitive anthropology

Subjected as it is to a "cognitive" form of cultural perspective, the second anthropological form becomes relevant if both:

- *immaterial categories* (invisible play, invisible toys, interpretations and suppositions) and
- *material categories* (implements, toys, things, objects and tools)

are classified and structured.

This is, in fact, a mental cultural theory which communicates the idea that it is possible to explain human thought systems, categorisations and classifications by means and with the help of regulations (a system of knowledge and cognition).

If we accept that:

"each particular culture consists of a set of logical principles which order relevant material phenomena. To the cognitive anthropologist these logical principles rather than the material phenomena are the object of investigation." (Renner, 1980:49f, (1983)),

then toys as a phenomenon (whether they either act as a representation or bear meaning in association with other things and objects or in actions in widely varying situations and events) will be accredited with meaning.

Re 3. Symbolic anthropology

In the third anthropological form any given toy is included and regarded as a metaphor from which semantic categories can be devised.

Where cognitive and symbolic anthropology are concerned, culture is regarded as a framework (limited by time and space) within whose contours order, system and overview can be created, thus avoiding disorder and chaos.

Toys help to do this in the following ways:

- In cognitive anthropology, toys help because they are visible and material objects which can be characterised/described in clear, tangible terms. This occurs via clear, concrete representations and linguistic expressions.

- In symbolic anthropology toys help because they are objects with symbolic classifications, analogy codes, icons and associations. The symbolic anthropological description of the toy is, however, significantly more complicated and abstract.

In addition, there is *cultural transmission and transformation* on the basis of the *some of the principles of social anthropology.*

Transmission and transformation themselves occur within the limitations of time and space in the form of a sequence of actions - partly as play in an allotted form and partly as dialogue in a symbolic form.

The child's creative, imaginative way of using toys and play, described in *pedagogical* (pedagogical-psychological) terms, together with social anthropology's principles of transmission and transformation, indicates that toys have very great social and universal human significance.

But.. comprehension and mediation will always imply the presence of the dilemma that any level of comprehension and interpretation blocks the universal view! Even the most neutral description of toys, play and life patterns cannot avoid highlighting the split between the person who describes and all the others, even though he has the firmest of intentions of playing this split down and even though the intention is to describe the new elements in the character of the theme in question.

Where this dilemma is concerned, I lean on Wagner's (1975) theory on how cultural translation and comprehension actually take place.

According to Wagner, the act of comprehending the unfamiliar by means of one's own terminology and meanings implies something positive which makes communication possible and which encourages mediation and comprehension.

By tradition, the social and cultural anthropologist does not restrict *his encounter* with apparently inexplicable, unfamiliar or "foreign" phenomena to studies, fieldwork, interviews and data collection but is forced to *stretch his own terminology and concepts to embrace the unfamiliar*.

The researcher's most important task is to make the unfamiliar comprehensible to others so interpretation, communication and dialogues (about the unfamiliar and mediating the unfamiliar to others in order to give it meaning) are important too.

The researcher makes a cultural translation and "stretches concepts", brings home the unfamiliar, the unknown and the obscure! Wagner gives no direct instructions as to how best to do this. He believes that the individual researcher must choose his own method and design.

Comprehending the unfamiliar is achieved by means of analogy, i.e. the basic significance of the unfamiliar is translated into a familiar form.

Wagner (1975:14-16) uses the example of paintings by the Flemish painter, Brüeghel, depicting biblical stories in the everyday Flanders of the artist's time. In these paintings Brüeghel used familiar and sympathetic images to illustrate the unfamiliar.

This and similar dilemmas of cultural translation lie in the fact that the terms used in any presentation tend to be interpreted on face value.

It is “as if” they are extant within the unfamiliar context and identical with the analogue. For this reason they either are or act as copies.

If this is the case, the translation has failed!

This distorted form of translation often occurs in connection with children’s play when play is interpreted “as if” the children are merely “copying” the realistic, real adult world - and this is far from the truth about what happens when children play.

Culture is, however, not something any one nation or group of people owns nor is it a suitable topic for study. Culture is sheer invention. An unfamiliar culture is invented in order to make the unfamiliar comprehensible.

Adults have invented a children’s culture in order to be able to understand children. Adults have invented play culture in order to understand play, toy culture in order to understand toys, etc. - even though it is impossible to comprehend culture without first having constructed an understanding of it through familiar terminology and concepts.

Relationship values and modern childhood 1990-2000

At the end of the 1950s 75% of all married women were housewives. (Danish Statistic)
Parents split responsibilities for the home so that mothers spent most of their time on practical housework while fathers spent most of their time at work and therefore away from the home. The division of responsibilities for the home was clear. The father usually took care of the external and extrovert tasks and the mother took care of the home. There were of course differences in how much the individual father participated in the relationship between mother and child(ren) but in general each parent had his/her own activities and needs.

Even though the mothers were at home, they did not always spend a lot of time with their children. Practical housework occupied most of their time. Day-to-day responsibility for the children was entirely the mother’s and many mothers ended up living their lives through their children.

All this meant that there were *different opinions as to what constituted a good mother and a good father!*

For example, the proportion of advice and information given by the majority of Scandinavian compendia on important aspects of the home, family and housework for housewives in the 1950s included very little about children.

The majority of the pages of the compendia were devoted to giving instructions about hygiene and cleaning, closely followed by many pages about recipes, needlework and repairing clothes.

The same books in the 1990 version have left out more or less all the advice about hygiene and cleaning and the space is filled instead with advice and information about culture, society, psychology, the family and politics.

Where the family is concerned, the advice covers health, nutrition and exercise, sexuality, children's welfare and social events - mostly by way of hints about seasonal celebrations, parties (duties of host and hostess) and cosy activities for children, friends and family.

From the beginning of the 1960s, women's lives began to resemble men's lives as - like today - they went out to work and spent a lot of time away from the home.

RELATIONSHIP VALUES

- ***"need to communicate"***
(exchange ideas and experiences, conversation, opportunity for mutual comprehension, security, etc.)

- ***"readiness to make and maintain contact"***
(confirming the feeling of belonging to the family, relaxation, reduce conflicts, etc.)

- ***"social learning"***
(problem-solving, forming attitudes, mediating values, interpretation of information, school-home-work, etc.)

- ***"competence and dominance"***
(strengthening roles and role patterns, practising authority, control functions, sanctions, demands and reasoning)

Today (1999) in "modern childhood" the significance of both motherhood and fatherhood has become central because both parents are apart from their children during the week while they are at work.

The "shared responsibility" family's distribution of work and responsibilities in the home and within the family unit has made fathers more visible. In most families both parents go out to work and want to assume both sides of the parental role. Therefore, the characteristics of neither one of the parents is more significant than the other's.

Parents
Most parents' education is now generally longer and there is an increasing number of mothers who go out to work, an increasing burden of work for mothers and fathers alike and temporal coincidence of starting a family with starting a career.

First-time parents are now on average older (24.3 years in 1970 compared to 26.4 years in 1990 - European average: European Union Statistics).

Within the European Union, the average number of children per family is falling:

	1970	1990
UK	3.43	1.82
France	2.47	1.77
Germany	1.99	1.33

Many parents feel pressed for time and they use strategies for buying time in the form of increased consumption of household appliances, more finished and “ready-to-use” goods and “help in the home”-type services. The effect is obvious: more focus on time as the limited resource, increased willingness to buy or invest in time and to make the so-called “ready-to-run products” a natural part of everyday life.

All in all, we can state that families now generally have two adults going out to work, that there is increased pressure to perform well in education and at work, that upbringing and decisions are subject to negotiation (with the active participation of the children) and that children spend a great deal of their time outside the home.

This means that there is less time available for the family, that there is focus on assuring children’s futures, that children now have greater influence within the family, that families use more “ready-to-run” products (including toys) and that there seems to be less time for free play activities.

Parents are generally especially aware of the importance of complementing each other as best they can for the sake of the children. Together or separately, mothers and fathers do a many different things with their children - so-called everyday and family relationships - but their closeness to their children, despite different interests and working habits, is equally intense.

Time, peace and quiet, intimacy, involvement in their children’s situation and constructive pursuits with and in relation to children, regardless of which parent is involved, are pivotal factors. Shared, positive experiences, also with grandparents or close family friends, are also central and very important activities.

Furthermore, many parents as a couple want to present children with an example. They want to be growing, developing people and want to express satisfaction with life. And this applies even though families with children (and especially families with small children) live under difficult circumstances due to the lack of time (and in some cases lack of economic resources), the demands of the employment market, the need to be upsides with the latest

information, knowledge and insight and the need, at the same time as all the other needs, to be able to fulfil oneself as an individual and as a person, etc.

And this is true even though parents work long hours and are very busy in their work and in clubs and societies, etc.

Both parents have a common ideal that daily life should run as smoothly as possible while their aims (mentioned above) ought preferably also to be realised. This also means that, when asked what they see as a good father and a good mother, children's responses are basically the same.

Parents compare their own childhood with that of their children and, for many of them, this is a case of *comparing two different kinds of childhood* - and *two different ways of spending time with one's children*.

This can, of course, give rise to the creation of myths. Myths surrounding the amount of time mothers spent with their children and the degree of intimacy they had with them (and, by way of contrast, the absence of fathers) in the 1950s and 1960s mean that many of today's parents complain they don't have enough of time and intimacy with their children and feel guilty about this.

How much time yesterday's parents *really* spent on taking care of their children is in fact open to question.

Children
The fact that both parents go out to work means that there is an automatically increased need for child day care institutions and "controlled childminding". In Denmark, this is fortunately high quality!

However, there is also an increased need for intellectual learning - securing children's futures. This increases pressure on child care institutions and schools to bring children up and educate them and they are not geared for this. Consequentially, during the 1990s, an increased demand for home education has materialised.

The effects have been multiple:

- Strong intellectualisation of free time activities,
- Increased and more intensive use of professional pastimes ranging from music and art to sport, riding, etc. and
- Strong pressure on the school system to use personal computers in teaching with
- Consequent *reduction in the amount of time spent on play activities*.

These developments have brought about changes in ideals and views concerning children's upbringing. Spending time together has become negotiable and children have more influence on all household investments and purchases and their position in the "power structure" of the family unit has changed.

There are, therefore, significant differences in the amount of time parents now have available and the way in which they spend this time with their children compared to their parents (and grandparents). And we see the pattern repeating itself where the content of play is concerned. In today's children's grandparents' day - and in the days of the previous generations and partly too in today's children's parents' childhood - experiences, field and direction of play were concentrated in four spheres:

1. Home and immediate surroundings
   The children listened to what the adults talked about and what they did around the home and in their immediate surroundings - imitated them in play, most often in a way the adults recognised as "real life" in the children's play.

2. Family parties and gatherings
   Children participated with their parents in family parties and festive gatherings. This gave rise to alternative possibilities for play and the addition of new play variations - "handed down" by older family members or other children.

3. Changing of the seasons in relation to work
   Work and social rituals were connected to and affected by the changing of the seasons and play related to work and traditional games were seasonal too. Special ritual games were played on certain occasions - often with adults.

4. The children's own play
   Children's free play without adult surveillance/control amounted to handing down traditional games and especially forms of free play with a variety of things and objects which the children could find or obtain by themselves. (To a limited extent, prefabricated toys or play objects).

Today, children's play is *supplemented* with the following:

5. Organised and controlled "play"
   Activities, play, games and sports which are limited in terms of time, space and resources and which are arranged, organised and controlled in a pedagogical or institutional way by adults and which take place in an organised, institutional sphere, e.g. child day care institution, school, club or society.

6. Electronic games
   Electronic games are abstraction games which children almost always play with other children and partly without parental/adult control and which are generally and most frequently subject to children's own rules for co-operation and mutual exchange of games, ideas and instruction.

6a. Video games - a wide variety of types and qualities

Many parents see video games and electronic games as a threat to something which is in fact immutable, simply because they have no insight into the basis and true nature of these games.

6b. “Watching video films”

This is onlooker play - where the child/spectator plays with what he is watching. Like watching TV, the children act as spectators or audience and are witnesses to the fictional processes of action and imagination which comprise the content or narrative of the film.

This is why it is relevant to differentiate between *freedom to play and take part in activities without adult surveillance* on the one hand and *arranged and disciplined activities subject to adult organisation and control* on the other.

The amount of time spent on spheres 1 and 2 has hardly changed. The parents of today play at least as much with their children as the parents of yesterday did - if not more.

The amount of time spent on play spheres 3 and 4 has been significantly reduced because children’s play connected to parents’ work is less frequent.

Spheres 5 and especially 6b have taken over a huge part of children’s own play possibilities (i.e. where they are free to organise their own play and activities) and this means that the children of today in reality play less than their ancestors - when we regard play in a traditional and historical perspective.

We don’t yet know what the consequences of all this will be for the children’s attitude to life - but there are no good grounds for believing that it is harmful - although many “childhood romantics” insist that it is!

Spheres 5 and 6 are additions. There are good grounds for the belief that these areas enrich children’s play and children’s lives.

Daily life and parties, relationships and encounters

Free activities

There is, therefore, no doubt that children’s free time and leisure time have been drastically reduced, even though the following three areas (see model) continue to represent a significant portion of the potential for free activities.

Many “offers” (often more or less in the guise of “obligations”) encourage passivity or are simply passive entertainment in the form of internationalised products. This can be measured by the number of personal computers and TV-sets in children’s rooms which could very easily lead to greater attention being paid to “activating” children (as opposed to “encouraging them to be creative”).

DAILY LIFE AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS

- the triviality of daily life
- meaningful daily life
- special occasions, festive occasions
- children's parties and birthdays

EXCLUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

- meeting a celebrity
- gaining well-earned praise
- exclusive, extraordinary events
- being rewarded

DYNAMIC ENCOUNTERS

- existential encounters
- appeal or recognition

The effect might be insufficient stimulation of children's imaginations due to:

- the many, frequent changes of activity,
- children spending more time with adults and less time in contact with other children and
- increased consumption of "ready-to-run" products.

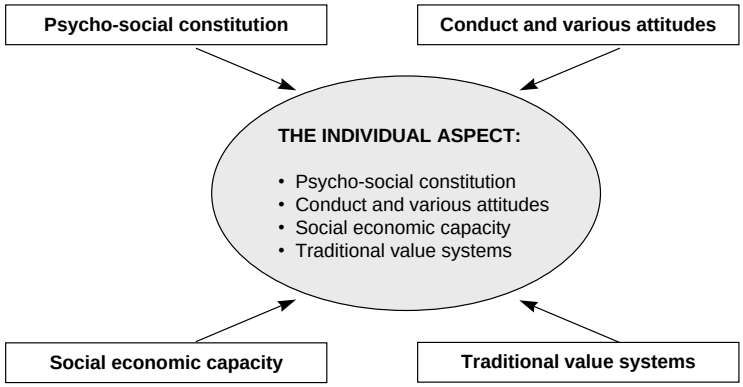
Over thousands of years and in their own anarchistic way, children have, however, always retained the *ability to invent, discover and establish time, space and "new" things for play - and often without the adults noticing what is really happening.*

Without attracting adult attention, children have always played experimentally and alternatively with objects which were in no way calculated to be used in the way the children chose to use them.

They will continue to do so - especially because there are markets, including the toy market, advertising and TV ads which stimulate vigilance and attention and also especially because electronic aids in the form of toys in the play and fantasy universe of both children and adults will continue to demonstrate the limitless opportunities available to "Homo Ludens".

CHAPTER 16 PERSONAL DIFFERENCES - “THE INDIVIDUAL ASPECT”

3.



An enormous variety of individual motivations for acquiring toys can be related to the personal, psycho-social constitution of the individual consumer (see Chapter 20: Consumer Segment and Toy Values) and to his/her gender, age, position on the family unit, etc. Private financial capacity has its own role to play. What can he/she afford to acquire? Are things too expensive, too exclusive? The individual consumer’s conduct and various attitudes to fashion, trends and other relationships also bring a great deal of influence to bear. Together these factors influence the values which the individual seeks to demonstrate or manifest.

These factors will be discussed in the following.

The individual and a “happy” childhood

Children and adults have different attitudes to what games and activities are interesting, pleasant, exciting. Their attitudes are decisive for their understanding of what constitutes a “happy childhood” - if, indeed, there is such a thing as the paradise of childhood. Despite this fact, parents and children indulge in many, many forms of activities together as play and being together, as listed in Steenhold (1993,d).

There are clear differences between the activities parents and children indulge in together which depend on the psycho-social constitution of the individuals involved, whether they are boys or girls, how old they are and the degree of difficulty of the activities. Furthermore, in the interviews parents and children referred to the significance of the duration of the activities.

PSYCHO-SOCIAL CONSTITUTION

- girl
- boy
- woman
- man
- age
- position within the family unit
- no. of siblings

Many of the parents elucidated the question about the duration of their activities by adding a comment about what was most significant about the game or how intensive it was, its quality and the degree to which the parent felt he/she had really concentrated on the game (whether he/she had participated 100% in the activity).

In their responses during the interviews and their answers to the questionnaire's open questions, most parents' accounts were related to play and play situations from their own childhood.

They have fond memories of their childhood and these memories are experiences for life. A number of parents spent a great deal of time in day care institutions when they were children. In most cases, however, their most vivid play experiences did not take place in a day care institution but together with parents, siblings or playmates in an environment which was not intended specifically for play.

These environments are typically described as housing estates, streets/roads or backyards, gardens or areas in the immediate vicinity of a farm, construction sites, fields/woods/parks - seldom play areas.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CAPACITY

- wages and earnings
- "living from hand to mouth"
- social economic determination
- long-term poverty or recently acquired wealth
- investments and long term ambitions

The so-called "happy" childhood is, therefore, conditional upon play and being together with others. It is also dependent on whether the immediate surroundings contain these conditional factors and are influenced by freedom of action and a variety of attitudes which are sources of inspiration for play in

everyday life. The most significant element is, therefore, parents' willingness or ability to play with their children.

CONDUCT AND VARIOUS ATTITUDES

- fashion and various stylistic influences
- chance meetings and trends
- spontaneous group relationships
- spontaneous impulses

The child's perspective

In her open research on this subject, Ulla Fasting (1989) describes children's and adults' ideas about childhood on the basis of responses to an open question "What constitutes a happy childhood?". She does not take into account the general preconditions or background of the respondents.

On the basis of their responses, Fasting describes how children think differently than adults, their parents.

Children think in terms of fantasies, images, senses and feelings while describing experiences in a concrete way. For children, a happy childhood is made up of sensory motor experiences, moving and expressing oneself - being active.

In the child's mind, "happiness" appears to be intoxication and infatuation. In the adult mind, happiness is synonymous with stability and affection.

These philosophies are explained by parents'/adults' ability to see life's different perspectives while children tend to live for today.

Classified in accordance with this book's play classification system, the typical responses of the child respondents in Fasting's research supplement the information contained in the tables:

Ways of being together:
- being allowed to play without adult intervention
- being on holiday with grandparents
- going camping or skiing with Mum and Dad
- having good friends to play with
- when the adults have time to talk
- when the adults play ball or cards or something like that with us
- when they play around and mess about
- when Mum and Dad are happy

Animals:
- acquiring or looking after an animal (puppy or kitten)
- breaking my horse in

Implements:
- reading an interesting book
- the adults work on something practical with us

Systems
- playing football
- being at scout camp

Nature:
- lots of space for running around and hiding in
- having your own den
- making dams in the stream
- riding in the woods or on the beach
- lying in the tall grass looking at the sky

No-one mentioned things like watching TV, playing with computers, going to kindergarten, after-school club activities or school. When asked why, they replied that these things have absolutely nothing to do with a happy childhood!!

School and child day care are not part of what the children see as happy experiences (as many of the parents who had spent time in child day care institutions in their own childhood could relate). School and child day care institutions were most clearly rejected as a possible basis for a happy childhood even though the majority liked school and day care and agreed that school can be fun - but schools, clubs and child day care centres are not for adults.

The responses cannot be described as dependent upon any particular life pattern or lifestyle because this was not the aim of Fasting's research. However, the tables in sections 6.4 and 6.5 of Steenhold (1993,d) give an indication of the conditions for these.

It is impossible to define a specific life pattern or lifestyle which would ensure children a happy childhood or a good play life.

This is due to the complexity and immense variety of assumptions and conditions which would have to be included in the “recipe” for what makes a happy childhood and a good play life.

However, characteristic of the majority of the responses in both Fasting’s and Steenhold’s (1993,d) research is that:

“we are dealing with emotional and sensory motor experiences, with environment and situations which facilitate movement and self-expression together with or alongside their parents and with play, fantasy and ”joie de vivre” which contribute to the “experience of joy” - feeling loved and “belonging””. Fasting (1989:20).

The adult perspective
In Fasting’s research, the adult respondents gave the following replies to the same question about “a happy childhood”. These responses are classified in accordance with the play classification model and included in general only ways of being together and experiencing of Nature:

Ways of being together:
- having a family
- being part of a family
- being wanted and loved
- when we played together in the street one Spring evening

Nature:
- having tall trees to climb in and fall out of
- physical activities in a free environment

Other responses from the adults were, however, more abstract:

- Security and trust
- Growing up in freedom
- If Mum and Dad get on well, children are happy and trusting.
- We must stop demanding that kids have to be clever and instead give them praise when they do exactly what we and their surroundings expect of them.
- Children who are asked to spend the rest of their lives pleasing others because Mum and Dad emphasised certain specific patterns of behaviour will never be happy.
- Never give a child a surrogate for what he/she really wants.

Like their children, the adults do not mention TV or time spent at school or in day care when they talk about ensuring a happy childhood. Furthermore, the adults connect the term “happy” with emotional experiences but do not place the same degree of emphasis on movement, experiences, play and imagination as children do.

The focal terms in both children's and adults' responses were "joie de vivre" and "freedom" and feeling loved and a sense of belonging and children gave the same clear signals The optimum conditions and backdrop for a "happy" childhood - factors which encourage human development - are having plenty of time, security, togetherness, having sufficient natural space and opportunities for moving and experiencing things.

The following questions arise:

- How far can these signals be attributed to a specific life pattern and lifestyle?
    - or to how certain groups regard children?
    - or to any specified understanding of the requirements for a happy childhood?
    - or to an adult's special ability to remember especially clearly the experiences and situations of his/her own childhood?

and

- Is there a general human need for togetherness, security and common experiences in an atmosphere of trust?

Fasting (1989:20) concludes that:

"children describe situations and sensory motor experiences more often than adults"

and adults tend instead to mention security and demands on parents, the atmosphere and environment in which children can express themselves.

The reason for this, Fasting concludes, is that: *"it could well be that we in general have concentrated so one-sidedly on children's intellectual development and social adaptation that we have failed to give enough space for happiness, desire, play, fantasy and sensory motor expression."*

Play between the generations (children - parents - grandparents, younger and older children) has, however, always been the means by which the younger generation - through ordinary and contemporary play and games - has acquired knowledge about, skills for and attitudes to life while the older generation (children and adults) have been able to enjoy seeing their own childhood from a mature perspective.

This is probably another factor which has contributed to the myth of childhood as a "lost paradise".

Traditional value systems

The *significance* of the child within the family unit can be determined by the "utility value" parents attribute to the child.

The way parents bring up their children, their values and attitudes, the reciprocal rights of negotiation between parents and children, etc. are reflected in this "utility value". Varming (1988) supplies examples of this.

Utility values can vary greatly, both on the social and personal level, but are primarily intended to support parents' desire to fulfil certain needs, ranging from emotional compensation to the certainty that later on in life the child will learn to take part in obligatory activities (most definitely not free play) which the parents will be proud of.

Regardless of how children have been regarded back in history, there is a certain pattern in the conditions under which children live, i.e. that in any society children are required to act in a way which corresponds to that particular society's needs and requirements.

This connection between the type of society in which they live and children's activities in the transitional phases between one social structure and another will always cause family problems and conflicts simply because the task of deciding what is the most correct, most useful and most sensible course of action is far from easy.

For example, around the turn of the century, the conflict between the need for children to work and the need for them to go to school was problematic because, among other things, many families needed the children's earnings to ensure their economic survival.

In transitional periods, many of the existing, natural and apparently eternally valid social balances and conventions are disrupted and new ones occur and have to be learned by the society's children and adults.

This applies, of course, also to toys and play. Increased competition and tougher demands for education make parents sceptical of the utility value of play and the significance of toys, even for very young children.

By contrast, other parents attribute great and overwhelming significance to togetherness, reciprocal play, play with toys and toys!

It is apparent, however, that the general attitude to this problem is demonstrated by the families' attitudes to children - attitudes which include the family's *interactive and communicative patterns* which form the basis for their life pattern and lifestyle.

Bonfadelli (1981:283) presents the *family's communicative complex* in two opposing dimensions:

- a social oriented (emotion-oriented) and
- a concept oriented (content/case/opinion-oriented) dimension

These two dimensions (which, incidentally, are closely related to older, socio-cultural models for “upbringing” and communication within the family unit) motivate the contact and communication which occurs between adults and children. The dimensions are reflected in play - in the way in which children are permitted to play. They are possibly also reflected in the choice of toys. See the model for social and concept-oriented interaction.

The content is characteristic for behavioural patterns and aims. On this basis, classical and traditional value systems can be formulated:

TRADITIONAL VALUE SYSTEMS
(split into three spheres)

*** Basic universal values**
e.g. trust, candour, sympathy, forgiveness, etc.

*** Instrumental values**
the preferred forms of behaviour: e.g. obedience, politeness, logical action, inventiveness, honesty, etc.

*** Terminal values**
the desired forms of existence: e.g. self-respect, recognition, happiness, friendship, freedom

Based on the extent to which parents exercise power over their children by using open or concealed discipline and sanctions of various kinds, Bonfadelli describes four different types of family (“family topologies”), each of which emphasises different interactive dimensions:

The laissez-faire family	emphasises none of the dimensions
The protective family	tends to emphasise the socially-oriented dimension most
The pluralist family	emphasises the conceptual dimension
The consensual family	emphasises both social and concept-oriented dimensions

MODEL: THE SOCIAL AND CONCEPT-ORIENTED DIMENSIONS

	SOCIAL-ORIENTED DIMENSION	**CONCEPT-ORIENTED DIMENSION**
Values:	Visible utility values Relatively similar and clear symbolic values	Variable utility and symbolic values
Dialogic constellation:	Reduction of the ego: "us" and you/it relationships	I-Thou relationships I- It relationships
Basis for contact/communication:	Emotional intent	Content, object, opinion, idea, point of view
Behavioural patterns:	Emphasise harmonious forms of contact Avoid controversial points of view	Emphasise special and even controversial points of view Encourage controversial points of view
Behavioural ideals:	Well-behaved, obedient Ability to adapt and adjust to fit in with social environment	Fantasy and tolerance Ability to learn and adjust to knowledge and capabilities
Behavioural aims:	Father/Mother/children, family/friends should " get on well together" Children should comply with other arguments Children must suppress disappointment and irritation Children should avoid social and emotional conflicts	Children must also be able to express their opinions to their parents Children should learn about different attitudes/opinions Children should be able to relate to controversy and confrontation with other children and adults Children must learn to survive conflicts and develop solutions.
Play patterns and aims:	Children should be sensory and intuitive in a harmonious way without conflicts. Children should be able to maintain balance in encounters and confrontations	Children should seek out, encounter, confront and socialise conflicts. Children should be able to reflect and integrate conflicts.

Where describing consumers is concerned, classification of the family types relative to the indices for life patterns and lifestyles (education, work/job, working life pattern, family life pattern, attitude to the future) outlined in this book would seem to be a logical course of action.

However, as already mentioned, the individual person's psychological constitution (gender/age), culture and attitude to life, values and attitudes and social economic affiliation all have a role to play too.

* * *

Study of the model for understanding the consumers continues in PART V.