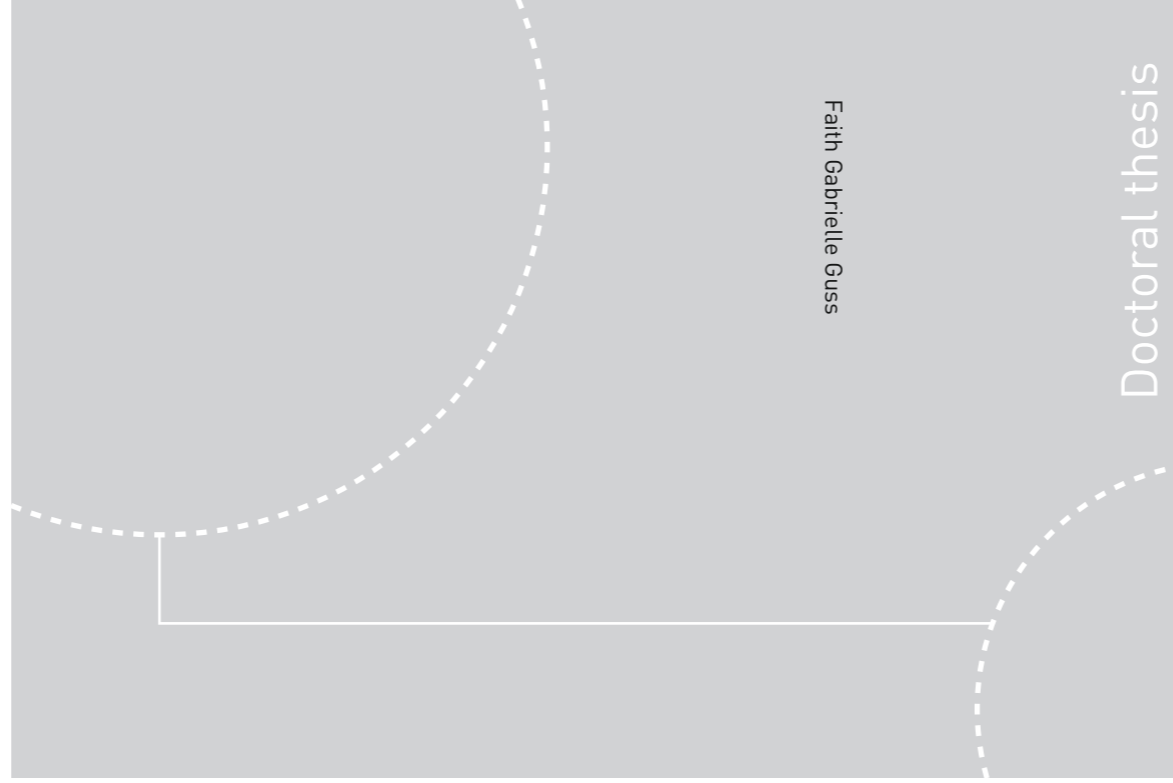


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Faith Gabrielle Guss

Drama Performance in Children's Play-culture The Possibilities and Significance of Form

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Thesis for the Degree of
Philosophiae Doctor
Faculty of Arts
Department of Art and Media Studies

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Dissertation for dr. art degree
Institute for Arts and Media Studies
Division of Drama and Theatre
Norwegian University of Science and Technology
2000

"In this more modern view, play, reality and culture are all involved in a continually shifting pattern of concepts and practices that condition each other, and rather than attempt to separate or privilege any of the terms, the critic or theorist of human activity should have as a goal the explanation of how this nature-culture manifests itself in different historical and cultural contexts."

Marvin Carlson: *Performance*, 1996

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Introduction

Teachers of drama and theatre education in early childhood studies have attempted to unite educational and artistic practices, but with little foundational aesthetic theory related to practice with young children (Guss 1993). As a drama/theatre teacher for many years in this context, I have registered the need for theory about the aesthetic dimension in children's dramatic playing (pretend play), in order to understand how to work more meaningfully in the drama medium, whether in drama processes *with* them or in theatre productions *for* them.

The motivation for this project has been a fascination with what I had observed, informally, as children's dramatic-expressive capacities in their dramatic playing: for example - how they "act" - the aesthetic qualities they bring to their use of voice and body, and how they create and use the play space and objects symbolically in their fictive worlds.

In dramatic playing children actualize, explore and interpret their life experiences in dramatic form, through enactment of role-figures and situations. - The players create a pretend world, a fiction, through symbolic use of body, voice, language, objects, space, and time. But *how* is drama performed in children's play-culture? - How do children collectively explore and interpret meaning in dramatic form? These questions have necessitated a study that can create theory about "the aesthetic dimension". The answers to these questions can be of interest not only for educationalists but for the dramatic/theatre arts community in general, because they can set drama and dramatic playing in a broad cultural-aesthetic perspective.

The interest is not solely in the individual child's symbolic mastery but, rather, in the cultural-aesthetic process of the symbolic mastery that lies in collective dramatic playing, and in how the children's minds seem to be at play in an aesthetic medium.

This dissertation presents the productive crystallization of a research process. The story is told through summarizing insights arrived at in theoretical retrospect, rather than through a report of

chronological developments in the analytical process. The goals of the project have been clear from the outset. However, a clarification of the problematics and concepts has grown out of theoretical and analytical work. I start the research story at the point at which these began to take solid form. Because of the complexity of the study - as an orientation for the reader, I give an overview of the contents of the dissertation below.

The wish for this qualitative study has been to develop theoretical understanding of the aesthetic, reflexive and cultural dimensions in children's dramatic playing. I have come to view dramatic playing as: drama performance in children's play-culture. In order to be able to study how children collectively perform drama in their spontaneous playing, I have conducted a six-month field study in a group of kindergarten children ranging in age from 2 - 7 years. The goals for the field study were threefold: to collect data of children's play-drama, to begin to develop tools for analysis of the aesthetic dimension, and to execute trial analyses. The results were the basis for a grant application for a three-year analysis project. Fieldnotes and videotapes of the playing children have provided the foundation for the development of the empirical material which is analyzed in the study.

The children and their dramatic playing have given me an enlivening experience, but the reader must wait until Chapter Five before meeting some of them full-scale. In Chapter One, I trace previous research that has both inspired me and led to the development of my problematics. Concepts that are central to the problematics - play, drama, aesthetics, aesthetic practice, reflexivity, culture, experience, and representation - are discussed and grounded in relation to the intentions of the study. Children's dramatic playing is considered as a cultural-aesthetic performance.

In Chapter Two, I present the theoretical foundations for the study of cultural-aesthetic performance - which are developed from the disciplines of theatre studies/dramaturgy, social anthropology, and performance studies. In this theory several concepts emerge which also prove central to the study, i.e. performance and liminality. The drama performance is the aesthetic *text* to be studied. The children, their experiences, and the relentless back-and-forth movement of the play process - its "beat and counterbeat" - together constitute the *cultural context* for the aesthetic "performance text".

Because I view each dramatic play event as a drama performance in the context of children's play-culture, the overriding methodological strategy that has been chosen is "performance analysis" with a cultural slant: cultural-aesthetic analysis. In the methodological considerations in Chapter Three, I present the philosophy of hermeneutic theory. This theory about the

development of interpretation and understanding is discussed thoroughly because it can be applied not only to the research process but to the interpretive process in children's aesthetic practice as well.

In Chapter Four, I present the design for the qualitative procedure based on ethnographic method and cultural comparative methodology. This is followed by a description of the fieldsite and field study in which I began to develop analytical tools and the empirical material to be used in indepth analysis. Before moving to the analyses in the next chapter, I conclude with an overview of the indepth analytical process - the planned levels of analysis and the analytical structure for the study.

Chapter Five consists of the analyses of three drama performances in which I document and describe the drama, and develop analytical tools to make the aesthetic, reflexive and cultural dimensions visible and to develop theory about them. The chapter is divided into three parts, corresponding to the three dramas. The findings are summarized in Chapter Six. These are reflected upon in a concluding theoretical discussion about the place of reflexivity in the concepts of representation, mimesis, and the transformation of experience and meaning. In an epilogue, I briefly sketch the implications of the findings for drama and theatre education.

The study seeks to understand what constitutes the aesthetic-reflexive dimension in dramatic playing, as well as to understand this dimension in a cultural perspective. Due to the complexity of the problematics, the dissertation's composition is highly intricate. - The concepts that are activated in these problematics have to be understood in relation to children's cultural world of play - the context in which they are being examined. The concepts themselves, and their interrelationships, can only become clarified through empirical exemplification, one analytical step at a time. This demands that the reader join me - one step at a time, perhaps not understanding where the path is leading, but trusting that the parts will eventually cohere into a meaningful whole.

Chapter One

Problematics:

The Aesthetic-reflexive Dimension in Dramatic
Play-Culture

Previous Research

In this chapter, I discuss the problematics of the study by entering into a dialogue with previous research on the aesthetic and cultural dimensions in dramatic playing, and by examining concepts that are central to the research goals.

I cannot hope to present the concept of play in all its philosophical complexity. In Mihai Spariosu's study of the concept of play and the aesthetic dimension in modern philosophical discourse, he posits that we cannot create a universal definition of the play concept, but best can understand it by describing "how and under what conditions an action is performed...one can define play by what it does, by its function, rather than by what it means"(Spariosu 1989: 3). In this contextual way, I wish to study what *dramatic play does* - culturally, aesthetically and reflexively.

"Playing " in contrast to "play"

The performance theorist Richard Schechner distinguishes between the idea of play and play genres, and *playing*. Playing is:

the ongoing, underlying *process* of off-balancing, loosening, bending, twisting, reconfiguring, and transforming - the permeating, eruptive/disruptive energy and *mood* below, behind, and to the sides of focused attention....How, when, and why is playing invited and sustained? How, when and why is playing denied or repressed? (Schechner 1993: 43, my emphasis)

I interpret him to mean that play is a concept and that play genres are taxonomies, whereas *playing* is an underlying process and mood that allows mental "transformation from one reality to another"(Schechner 1993: 28).

Dramatic play theory

Theory about children's dramatic playing is cross-disciplinary. In the literature, according to which disciplinary interests are defining it, this kind of play has been referred to as, for example: *pretend play, make-believe play, symbolic play, social fantasy play, socio-dramatic play, role-play*. In this century the social sciences have developed extensive play theory - for example, within psychoanalysis, sociology, social anthropology, and psychology - particularly cognitive and developmental psychology. This theory greatly influences the education system. In versions that can often curb one's awareness of the life-giving dynamics and cultural productivity of playing children, play has been "summarized" as follows: within the psychoanalytic tradition, as emotional processing and catharsis; within sociology and social anthropology, as an arena for socialization and cultural integration - learning of social roles, development of communication skills, social relationships, and peer-culture; within educational

psychology, as a locus for multi-faceted development - often with an emphasis on cognition and the trajectory toward 'higher' abstract thinking and psychological processes. The research of each of the disciplines has influenced the research of the other. Research of the past two decades has strived to overcome Piaget's dominant view of unilineal stages of development.¹ In existing theory little attention has been paid to the aesthetic dimension (Guss 1993).

Of potential interest for a cultural theory of play - in which the aesthetic dimension in dramatic playing and all cultural experience could be situated - the British child-psychiatrist D.W. Winnicott has created a metaphor - "the intermediate space", or "the potential space". This term provides an image for the psychological space between the infant's subjective *Me* and the objective world - the *Not-me*. This is also a cultural space. The development of this space first occurs when the infant uses what Winnicott calls "transitional objects" - such as a the corner of her blanket or the soft doll. These objects aid him in the transition from dependence upon to separation from "Mother", whom the infant experiences as part of himself - as part of his *Me*. The use of these objects provides a beginning experience of Mother as a *Not-me*, as part of the objective world. The intermediate space can be filled with meaningful play - the child's symbolic expressions. According to Winnicott, symbolic playing is the root of cultural-symbolic actions in adult religious ritual and in art (Winnicott 1971, Guss 1991 og 1993). The potential space is where cultural experience can "take place" (Winnicott 1971: 125). And in the cultural space, aesthetic experience can take place.

Apart from the great significance of Winnicott's thinking for psychoanalytical theory and psychological play theory, it seems an important foundation for developing theory about the aesthetic dimension in symbolic playing. We can come to an understanding of *how* the intermediate space between the individual and the objective world is filled with concrete-physical, symbolic actions, how they are *formed* so that they become significant for the player's *Me*. This is an aesthetic question. The experimental theatre director and performance theorist Richard Schechner applies Winnicott's theory to describe what happens in the workshop-rehearsal phase when the performers' *Me*'s, in working aesthetically with material from the objective world - the *Not-me* of the dramatic text - arrive at *Not-not-me*'s, which are a fusion of the *Me*'s and the *Not-me* (Schechner 1993: 29). As noted earlier, in their collective playing, the performers develop what can be defined as a "system of transformation from one reality to another" (Ibid.: 28).

¹ See Schwartzman 1978 for an extensive presentation and critique of play research and theory; see also Corsaro 1985, Åm 1989

Several developmental psychologists have noted the resemblance of play to theatre performance and other cultural performance genres. Sara Smilansky points to the essential pre-requisites for drama in socio-dramatic play: instruction, dramatic role, theme, scenography and props. She points as well to the potential for these aspects of socio-dramatic play to be harnessed in the service of *social* and *cognitive* goals in the school setting (Smilansky 1968). Brian Sutton-Smith, in moving from an individual developmental perspective on play toward an anthropological perspective, views play as performance. He points to the "play-quadrilogue" of performance communication in children's play: the actor, the co-actor (imagined or present), audience, and director. Through this play-structure model, he differentiates between the play *text*, the drama of play, and the overall performance *context*: As actors the children play the dramatic text, as directors they frame the context, as audience they receive the communication of both the text and the context (Sutton-Smith 1979).

Flemming Mouritsen, a theorist of aesthetic expressions in child-culture, has identified in children's storytelling and pretend play, three levels of awareness: in dialogue related to the private self, in that related to the position of the narrator/director, and in that related to the position of the actor (Mouritsen 1987 and 1996: 106-107). The social anthropologist Eli Åm identifies in the structure of play two layers or planes: one on which the players are their real selves and make up the story and direct the play, which she calls the director-plane; the other on which the players are play-selves, taking dramatic roles in which they create dialogue and actions (Åm 1989).

Sutton-Smith and Åm also note the states of excitement (euphoria, ecstasy) engendered by the play experience.

Of the five boundary-transcending theorists, Sutton-Smith, Åm and Mouritsen show great sensitivity to the structural form of pretend play. The first two theorists are on the structural brink of aesthetic analysis but only Mouritsen ventures over the threshold - especially in regard to children's storytelling. In regard to pretend play specifically, he notes resemblances to the theatre artist Dario Fo's folk-cultural storytelling methods and aesthetics.

Further cultural aspects of the resemblance of play to theatre and performance have also been noted - highlighting its character of *carnival*, its potential for turning the established order on its head, and for creating new cultural norms (Sutton-Smith and Magee 1989). Play's subversive, as opposed to integrative, social function; as well as its innovative, as opposed to imitative, function have also been noted (Schwartzman 1978). From these studies the conclusion is drawn that "play is both generative *and* expressive of personality and culture" (Schwartzman

1978: 209, my emphasis). However, the cultural, subversive and innovative aspects connected to the *formal* resemblances of dramatic playing to carnival, theatre and performance have not been pursued systematically from an *aesthetic* perspective. In my review of the literature (Guss 1993), I found that young children's spontaneous dramatic playing had not previously been systematically examined within a *cultural-aesthetic* framework. Since that time, however, several studies in Scandinavia have worked within this framework (Heggstad et al. 1994, Lindqvist 1995), although not to the extent of interpenetration of the two concepts that I wish to pursue in my study.

In the following discussion I wish to stress concepts that are central to an understanding of the goals and problematics of the research, such as culture, drama, and aesthetics and aesthetic practice. I raise questions throughout which will form a backdrop for the empirical study in the analyses of Chapter Five.

Cultural play theory

Culture in its broadest sense can be understood as the sphere of human life-production, life-process and social discourse within which human beings organize themselves; human beings' "unique forms of existence in cultural systems - arts, sciences, religion, economy, law". "...Human, cultural expressions - not least the arts - and cult actions are a kind of *objectification of the life of human consciousness*" (Nordenstam 1993: 134 and 137, my emphasis; Dilthey 1979). In the existing theory and in my analyses, I will investigate to what extent children's collective play-drama can be understood in cultural terms.

Cultural play

I pursue below theory which highlights the cultural and aesthetic dimensions in playing. In his book *Homo Ludens*, the Dutch cultural historian Johan Huizinga focusses on these dimensions. I refer in detail to his theory because it can serve as a reference point throughout the analyses of play-dramas in Chapter Five.

Playing can be understood as a cultural phenomenon (Huizinga 1954: Foreword), a view which meshes with Winnicott's theory (1971). Huizinga takes the view that "culture arises in the form of play...It is through this playing that society expresses its interpretation of life and the world. By this we do not mean that play turns into culture, rather that *in its earliest phases culture has the play-character...Culture emerges from play*"(p. 46, my emphasis)². This

² The idea of culture emerging from play is not presented here as support for any phylogenetic "ursprung" theory, but is meant to suggest that collective play might, in fact, produce culture in the here-and-now - an aspect I examine in the analysis chapter.

thinking supports the use of the concepts of "play-culture" and "child-culture" (Mouritsen 1996). *Child-culture* can be understood as emerging in the context of children's collective dramatic playing. Huizinga theorizes that "solitary play is productive of culture only in a limited degree" ((Huizinga 1954: 47), a point I wish to examine in the study.

Huizinga refers to play as a form of thought that satisfies communal ideals:

The play concept always remains distinct from all other *forms of thought* in which we express the *structure* of mental and social life (p. 7, my emphasis).

.../ "The expression of it (play) satisfies all kinds of *communal* ideals... In all its higher forms (it) at any rate always belongs to the sphere of festival and ritual - the sacred sphere.".../ "It at once assumes *fixed form* as a cultural phenomenon" (p. 9, my emphasis).

.../ "A play community generally becomes permanent even after the game is over... the feeling of being apart together... rejecting the usual norms...secrecy...child-life...suspension of normal child-life (p. 12).

What does Huizinga mean by "the higher forms" of play? - Adult forms? - Art and ritual? Perhaps *dramatic playing* can be included in this company. Huizinga seems to mix theory of adult and child play but can be interpreted to mean that child play is not a "higher form", not "serious". However, his meaning of the word "serious" is ambiguous. Perhaps we can understand children's play-drama as "serious fun". They may explore serious thematic material but the outcome of the drama does not have consequences in everyday child life, in regard to influencing the subject matter being treated, i.e. adult cultural viewpoints or the social order. Albeit, Huizinga says that cultural bonds are created among the players, indeed a "serious" consequence in everyday life.

In summary, cultural play is both mental and physical action, and it is a form of thought. Play expresses both individual mental structure and social structure. Huizinga's use of the concepts of *communal*, *community*, *of being apart together* is a concretization of the cultural aspect of play. Children's dramatic playing is a part of their "peer culture" (Corsaro 1985), a culture that is both intertwined with adult culture and set apart from it in a private, secret sphere. Children's dramatic playing is a *cultural meeting place* (Guss 1994: 13).

The aesthetic sphere of playing

Huizinga connects play to the aesthetic sphere and observes that it is characterized, formally, by movement, rhythm, change, alternation, repetition, succession, association, separation (Huizinga 1954: 9) - some of which can be viewed as basic characteristics of the aesthetic dimension. He also lists other aesthetic categories that will be examined in the research: order,

tension, poise, balance, contrast, variation, solution, resolution, etc..(p. 10); enchanting, captivating, rhythmical, ever-recurring patterns, beat and counterbeat, rise and fall, question and answer (p. 142). Play expresses "this desire to astonish by boundless exaggeration or confusion of proportions..." (p. 143).

So that we do not risk harmonizing or romanticizing play - in regard to Huizinga's characterization of play as *formal order* - it should be kept in mind that play's *aesthetic order*, or structure, can produce *social disorder*, an anti-structure to the prevailing social structure - "the dissolution of normative social structure" (Turner 1982: 28). This point can be examined both in relation to the *meanings* and forms that children explore in their dramatic playing.

Dramatic playing as mimesis and poesis:

I wish to consider Huizinga's thinking about what I understand as the *impulse* to mimesis and poesis, which are aesthetic concepts:

The creative faculty in a people, as in the child or every creative person, springs from this state of being "seized"... (which) inevitably and by *reflex action*, leads him to *represent his emotion in an act...* (Huizinga 1954: 16). " /.../ It is "a necessary *mental process of transformation...* The "being seized" by the phenomena of life...is condensed...to *poetic expression and art...*"(p. 17, my emphasis).

One can be seized by everyday phenomena (experience), artistic or otherwise, in a way which gives a strong impulse to represent the emotion in a play-act, to transform the experience objectively so that it can be grasped subjectively, in one's own aesthetic terms. As I understand Huizinga, this is what is meant by "poetic expression". It is a necessary mental transformation, but the way in which Huizinga expresses this idea confirms the interrelatedness between mental transformation and concrete symbolic transformation in the acts of playing.

Huizinga observes further that in this transformation, "In play as we conceive it *the distinction between belief and make-believe breaks down*" (p. 24). It seems that he is speaking of the distinction between being and pretending. Understood in this way, Huizinga's statement brings to mind a double consciousness which one recognizes from acting and acting theory. To what extent and how do children, mentally, exist simultaneously in both realities - the real and the fictive?

In Huizinga's theory, playing and dramatizing are interwoven in the same cultural fabric. He states:

The function of play in the higher forms... is a contest *for* something or a representation of something."..."Representation means display... a stepping out of common reality into a higher order(p. 13). /...*Imaking an image of something different*, something more beautiful or more *sublime*, or more *dangerous* than what he usually is... His {man's} representation is not so much a sham-reality as a *realization in appearance: imagination* in the original sense of the word....(p. 14, my emphases) [Imagination = image-in-action: my note].

The terms "representation" occurs frequently in the literature. Huizinga posits that play representation is not a "sham-reality", not a false reality. We could interpret this to mean that, *also* in play-drama representation, the player steps out of common reality and creates another reality. In my use of the term, *representation* will not mean *mimesis*, or copy of an original - as Plato conceived it. As a starting point, I will employ representation to mean: an action that is one's sensory processing of the way in which the imagination has captured an experience.

To what extent we can characterize dramatic playing as "mimesis" or "poesis" remains to be seen. Subsequent to the findings of the empirical study, I shall examine these concepts in relationship to "representation" and "transformation".

The interwoven fabric of play and drama

It is Huizinga's theory that "only the drama, because of its intrinsically functional character, its quality of being an action, remains permanently linked to play "(p. 144). [By "functional", I interpret him to mean "operational".] Here he states that, "The mental sphere from which the drama springs knows *no distinction between play and seriousness*" (p. 145, my emphasis). If we consider dramatic playing as *drama* played in the cultural context of children's playing, this statement is a clarifying confirmation that "play" and "seriousness" cannot be separated in the acts of drama, "even" when the drama is being played by children.

The French theorist of cultural play, Roger Callois (1958/1961), delineates categories similar to Huizinga's, but distinguishes between two types of play: *paidia* - spontaneous anarchic play, and *ludus* - conventional play governed by rules. In Huizinga's writing it is sometimes difficult to distinguish which type he is referring to. In the empirical study I will examine to what extent dramatic playing is on the borderline between *paidia* - with its principle of randomness, and *ludus* - with its rules and reigning principle of to and fro movement. It will be interesting to investigate to what extent it can be said to be primarily *paidia*, within a *ludus* of minimal rules - such that new aesthetic conventions can emerge.

Callois points to aspects that are common to play and theatre: mimicry - not necessarily in the sense of imitative copy; *agon* (conflict) and its logical, strategical nature; *alea* (chance) - an

opposite tendency to *agon* in its freedom and spontaneity; and *ilinx* (vertigo) - the destabilization of one's perception (Carlson 1996). One could explore to what extent dramatic playing combines the forces of *agon* and *alea*. And to what extent *ilinx* can be considered as a central feature in the fictionalization of others' perspectives, in the exploration of meaning generally, in reaching *recognition* (in Aristotle's term) or insight, and in all significant learning.

The play mentality in theatre training

In this century, theatre theoreticians from within theatre praxis have understood and utilized *tacit* knowledge about the resemblances between dramatic playing and theatre arts. - They have created systems of training actors which employ components that can foster the play mentality and verissimilitude (Stanislavsky 1924/1980, Jovet 1939). However, systematic, empirical studies were not recorded for fulfilling this purpose.

Within cultural history (Huizinga 1954), social anthropology (Turner 1988), and performance studies (Schechner 1988), the resemblances between the states of consciousness in playing, drama and ritual performance have been theorized, but the theory has not been based on documented, systematic, empirical investigations related to the *aesthetic* dimension in playing.

Summary

Dramatic playing is action represented for spectators in a performance. It is represented for spectators - in the sense that the players can be understood to spectate their own and each other's performance. Children, in dramatic playing, are *performer - spectators*.

Dramatic playing is both mental and physical action. It is a cultural form that child-life takes, a representation-form. Play in general is in the aesthetic sphere and is intrinsically linked with drama.

The theory expounds that there is a private, cultural sphere among children that *is* a child-culture. This study will focus on child-cultural dramatic expressions. Play, or *playing*, is the cultural context for children's drama performance. The study does not have as a goal to develop theory about the concept of child-culture, but to document, describe and develop theory about *how* this culture *is*, aesthetically, in its dramatic expressions.

Problematic: How is dramatic playing performed in child-culture?

In order to find answers, it is necessary to observe children at play and to analyze the material with tools that can make this dimension visible. Below, I present previous research/theory

within developmental psychology that is related to symbol systems and artistic symbols. It has aided in the refinement of the above problematic and the definition of the project's goals.

Dramatic play as proto-artistic practice?

The research in this thesis has its roots in a pilot project, a field study, in which the main goal was to create the empirical foundation for studying the aesthetic dimension. I had originally asked questions in regard to the potential in dramatic playing for *recognition* - in the sense of "perceiving clearly" (in Norwegian: *erkjennelsespotentiale*).³ The major tasks of the pilot study were to document the dramatic playing of a group of kindergarten children, as well as to begin to develop analytical tools for describing and characterizing the aesthetic dimension. The experience of the field study will be presented in Chapter Four. Below, I summarize the ideas behind that study, as their evolution has brought me forward to the theoretical foundations for the current study - which are presented in the next chapter.

In the early stages of the research, I thought of the children's dramatic playing as "proto-artistic", in the sense that it could be considered as an antecedent to artistic practice. By this I meant that ontogenetically, in the life of a young child, dramatic play practice could be seen as an embryonic artistic practice which, with training of skills and technique at a later age-level, could be developed into artistic practice. From this perspective, my original working title was "The Aesthetic Dimension in Symbolic Play: Children's play as proto-artistic practice"⁴. I delineate the background for this choice below.

Dramatic playing as a symbol system

The term "*symbolic play*" was utilized in the original working title for the research, but was later changed to "*dramatic play*". The original term was used because, at the time, I was concerned with developmental psychologist and psycho-biologist, Professor Howard Gardner's and colleagues (Project Zero, Harvard University) research into human intelligences. Gardner's research was based partly on a seven-year study of children's use of symbol systems, and symbolic play (pretend play) is one of the symbol systems which was studied (Gardner 1983). As a theatre arts educator, the findings were of great interest, both because Project Zero's research was heralded by arts educators in other fields as a long-

³ For a summary of the results of the pilot study, see sections on "The Design for the Field Study" and "Description of the Field Study", Chapter Four.

⁴ The idea of "proto-artistic" practice was developed in a conversation with Ellen Winner, a developmental psychologist and researcher of children's verbal and pictorial symbolization at Project Zero, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University - during my year there as visiting scholar, 1989-90.

awaited scientific recognition of the educational value of artistic subjects in developing culturally valuable, core intelligences; and because developmental psychology has such a large impact on educational policy and general curriculum in early childhood education.

According to Gardner, symbol systems are:

...culturally contrived systems of meaning which capture important forms of information. Language, picturing, mathematics are but three of the symbol systems that have become important the world over for human survival and human productivity. /.../...A primary characteristic of human intelligence may well be its "natural" gravitation toward embodiment in a symbolic system (Gardner 1983: 66, my emphasis).

Other symbol systems are bodily-gestural, musical, spatial and even personal systems (Ibid.: 26). Gardner states further that:

...what characterizes human intelligences, as against those of other species, is their potential for being involved in all manner of symbolic activity - the perception of symbols, the creation of symbols, the involvement with meaningful symbolic systems of all sorts" (p. 298). /.../...a symbol can convey some mood, feeling, or tone. /.../ By including the important expressive function within the armament of a symbol, we are able to talk about the full range of artistic symbols, from symphonies to square dances, from sculpture to squiggles, all of which have potential for expressing such connotative meanings" (p. 301, my emphasis).

As a backdrop for my study, Gardner's characterization of the child from two to five is relevant:

...epoch-making events occur in the child's symbolic development. The ages of two to five mark the time when basic symbolization develops, when the child becomes able to appreciate and to create instances of language (sentences and stories), two-dimensional symbolization (pictures), three-dimensional symbolization (clay and blocks), gestural symbolization (dance), music (songs), drama (pretend play), and certain kinds of mathematical and logical understanding, including an appreciation of basic numerical operations and simple causal explanations. By the close of the period, the time when children in our society enter school, they possess an initial or "first-draft" knowledge of symbolization; they may then go on in the years that follow to achieve fuller symbolic mastery (p. 305, my emphasis).

Although I must necessarily reduce the complexity of Gardner's seminal book (of 427 pages), I will attempt nonetheless to delineate what can be seen - from a drama and theatre educational perspective - as an incompleteness in Gardner's otherwise intriguing study and conclusions. He states that *symbolic products* ("stories and sonnets, plays and poetry...") are the *raison d'être* for symbol systems (p. 301, my emphasis). *Pretend play is seen as drama*, on the same line as children's early symbolic products in music, dance, linguistic/poetic and pictorial symbolizations. However, the relationship between pretend play and "artistic symbols" is *not* further developed - as it is in regard to children's other symbolic products. - Children's musical, kinesthetic, spatial and linguistic capacities are described in terms of *aesthetic* qualities

and *artistic* antecedents. For instance, *musical intelligence* is described in terms of sensitivity to aesthetic qualities in tone and rhythm, etc. and the trajectory toward musical mastery (p. 105 and Chapter 14). Pretend playing is not conceived of in such terms. There is no conceptualization of aesthetic qualities in regard to pretend play, nor of pretend play as the site of a "dramatic intelligence".⁵

In Gardner's suggestions for fostering these other symbolic capacities, their connection with adult art forms is made explicit, especially in the discussion of implications of the findings for pictorial arts education (Chapter 14). However, the "dramatic capacity" is not conceptualized and the enhancement of pretend play (drama) is not discussed in terms of drama and theatre arts education. On the other hand, Gardner discusses the competences of the mime, Marcel Marceau (p. 206-207), and the Balinese clown (p. 226-28) in relation to "*bodily-kinesthetic intelligence*". In doing so, the bodily-gestural symbol system, and not symbolic play, is cobbled to acting skills - which he understands as the ability to observe carefully and then to re-create scenes in detail (p. 226) - to create a role through re-creation of feelings (in terms of Stanislavsky's concept of emotional memory), or through "attention to surface details" (p. 228, perhaps a reference to Brecht and developments after Stanislavsky). Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence is certainly involved in creating a role, also in dramatic playing; but where in this picture is the complex symbolic use of voice, objects, space, and time? Unfortunately, Gardner does not address the full range of dramatic production skills involved in symbolic playing that are apparent to the observer trained in dramatic arts. Because of this, drama and theatre education are excluded from the scientific recognition that his work otherwise has bestowed on education in dance, music, pictorial arts, and linguistic arts.

It seems that, within the developmental psychology framework, a cobbling between the play form of drama (symbolic play) and the art form of theatre is not seen as relevant for cultural and educational purposes. On the other hand, Gardner conceptualizes the valuable outcomes of pretend playing as *intra-personal and interpersonal competences or intelligences* - "access to one's own feeling life" and "the ability to notice and make distinctions among other individuals and, in particular, among their moods, temperaments, motivations, and intentions" (p. 239); as well as being the central locus for "event-structuring". These capacities are undoubtedly of the greatest importance in a child's/person's life, but Gardner's focus does not inform the aesthetic and artistic perspective on symbolic playing. - These aspects of symbolic play are *also* the

⁵ Gardner does not posit a "dramatic intelligence", but in one possible reading of his text, the ability to play symbolically in pretend play *can* be understood as a culturally relevant "executive capacity" in the context of child-culture - a context he does not discuss. See pp. 274-76, and 316-320.

foundations and mainstays of acting and dramaturgical awareness (i.e. event-structuring). Hence, my wish to supplement Gardner's findings from a perspective that will be useful for drama and theatre education.

The questions that need to be answered are: - *How* do children in their symbolic work in pretend play *embody* and *actualize* their experience and awareness in dramatic form - aesthetically and reflexively? - How do they express and structure events such that the form is aesthetically gripping for them and allows them to better grasp the meanings of the events they are playing with? How do they sensorily represent their experiences and perceive and receive these sensory representations? - How do children *combine* the "artistic symbols" in their symbolic playing into a drama performance? How is drama performance in children's symbolic playing culturally significant, aesthetic production? At this juncture, we can examine the concept of children's "experience".

"Children's experience":

In English, the use of the word *experience* can produce communicative opaqueness. It can mean sensory data *as well as* cognition about, and reflection over, the data. The social anthropologist Victor Turner traces its Indo-European etymological roots to *per* - to attempt, venture, risk, related to the Greek *perao*, which means "I pass through". Turner points out that in this sense "experience" is "drama's" double, as in "*peril*". "Experience" can also be linked to the word "*ex-per-iment*" (Turner 1986: 35). The anthropologist Edward Bruner defines *experience* as both data, cognition, and expectations - "...actions and feelings, but also reflections about those actions and feelings" (Bruner and Turner 1986: 13). We say we have *had* an experience, but also that we *accumulate* (life) experience. In the German language, the writer and arts theorist Walter Benjamin defines the distinction between *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung* in the following way: the former means thrill, sensation, excitement; the latter means something lived through *and* reflected upon. This is clarified in his statement that Brecht "endeavors to refract the spectrum of "thrill" [*Erlebnis*, what I will call "experience"] in order to derive from it the hues of "experience" [*Erfahrung*, what I will call "Experience"]" (Huxley and Witts 1996: 68). In the Norwegian language which I use daily, we also have two words that make the same distinction: we use *opplevelse* to mean a thrill or sensation, and *erfaring* to mean sensory data that we have reflected over so that it becomes clarified and generalized.

For the purposes of the dissertation, when I use *experience* with a small "e", I am referring to a "perceptual core", and "images that have been evoked with unusual clarity" (Turner 1982: 13). When I use *Experience*, with a capital "E", I am referring to a perceptual core of images that has been reflected over, becoming more clarified and generalized than before the reflection.

Perceiving the aesthetic, reflexive, and cultural dimensions

The rapid, complex and ephemeral quality of dramatic playing makes it difficult for the untrained ("non-dramatic") eye to perceive the complexities of the form-making process, let alone to conceive of it in reflexive and cultural perspectives. It is clear that in Project Zero's study the focus and context in which the phenomenon was studied did not lend themselves readily to discovering these dimensions in symbolic play. The researcher visited individual children in their homes the first seven years of their lives, and studied them in solitary play or in play with either the mother or the researcher. In the research framework itself, the child-cultural production context was lacking. However, Gardner states: "It is through *symbols* and *symbol systems* that our present framework, rooted in the psychology of intelligences, can be effectively linked with the *concerns* of culture, including the rearing of children..." (p. 300, my emphasis).

A study of symbolic play in the context of child culture and the framework of cultural and aesthetic theory could be meaningfully linked with such cultural concerns. This view is supported by Schwartzman (1978: 237-38). It is the lack of the child-cultural production context in Project Zero's project that has led to my wish to turn the many-faceted pretend-play-crystal so that the light can strike it from another angle. Because of the interest in symbolic playing from a cultural, drama perspective - as collective *dramatic* playing, the need is felt to extend the basis for understanding this symbol system. There is a need to build further on drama and theatre educator Peter Slade's unsystematized observations, in the 1950's, of what he recognized as "child-drama"(Slade 1954/1974). This is an important task for empirical research in drama, as a theoretical underpinning for work in dramatic arts in relation to children. Slade claimed that child-drama is an independent art form (Ibid.: Foreword). The project's concern is not to confirm or dispute this standpoint, but rather to document and describe *how* playing children create their drama, how they play with dramatic form in a way that it becomes significant for them as a cultural form of knowing.

Collective dramatic playing as a reflexive practice

Influenced by Gardner's thinking about symbol systems and multiple-intelligences, the question has arisen as to *how* children, in the process of their spontaneous dramatic playing, combine the art-like symbol systems; and *how* this combinatory work can be understood to involve an aesthetic and reflexive practice that could "capture important *forms* of information" (Gardner 1983: 66). These questions have influenced the problematics and choice of initial analytical approach in the pilot project, the earliest stage of the research presented here.

I wish to investigate to what extent and how the children come to "know" through playing in dramatic form (see Bruner 1979).

Related to Gardner's understanding of the artistic symbols' potential for expressing connotative meanings, the pilot study lays the ground for the study of the acts of dramatic playing for the purpose of understanding the extent to which the children's play with form allows insight - clear perception of meaning, or re-cognition (in Norwegian, *erkjennelse*). To what extent do the children seem to "express connotative meanings"? Is dramatic playing a connotative practice or is it a practice that directly signifies meaning? Are the players' expressions also explorations of meanings? Is the value of dramatic playing that the players *reach* insight, or is there an equal value in sensory reflection that does not reach insight? In the study of young children's formal process *can* research discover if the play with form results in insight?

Due to the above thought-process, the approach which is presented in the remaining chapters began to take form. The interest was not alone in the individual child's symbolic mastery but, rather, in the cultural-aesthetic process of the symbolic mastery that lies in collective dramatic playing, and in how the mind seems to be at play in an aesthetic medium.

The study will focus on how children reflect over their experiences in the collaborative process of playing with dramatic form.

In order to stress that the research object is, specifically, *drama* - in the cultural (collective) context of children's playing - the term "symbolic play" has been dropped from the original working title. In the first instance, the term has been replaced by *dramatic* playing.

"Proto-artistic practice" versus "aesthetic practice"

As noted earlier, the project's original working title was "The Aesthetic Dimension in Children's Symbolic Play: Children's play as proto-artistic practice". In the second part of the title we see the influence of Gardner's explicit cobbling of children's early symbolic products to adult art forms. However, because of its multifarious connotations, often misleading for others, the term "proto-artistic practice" has been replaced by "aesthetic practice". I discuss the reasons in detail below, because they form the background for the delimitation of the problematics discussed in the following section.

The general thinking at the start of the pilot study was that consideration of dramatic play as *drama*, as a member of the cultural "drama family", and finding a way to use the drama-family vocabulary to describe the formal process in play, could place dramatic play in a cultural and

aesthetic perspective. Dramatic playing can be understood as drama performed in a play-cultural form, whereas theatre is drama performed in an art form. Conceptualizing pretend play as "proto-artistic" practice was *meant* to connote that drama in a play form is *not* (yet) an artistic practice, but can be understood as its potential *precursor* in the life of a human being. However, there are reservations to be raised:

- The use of "proto-artistic" practice suggested that the concern of the project was ontogenetic: to show the value of dramatic playing as a precursor or antecedent to, and on the way to, a (presumed) higher and more valuable form, the art form of theatre. Contrary to this, it is important to explore dramatic playing as a valuable form of cultural drama in itself, in the child-cultural context in which it exists. There is no hierarchical valuing at the source of my questions and, therefore, the language used to articulate the project's concerns must guard against a misunderstanding of this point.
- The term also suggested that thinking of dramatic playing in a continuum with theatre arts would result in evaluating the children's expressions on artistic grounds. Rather, I wish to describe and interpret the process in dramatic playing on *aesthetic* grounds - *not* necessarily tied to theatre arts practice, but with whatever theory, tools, vocabulary and procedures that can capture and characterize this dimension.
- In addition, the term leads to associations about the phylogenetic/horizontal matrix - as in: "What came first in the phylogenetic chain - children's dramatic playing or theatre?" - "Do the dramaturgical structures, conventions and genres of adult theatre exist innately in the human psyche from birth?" What kinds of dramatic conventions do children use? Do conventions from play continue into adult artistic, dramatic culture; or, conversely, can children's dramatic conventions be viewed as a reprocessing of material (form) from their experiences of adult dramatic culture? It would be impossible in an empirical study to uncover whether or not some dramatic structures are inborn. We know that there is a playback mechanism in the social-cultural interaction between adults and children which influences the structures of children's play-genres and conventions (Sutton-Smith 1983, Nicholson 1995).
- Along the same lines of thinking, one can easily associate to Eugenio Barba's seemingly structuralist, theatre anthropological explorations of "pre-expressive scenic behaviour *upon which* different genres, styles, roles and personal or collective traditions are all based" (Barba 1995: 9, my emphasis). The "proto"-mindset would perhaps direct my attention *only* to the existence of those patterns, conventions and genres - in *proto-form* in play-drama - that already are known to exist in theatre arts. There was a danger that the proto-artistic focus

would lock my thinking in structuralist terms, rather than opening my receptivity for *other* aesthetic characteristics and their value for meaning interpretation.

However, looking actively for familiar structural patterns from theatre conventions has been difficult to relinquish. My work with theatre for children has for many years nurtured an interest in aesthetic "communication units" in theatre that children will recognize from their own play-forms. Use of such "units" in theatre for children could enhance the child-audience's sensory reception of meaning, as opposed to purely cognitive reception. This is an important goal for theatre artists interested in the uniqueness of children's reception. For instance, if I were to find in young children's play-forms storytelling conventions through which a child can juggle double or multiple narrative positions - the ability to move back and forth between a storyteller perspective and that of different characters - this finding would suggest that I could employ the convention in artistic work with and for young children. However, in a basic research context, there is a difference between actively *looking for* basic patterns or structures in children's drama that are known to exist in adult drama, and just *looking at* the phenomenon - to see what broadly constitutes the aesthetic dimension. In the latter case, one could possibly discover expressive components and structures that *also* exist in adult theatre practice, but one could possibly find something else - something unimagined.

In other words, replacing "proto-artistic practice" with "aesthetic practice", can avoid a confusion of associations and priorities. It can leave the articulation of problematics and the explorative process more open.

Foreground

How does the previous research and my background thinking contribute to a crystallization of the project's intentions?

A study of aesthetic-reflexive practice in play-drama is in effect a study of *how drama is performed* in the context of the children's collective playing. Therefore, it is necessary to explain how the terms drama and aesthetics are conceptualized here - concepts as central to the framework of the study as the concept of *play*. As will probably become clear in the following discussion, in the conceptual network in the thesis, an understanding of *one* concept is closely interwoven with an understanding of the others. It is necessary to explore the concepts of *play, drama, aesthetics and reflexivity* separately, as well as to understand their interdependence - how they tie together in the whole framework. The interrelationship between the parts and the

whole is a central insight in the hermeneutic scholarly tradition, which I return to in depth in the chapter on methodological considerations (Chapter Three).

A cultural-historical perspective on the concept of drama

In the educational context in Norway, the term *drama* has become synonymous with the praxis of drama and theatre education. In the context of the performing arts in Norway, *drama* commonly refers to the scripted drama, drama as literature - as opposed to the performed drama, which we generally refer to as theatre performance. Therefore, I will explore alternative understandings of the term.

"Drama" is derived from the Greek verb *dran*, "to do", which derives from the Indo-European base *dra* - to work, perhaps in the sense of doing cultural work (Turner 1988: 26). In English and German, a drama, also a *written* drama, is called a "play" and the performance of it is called "playing". However, the Hellenic Greeks did *not* use the word "play" for drama, presumably because the play-spirit was so interwoven into the cultural life that they did not separate out play as a special aspect of drama or any other of the arts (Huizinga 1955: 144).

When we try to understand the cultural place and significance that drama performance may have had in early Western culture, there are few outward signs in today's industrial society that can inform us. In the research literature we can read that in archaic times, in an oral culture, the separate art forms as we know them were united in *one* poetic-symbolic-dramatic cultural form - before the single, authorial voice and the advent of written language separated them. In collective festive gatherings, in events such as storytelling, religious ritual and theatre - what we think of today as separate art-forms - poetry, drama, music/song, dance, and pictorial and sculptural objects - were thought of as part of one, performed art-form. This art-form performed and communicated the group's cultural experience and meanings. The poetry and drama in these events could interpret and express the most basic existential, as well as critical and humoristic, thoughts and feelings of the group. - The cultural purpose of the event could be entertainment or communication of religious belief. It was not until the advent of written culture and rational thought that drama performance was intended as an epistemological method.

There are many theories about the origins of drama as part of an oral culture - origins which have probably differed from society to society (Kirby 1975). However, none of these can be verified or falsified. As performance theorist Richard Schechner points out, the origins of drama *and* theatre could just as well have been *fun-making*, "an activity co-existent with the human species" (Schechner 1990/93: 24), as any of the other phenomena which are set forth as

possibilities by theorists. "Before *actors*, there was drama. The actor as a conceptual category is posterior to the *playing* of drama before an audience" (Slater 1992: 385, my emphasis). We can never know about the origins of dramatic expression as a spontaneous mode of cultural expression - in the sense that Schechner indicates when he speaks of fun-making or *play* - that is, in my words: drama in a relatively unrefined and unstylized form ⁶. However, the most well-known theories are that Western drama has emerged in:

- Storytelling, where feats of hunting, raiding, and the like, were recounted for the community, with dramatic *personification through voice and gesture*. The storyteller may have been the "first actor" (Turner 1988: 27; Huizinga 1955: 144). In Schechner's theory, storytelling drama derived from circumpolar hunting cultures, "done not merely through words but through songs, chants, dances, drumming, and "setting" (such as caves). Ultimately, drama arose as a *playful combination* of these strategic behaviors" (Schechner 1977/1988: 103, my emphasis).
- Religious rituals, consisting of the rite (*dromenon*) and its myth (the unwritten "script" for the rite) - performed in drama, music/song, and dance (Huizinga 1954). In archaic society, the term *dromenon* referred to the religious rite that is performed, and means "something acted, an act, action" (Huizinga 1954: 14). Removed from the religious context, the term *drama* (a derivative of *dromena*), refers to the *represented action* - its formal content and its meaning content; but it is understood as action "represented for spectators, in form of a performance or a contest" (Ibid.). The expressive modes of the ritual could be aesthetically elaborated with masks, costumes, props, atmospheric effects of natural light/darkness, fire, etc.. The "ritual specialist" (i.e. shaman) may have been the "first actor", director, dramaturg, scenographer, etc.. - The actor was originally a medium for the spirits (see Kirby 1975: 3 and xiii).
- A song culture in ancient Greece, where poems were sung in choral hymns of praise (*mousike*) at the tomb of a dead hero. At some point, a speaker (the *rhapsode*) stepped out from the chorus to act - to personify with dramatic, mimetic gestures the deeds in the hero's life. Over time, the acted part expanded and the chorus' role diminished. Origins forgotten, the dramas continued to be performed as "plays" (Herington 1985: preface, chapter IV, and Appendix Part II; Spariou 1989: 9). The poet might have been his own "first actor".

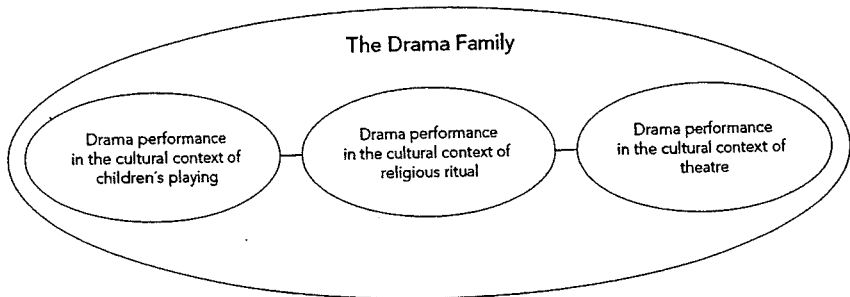
⁶ See Kirby 1975: xv for a discussion of the basic characteristic of theatre as refined and stylized expression.

E.T. Kirby, in a study of the origins of theatre, traces aesthetic and artistic elements in many cultures' dramatic arts to shamanistic ritual (shamanistic theatre). He concludes: "...however diffused its influence might have been, a shamanism absorbed into folk culture lay at the origins of theatre" (1975: 153).

Summary and reflections

In all these types of performance, the *drama* - the re-presentation of life's action and movement through personification in voice and gesture - has performed a group's culture, expressed its experience and, as "social meta-commentary", been the "story a group tells itself about itself" (the anthropologist Clifford Geertz' terms). It has been part of the public arena, where it has explored, defined and confirmed a group's cultural identity (Turner 1982: 103-104). In its origins drama is continuous with everyday life, because it is not abstracted from the religious or secular function that gives it significance. Drama, then, arose as oral culture, performed in the cultural arena - before the printed word separated the representation of actions from the performance mode. Drama, in its origins, performs and produces culture. It has existed in varied cultural contexts, profane and religious, as popular culture and as elevated artistic expression. Drama exists also in the cultural context of children's playing, and it is this form of drama that is the research object of my study (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Varied cultural contexts of drama performance



I reiterate Huizinga's theory that, "only the drama, because of its intrinsically functional character, its quality of being an action, remains permanently linked to play (Huizinga 1954: 14). Drama is the played, or performed, action.

As shown in the above discussion of the origins of drama, the term drama *can* be utilized without turning to the cultural-historical development of the concept within rational thought (post-archaic thought). The goal to develop theory about the aesthetic-reflexive dimension in play-drama will demand an illumination of this particular cultural view of *drama* in light of

empirical findings. As I have come to understand it, *drama* was originally used to characterize unscripted playing. It is the performance of *represented* action - the performance of the "movement" and friction between people and the forces of nature or society, between people, or movement and friction within the mind. In the more Aristotelian meaning of the word, drama is often *about* a contest between forces, in the sense of conflict of wills or fates. Huizinga speaks of agonistic play, with heroes and villains, which creates tension-producing themes, as in Callois' *agon*. How is drama performance in the context of children's playing in postmodern culture?

Child-culture and play-culture as a context for drama

In order to emphasize the point that the mode of children's drama emerges in the cultural form and context of their play, I am calling it "play-drama", rather than dramatic playing. Children's playing is "cultural production" (Mouritsen 1976). - In regard to child-culture we can apply *drama* as it is understood from theories of pre-rational and pre-literate, oral, cultures (see Spariosu 1989). The cultural perspective - from which I wish to understand the aesthetic-reflexive dimension in play-drama - places the emphasis not on the individual development of the child, but rather on the development of culture which children produce collectively in their play-drama performance. Child culture, unlike adult culture, is to a great extent organized around and within the aesthetic sphere of play production. Child-culture is predominantly a play-culture. Drama performance is one of the forms that the play-culture takes. Huizinga observes that it is a symbolic form of culture. - But *how* is it a symbolic form? And how is the aesthetic-reflexive dimension constituted?

In the same way that it has been necessary to ground the concept of *drama* in relation to the research object of this study, as drama performance in the context of children's play culture, it is also necessary to explore the concept of *aesthetics* in a context-sensitive light and to ground it within the project's framework.

The concept of aesthetics

Because the problematics of the study concern aesthetic practice in a context in which one would not immediately expect to find it, traditional understandings of the term "aesthetics" may have limited relevance. In this section I present a theoretical starting point for understanding my use of the concept - which the new findings may challenge. Therefore, the starting definition is a temporary one, and one that I will return to underway, with the possibility of extending it. In the temporary definition, I attempt to come as far as possible, theoretically, in grounding the concept in the all-in-one aspect of the *participant-spectator* experience of playing children - which was identified in the pilot study. This is a study of aesthetics within the

formative process of the drama experience - rather than in the relatively unilateral spectator experience. This aspect will be elaborated upon in the analytical discourse.

The questions of how the drama is performed and how the formative process becomes significant for the players are related to the field of aesthetics. In the early 18th century there was a heightened concern within philosophy to understand the *particularity of sensuous experience* (Gadamer 1977/1991: 16). What is it that arrests us, draws us in to dwell on certain "objects" in nature or in the arts? This is a concern with *how* we grasp "truth"; or, in less metaphysical terms, how we arrive at "knowing" and "meaning". This philosophical question has been debated since antiquity. Where is the truth located? Is it subjective, something inside us?; or is it something objective, something that lies "out there"? Or is it something that emerges in the meeting between the subjective and the objective? - Is it intersubjective and therefore contingent on context? Or, in the contemporary post-structuralist perspective, is there no separation to be made between the object/reality and the subject who experiences it (see Deleuze in Lechte 1994: 103)? Can knowing and meaning best be arrived at intellectually, in rational verbal discourse - which produces monovocal meaning? - Or is it best grasped sensorily, in presentational, symbolic discourse (Langer 1979: 97-98), where meanings can be plurivocal and ambiguous?

The concept of "aesthetics", used in Philosophy, was first delineated by the German philosopher A. G. Baumgarten in his works from 1735 and 1750-58 (Guyer 1995: 64). The term "aesthetic" is derived from the Greek *aisthanomai*, to *perceive*, - and the concept refers to sensory perception or sensory knowledge, *cognitio sensitiva* - "the full life of the senses, with all their related organs and perceptual channels ... The term relates to a full appreciation of the physiological - psychological dimension of perceiving with the senses" (Barilli 1993: 12). Here we could use the term the "body-mind dimension".

Instead of employing the term sensory *knowledge*, which means the fact of knowing a thing, I prefer to use sensory *knowing*. *Knowing* is the action of getting to understand (Oxford 1955) and implies reflection.

Baumgarten tried to rehabilitate the study of knowing through the senses, and this contained a reservation about the traditional Platonian metaphysics of knowing. Such reservations were not new. What was new was that with "aesthetics", a systematic philosophical discipline was to come into being. Baumgarten considered aesthetics as one of the two branches of the *study of knowledge* - namely the study of sensory experience coupled with feeling - as opposed to the study of logic and abstract ideas. The traditional Hellenic Greeks considered knowledge,

grasping the "truth", as something *not* determined by the subjective and sensory but, rather, by rational logic. Contrary to this, Baumgarten saw the unique potential for truth in sensory, in contrast to conceptual, representation (Ibid.). "Sensory experience coupled with feeling provides a *different type of knowledge* from the distinct, abstract ideas studied by "logic" " (Feagin 1995: 10-11). But, *what* type of knowledge?

The branch of philosophical aesthetics, then, has been developed in relation to our sensual perception of the natural world and works of art (the cultural world), in an attempt to formulate and perceive the "truth", or knowing, contained in these *spectator* experiences. Because the concepts of *aesthetic* and *artistic* are often used interchangeably, when "aesthetic" is applied to the interpretation of children's play-drama, it may suggest that the research has to do with an artistic evaluation of their drama performance. This, however, is not the intention of the research. In this research context I draw a line between "aesthetic" and "artistic": "Aesthetic" perception can operate divorced from artistic considerations. It can operate *within* the representational process. For example, in experimental *theatre workshop-rehearsal* (Schechner's term) aesthetic perception of the actors occurs prior to artistic intention and technique directed toward communication with an audience - even though artistic intuition, skills, and technique may already be subliminally at work. This immediate aesthetic representation and perception is divorced, in the first instance, from artistic criteria and evaluation.

It could be asked: What is the scholarly point of an initial grounding of a study of children's cultural-aesthetic play practice in aesthetic theory from the 18th century? - This is a discourse which arose in the epoch which conceptualized the *autonomous* work of art and the autonomous Arts Institution (see Kj rup 1971: 28) - in contrast to aesthetic practice as an integrated part of the cultural process. In the stretches of time between Baumgarten's *Reflection on Poetry* in 1735 and, for instance, Hans-Georg Gadamer's wish in the last third of this century to *overcome* "aesthetics" - conceived as discontinuous with everyday life (Gadamer 1986: xv), and a postmodern theory of the 1990's which argues that "the aesthetic" should not be conceived of as a special kind of *value* (Feagin, in Audi 1995: 635), can we not find a more relevant conceptual basis for considering the formal process in play-drama and its significance for the players?

These reservations notwithstanding, it has been necessary to establish here a clear connection between the concept of aesthetics and the significance of form related to reflexivity. It should be re-emphasized that the study of aesthetics was originally considered as a branch of the study

of knowledge, and that a central concern in this research project is *the relationship between aesthetic practice and reflexivity*.

Reflection and reflexivity

In considering reflexivity in the drama medium, I employ general definitions:

- Reflection: "The mode, operation or faculty by which the mind has knowledge of itself and its operations or by which it deals with ideas received by sensations and perception."
- A thought or idea occurring to, or occupying the mind.
- The action of turning (back) and fixing the thoughts on some subject, meditation; deep or serious consideration;
- Recollection or remembrance of a thing (Oxford Dictionary 1955)

I wish to explore how the playing child's mind deals with ideas, or images, received by sensations and perception in the acts of performing the drama. The images received by sensations and perception in the acts of the performance are not conceptual ideas but rather sensory imprints/perceptions of the aesthetic contents of the acts themselves - which can carry meanings.

- Reflexive: *Of mental operations: Turned or directed back upon the mind itself.*

In regard to the acts in play-drama, we could ask if to be "directed back to the mind itself", would mean to be directed to conceptual thinking. Does the term "the mind" refer only to logical/conceptual thinking - language thinking? The "mind" means: ways of thinking or feeling, the seat of volition, consciousness, thoughts, feelings (Oxford 1955). I am using the terms *reflection and reflexive* to refer to: the turnings of the mind at work in the aesthetic language of performance actions. It is a question of *how* reflexivity can be understood to operate within the aesthetic process of the play-drama performance.

The German philosopher, poet and dramatist Friedrich von Schiller, in *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1794-5), found in the idea of the "play impulse" an intermediary, aesthetic sphere that can reconcile the two sides of human nature - the natural, sensuous side and the rational, supersensuous side. This is an idea of "a condition in which opposites are simultaneously cancelled and preserved, as well as ... reconciling freedom and necessity" (Breazeale 1996: 715-716).

The play-impulse and performance of play-drama can be understood to reconcile the sensuous and the rational. Even though the research object is a play practice and not, by traditional definition, an artistic practice, the study's focus on aesthetic reflexivity *can* nonetheless be understood as being inextricably connected to the original concept of aesthetics

within Philosophy - as a study of "sensory knowing". The point in establishing a connection with the original use of the concept is to investigate how it can be opened up - and perhaps extended - in relation to the formative process of drama performance in *any* cultural context.

Aesthetic practice and aesthetic reflection

In *Truth and Method*, the German hermeneutic philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer - who aligns himself with Johan Huizinga's cultural orientation on play and the aesthetic sphere - discusses a point about *aesthetic reflection* from the perspective of the *creator*, versus the spectator. This is a relevant problematic for the project:

It is a problem of a special kind whether the *formative process* itself should not be seen as already constituting an *aesthetic reflection* on the work. It is undeniable that when he considers the idea of his work the creator can ponder and critically compare and judge various possibilities of carrying it out. But this sober clarity which is part of creation itself seems to be something very different from the aesthetic reflection and aesthetic criticism, which the work itself is capable of stimulating. It may be that what was the object of the creator's reflection, i.e., the *possibilities of form*, can also be the starting point of aesthetic criticism. But even in the case of this kind of agreement in content between creative and critical reflection, the criterion is different. Aesthetic criticism is based on the disturbance of unified understanding, whereas the aesthetic reflection of the creator is directed toward establishing precisely this unity of the work... (Gadamer 1960/1996.: 32, my emphasis).

Perhaps Gadamer's question can contribute to a clarification of the project's problematics. We can ask to what extent playing children direct aesthetic reflection toward establishing "unity" of the play-drama. We can ask what "unity" would mean in regard to the formative process of play-drama. - Is there unity in what we may observe as fragmented episodes? Does play-drama reach a "final form"? Is there what Gadamer calls a *central structure* (Gadamer 1977/1986: 43)? If so, play-drama would adhere to Aristotelian dramaturgical principles.

Creative reflection is also a key term here. Can one find in children's drama performance behaviour which could be interpreted as constituting creative reflection over the forms they are bringing into being? - To what extent *do* the children, in the formative process, "critically compare and judge possibilities for carrying out" the drama performance? The study attempts to explore if, to what extent, and how the children - in the formative process of their dramas - direct their aesthetic reflection toward establishing sensorily/sensorially, and emotionally satisfying modes of expression - for themselves and each other.

Aesthetic practice:

In summary, I am using the concept of *aesthetic practice* in play-drama to refer to: the processual interplay between the players' experience, the forms in which the experience is represented sensorily (symbolically and dramatically), and the players' sensory perception of

(and reflection over) their own representations - as part of a collective (cultural) drama performance.

Figure 2: Aesthetic practice in play-drama performance

A sensing and form-making practice, with a processual interplay between:
the children's experience (both in regard to formal and thematic content),
its sensory (symbolic-dramatic) representations,
and the players' sensory reception and perception of their own representations
- in the collective exploration and interpretation of the experience and meanings.

I wish to discern the aesthetic effect that the process of producing dramatic forms has on the participant-spectators themselves. Questions to be answered in the analysis of empirical material can also be formulated as in the following:

- *How* is one's own experience explored in sensory representation (in dramatic form) and how are the representations perceived sensorily by the performers? In exploring experience in dramatic form, how does reflection operate?
- What is the relationship between the formal, representational process and reflection over the experience being represented?

Because the research is concerned with the aesthetic-reflexive aspects of play-drama in the everyday lives of the players, I examine below the concept of drama as aesthetic practice in terms of its continuity with everyday life and cultural significance.

Aesthetic practice and continuity with everyday life and significance

Another thread in the discussion of *drama* and *aesthetic practice* can be tied to some critical reflections by Gadamer about the nature of art and aesthetic consciousness and of art as "divorced from the realm of everyday life"(Gadamer 1977/1991: xv). The ideas he explores on these matters tie in with the project's understanding of the concept of *aesthetics* in everyday culture - which is related to the project's view of the concept of *drama* as an oral and cultural performance.

According to Robert Berasconi in his introduction to a collection of Gadamer's essays, Gadamer makes a point that is central to my study:

... by understanding art as a realm divorced from everyday life, aesthetics comes to be viewed as separated from the truth. Indeed, insofar as our notion of art is a product of this aesthetic consciousness, the very concept of art becomes questionable. The breadth of the notion of art we usually employ is sustained only by a kind of abstraction whereby we deprive many religious or even secular artifacts of their original significance. The specific determination by which our concept of art includes painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and poetry but excludes much else, has its source only as far back as the eighteenth century. Gadamer's notion of art is by contrast sustained not by abstraction but by reference to *a form of experience*. The challenge that Gadamer issues to the idea of art as a special magical realm is carried through by showing the continuity between the world of art and our everyday world. ...Gadamer finds in *ancient tragedy* an illustration of how *art contributes to our self-understanding* only on the basis of such continuity (Ibid.: xvi, my emphases).

Although my research is not taking up the philosophical issues of whether play-drama is or is not art, or proto-artistic practice, it *is* concerned with drama and its aesthetic practice as an integrated, i.e. non-abstracted, part of the social and cultural life of children. In regard to this practice one could ask to what extent there is a continuity or discontinuity between the world of the children's aesthetic practice and their everyday world - which can contribute to an understanding of their experiences/themselves. Perhaps we rob play-drama of its cultural significance by not recognizing and acknowledging the interrelatedness and continuity of the collective, formal process and the pure force of communal life among children.

The philosopher of art, John Dewey, sees an "intrinsic connection between experience and aesthetic form" (Turner 1986: 37). "Form is *arrived at* whenever a stable, even though *moving equilibrium* is reached" (Dewey in Turner 1986: 37, my emphasis). The moving equilibrium referred to here can be another term for what Schiller calls the reconciliation of the opposition between the sensuous and the rational in the play-drive. Turner reflects:

The aesthetic has its genesis in sensible human experience and does not proceed from an ideal domain, a Platonic realm of archetypes superior to the vulgar human activities it is supposed to *evaluate and organize*. For both philosophers [Wilhelm Dilthey and John Dewey], the arts, including all genres of theatre, germinated in the scenes and objects of human experience and could not be considered in separation from them. The beautiful is the consummate flower of the *muddled search* for meaning (Turner 1986: 39, my emphasis).

This statement can be understood to mean that, for the form-maker, the consummate flower of the muddled search for meaning is beautiful; but that it is not necessarily beautiful to other beholders - unless it also speaks to *their* muddled searches for meaning. The form-making process moves the form-maker from chaos to (relative) order. The communication of form can have the same effect on a spectator.

From this conceptual grounding in varied philosophical reflections over *aesthetics*, I can begin the quest for extending these theories - related to the analysis of cultural-aesthetic process.

This will be discussed further in Chapter Two - in regard to the project's theoretical "home disciplines"; in Chapter Five, Analysis 3, in the interpretation of play-drama through comparison with folk-cultural aesthetics; and again in Chapter Six - in regard to development of theory about the aesthetic dimension in play-drama.

Boundaries of the Research

The conceptual explorations above have laid the foundation for a summary of the project's goals, research object, and problematics. - These have grown out of a keen interest in the implications for drama/theatre arts that may emerge from cultural-aesthetic theory about dramatic playing. The overriding, motivating "ideology" is to create a theoretical potential for *more life* in drama and theatre, a potential built upon an understanding of how children, aesthetically, create more life for themselves in their cultural sphere - their collective drama.

Summary of the research object, goals, and problematics

In the above discussion, the research object and goals, and preliminary problematics have been defined:

The research object is spontaneous drama performance as it is actualized in children's play-culture; hereafter referred to as *play-drama*.

The goal is to make visible and develop an understanding of the aesthetic-reflexive dimension in children's spontaneous, collective dramatic playing (*play-drama*), in a cultural perspective. This goal is threefold:

- to make visible children's collective play with dramatic form,
- to develop an understanding of the potential for reflection and knowing in the players' formal actualization of the drama,
- to develop an understanding of the cultural significance of the players' collective aesthetic practice.

The problematics can be summarized as follows:

How is the aesthetic practice in children's play-drama constituted?

- *how* do children perform drama collectively in their play-culture?
- *how* are experience and meaning explored and interpreted in the children's collective play with dramatic form?

What is the cultural significance of the aesthetic practice?

In the words of the moral philosopher Richard Rorty, I wish to *redescribe* dramatic playing with the use of a *new vocabulary*, one that can make the invisible aesthetic dimension visible through conceptualization. Rorty observes that the "one who makes things new"... "is typically unable to make clear exactly what it is that he wants to do before developing the language in which he succeeds in doing it. His new vocabulary makes possible, for the first time, a formulation of its own purpose. It is a *tool* for doing something which could not have been envisaged *prior to development of a particular set of descriptions*, those which it itself helps to provide" (Rorty 1989: 13, my emphasis).

The disciplinary boundaries of the research

Due to the breadth of the subject matter that I am addressing, I do not venture further into the discourse of the social science disciplines mentioned earlier. However, I am aware that the findings and the theory generated by the study can open the way for cross-disciplinary, comparative theoretical perspectives on the nature and outcomes of children's dramatic playing.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Foundations: Cultural-aesthetic Performance

Background

In this chapter, I present the theoretical foundations from which I have developed the methodological approach for the collection and analysis of empirical material for the study. I take the reader through a complex seeking process in order to situate the research object in a relevant cultural-aesthetic framework. I seek disciplines that can provide a new vocabulary with which to realize the project's goals. - Which disciplines have as their task to describe performance qualities and to interpret the experience and meanings being explored in the performance? Which disciplines are concerned with studying aesthetic process in continuity with everyday life?

As background, I first examine the research parameters in drama and theatre education, as well as the ideas of cultural performance and aesthetic process in continuity with everyday life.

Research in drama and theatre education

In educating practitioners in drama and theatre education we attempt to make theoretical connections between the disciplines of pedagogy and of theatre studies/aesthetics. Our field straddles both. Within the research community, theoretical problematics have grown out of questions about the purposes and values of the practice: Is the purpose and value of the practice primarily cognitive, political, social, cultural, aesthetic, or artistic? To what extent can these aspects be separated from one another? And what is the relative value of, for example, theatre, ritual, play and "process drama" in relation to these varied purposes and values? Methodologically - *how* does one document and analyze classroom practice in order to understand the values of the different types of drama and theatre practice? The methodological turn has been toward qualitative method - which questions and interprets; a turn away from quantitative method (Taylor 1996) which, traditionally, has sought to prove the *cognitive* value of arts education, an apologist position in the face of the demands of the education system within which we do our work (Rasmussen 1996). - And last but not least, in a philosophical turn, what understanding do we have of the various concepts that are central to our drama practices? How can these be developed with an eye to broadening our perceptions of the varied aesthetic, artistic, and cultural values of drama performance?

Within drama research, several theorists have considered the aesthetic dimension in drama and theatre education in relation to the cultural dimension. I will focus on two of these: Jonathan Neelands and David Hornbrook are on different errands but, nonetheless, generally represent the field's new cultural trend of this decade. Neelands (1996) sets up two positions in drama and theatre education: the aesthetic formalist position and the cultural position. "The first

discusses the aesthetic in terms of formal relations and technical skills; the second focuses on the relations of the aesthetic to other cultural practices and material conditions" (Ibid.: 22). The study of the aesthetic dimension in play-drama in a cultural perspective would seem to lie at the interface of the two positions. Hornbrook (1991) elaborates a cultural perspective in contrast to a cognitive-psychological perspective on the field. He stands for the production of drama and theatre with no pre-planned cognitive goals, believing that these goals are contrary to the nature of drama - which is openly interpretive of experience. This perspective seems relevant to keep in mind in studying children's spontaneous drama performance. (See also O'Farrell 1994, O'Toole 1992: 8-9, O'Toole and Donelan 1996).

Because the intention of my study is to generate theory about the aesthetic dimension of drama performance in a specific cultural context the results could, perhaps, create a theoretical foundation for evaluating some of the problematics in the abovementioned research discourse.¹ Central to the search for the proper theoretical home disciplines for my study is the concept of *cultural performance*.

Cultural performance

As noted in Chapter One, in children's culture, play-drama can be thought of as a spontaneous performance in the cultural arena for the child's own inner eye, as well as for the other players. Seen in this light, children both perform the drama and spectate their own and each other's performance. In his article *Play as Performance*, the play-theorist Sutton-Smith, as noted earlier, posits the spectator aspect as one fourth of the performance quadrilogue (Sutton-Smith 1979: 297, 298). The performance aspect places play-drama in a heightened cultural sphere, to use Huizinga's terms.

The idea of *cultural performance* is found in social anthropological theory, which I return to at length below. According to anthropologist Victor Turner, the term *performance* is derived from the French *parfournir* - *to accomplish completely*. The Oxford Universal Dictionary on Historical Principles (1933-1955) has several meanings for the verb "to perform" that evoke the meaning which I connect with "play as performance": to carry through to completion (action, process...); to complete by adding what is wanted, to execute (literary, artistic); to bring about, produce, to carry out, achieve; to go through and finish; to play a part. The idea of performance as, "to complete by adding what is wanted", raises questions as to the meaning of "representation of experience". It will be necessary to gather the varied connotations of the phrase in regard to the findings.

¹ See, for example: Rasmussen 1991, Guss 1995, and Taylor 1996 for a discussion of various research problematics in our field.

Turner emphasizes that, "*Performance* does not necessarily have the *structuralist* implication of manifesting form, but rather the *processual* sense of "bringing to completeness" or "accomplishing". In this sense, to *perform* would mean to complete a more or less involved process [of experience - my note] rather than to do a single deed or act" (Turner 1988: 91). In cultural performance there is a moving toward sharing of cultural experience, a "form of objectified mind" (Turner 1982: 19) - with echoes from Dilthey. I will need to examine *how* the players objectify subjective mind in collective dramatic form.

In relation to play-drama, the concept of *performance* will be employed to mean: to carry through to a *temporary* completion of children's experiences on the way to Experience. Turner meant that an "experience" is not completed until it is expressed - that is, communicated to others... (Turner 1982: 14). In studying the findings, I will investigate to what extent we can surmise that experience becomes clarified- i.e. Experience - in play-drama.

Performance, then, does not necessarily mean playing for an outside spectator, but rather playing for the cultural collective of *performer-spectators* - reminiscent of ritual performance or participatory theatre.

Can one separate the aesthetic aspect of play-drama from the cultural aspect - from the cultural context of the aesthetic "performance"? How can they be understood as complementary aspects?

In searching for a theoretical platform for the study, it seems natural to turn to theory about the aesthetic practice of drama performance in other cultural contexts than play. However, because the play-drama performance is a spontaneous eruption, we would expect it to resemble more the *formative process* of an artist rather than the finished product of the work of art. To the extent that, for instance, aesthetic theory and theatre theory could be useful for understanding this cultural and social phenomenon, it must be theory that embraces the idea of the aesthetic performance as continuous with cultural process. I will return here to aesthetic theory.

Aesthetic process and the continuity with daily-day life

As Gadamer has argued, we must understand the significance of the aesthetic practice as part of a cultural tradition, in continuity with everyday life. This view addresses a core problematic in regard to understanding art-like processes which are not part of the arts institution of culturally autonomous works. The contemporary collective "art" of Australia's original population comes to mind. "These pictures of landscapes are not attempts to capture beautiful impressions

of nature. They are instances of *Dreaming*. They are the indigenous Australian's understanding that all landscapes are someone's home" (Sutton 1994: 6, my translation). Perhaps we rob play-drama of its cultural significance by not recognizing and acknowledging the interrelatedness, the continuity, between the dynamic force of communal life among children and the aesthetic production of meaning. We could ask to what extent the children's relationships are constituted aesthetically. - And conversely: To what extent their aesthetic practice is constituted interrelationally - by the children's presence for and receptiveness to each other and to each other's varying experiences and aesthetic representations for these.

I do not wish to take on the monster of the philosophical discourse regarding what art *is* - its phenomenological essence. Rather, I focus upon the continuity between the world of art and our everyday world - or, more appropriately expressed in regard to play-drama, the world of aesthetic process and the everyday world. This focus stems from an understanding of play-drama as an "art-like production" in a cultural process - an *aesthetic* cultural process.

Gadamer wished to expose the anthropological foundation upon which the phenomenon of art rests (Gadamer 1977/1991: 5). I wish to expose the anthropological foundation upon which the aesthetic practice of play-drama performance rests. Here I will turn to Gadamer's philosophy of play, which along with symbol and festival, he regards as the anthropological basis of art. His views on play's essence expand upon Huizinga's cultural theory of play. I present them here, rather than in Chapter One, because they also provide a theoretical foundation for the *play* of the chosen methodological strategy (Chapter Four).

Play and art

Play is not just freedom from particular ends, it is free impulse, the back and forth of constantly repeated movement, in which "neither pole of the movement represents the goal in which it would come to rest" (Gadamer 1960/96: 22). "The play is the occurrence of the movement itself" (p. 103). Play is a human structure which has its "source of movement within itself".

"The structure of play absorbs the player into itself" (p. 105), such that there exists "a primacy of play over the consciousness of the player" (p. 104). Gadamer has observed that in the act of play, the player is also a spectator who plays along with the movement of the play. Play is movement which the player is moved by. In this meaning of play, the play plays the player and not the converse. The "players" should be called "those being played", or "the played".

These thoughts represent a challenge to existing play theory, and to the goal-oriented educational uses of play. They turn our vocabulary and our thinking on their heads. If the

movement structure of playing has primacy over the consciousness of "those being played", how will this bear on the idea that children explore and reflect over meaning in the aesthetic forms of play?

According to Gadamer's theory, we would not continue to say that "children play", but would say that "children are played" by the movement of play. The children, and the raw materials of their experiences which they bring to play - what we could call "the subject matter" and "formal expressions", might be considered as if they were rubber balls - the objects with which the play plays. The mind plays and the body plays, and both are played. If children's experiences are impulses to the movement of play, how are they treated mentally and bodily - such that meaning is explored in the movement of play? If knowing, equal to the knowing of conceptual thought, are to be found in the experience of art, are they also to be found in the formative process of children's performance?

In his reflections on the nature of aesthetic consciousness and aesthetic criticism Gadamer explains why his concept of play is methodologically advantageous in the search for phenomenological essence of art. They may also be advantageous for an understanding of the aesthetic dimension :

The work of art cannot simply be isolated from the "contingency" of the chance conditions in which it appears, and where this occurs, the result is an abstraction that reduces the actual being of the work. It itself belongs to the world to which it represents itself. A drama really exists only when it is played, and ultimately music must resound (Ibid.: 116).

In regard to postmodern "art for art's sake", Gadamer's ideas can be interpreted as deeply conservative. However, this consideration is not important in the context of my study - which is not attempting to define what is or is not art. In spite of the fact that I do not wish to make a case for play-drama as an artform, I find Gadamer's reflection useful for the attempt to understand play-drama as continuous with the cultural life in which it emerges. According to Gadamer, in entering play-culture, children would be entering what we could call "the culture of being played". According to his thinking, the cultural context of play-drama is the "chance condition" in which the performance appears. The play-drama itself would "belong to the world to which it represents itself". The play-drama would *belong to* the world and *represent itself to* the world. There would be an interaction, a continuity between the "world" and the aesthetic representation. The idea that drama exists only when it is played links with Huizinga's observation of the intrinsic interlinking between play and drama.

Gadamer's philosophical view of the interrelationship between play and art can provide an important core in the creation of a theoretical foundation for studying the cultural aesthetics of

play-drama. The drama performance would be the aesthetic *text* to be studied. The children, their experiences, and the relentless back-and-forth movement of the play process - its "beat and counterbeat" - together would constitute the *cultural context* for the "performance text".

The performance takes place in the cultural form of play, it is hypothetically art-like and it must, by its cultural situatedness in children's playing, express a continuity with the cultural world it represents. Therefore, it must, by necessity, be explored as an aesthetic practice deeply emeshed in a cultural process.

If, as I have discussed theoretically, play is the back-and-forth movement between impulses and if play is a cultural and aesthetic form, then the back-and-forth process of the drama performance can be called cultural-aesthetic process. To understand its meanings - one must understand the culture in which the drama emerges and to which it represents itself. For the empirical study of children's drama production I hope to discover theoretical lenses that can make visible the cultural-aesthetic aspect, to reveal the cultural significance of the aesthetic practice within child culture.

From this rhetorical-pragmatic situating of the basic contingencies of the study, in the following section I will examine the paradigms of the research disciplines that seem to offer a suitable home for the project's problematics - to determine to what extent these could be servicable in the development of a methodological framework.

Locating Appropriate Academic Disciplines for the Research Procedure

There are varying paradigms and discourses for understanding drama performance. The aesthetics of drama performance has been the object of scholarship both in theatre/dramaturgy studies - in performance analysis (Hov 1993, Fischer-Lichte 1996); in social anthropology - in regard to the way in which social living is structured over time (Turner 1982), and in regard to the composition of religious ritual (Kapferer 1986); and in performance studies, in regard to the "mutual mirrorings" between theatre and social and ritual practices (Schechner 1977/1988). A succinct but lengthy summary of the complex dialectics involved in the study of performance aesthetics is found in the following statement:

Much of the turbulence generated by performance and performance scholarship, which has proved productive and frustrating by turns, stems from the divisions created by the diverse institutional sites of research in the field. These include departments of theatre, performance studies, communication, literature, media studies, and anthropology - and their respective professional

associations. The dialectics that they produce include theory versus practice, history versus theory, dramatic text versus stage performance, performance (as a high culture form like most performance art) versus theatre (as a popular form like circus), and theatre (as a high culture form like the production of classic plays) versus performance (as popular culture, including rituals and social dramas) (Reinelt and Roach 1992: 3).

...Now, however, it is even more necessary to recognize and insist on *the interdependency of a related series of disciplines* and also on *the role of performance in the production of culture* in its widest sense (Ibid.: 5, my emphasis).

Within each discipline, then, as well as across disciplines, there exist rivalling paradigms for studying aesthetic performance. Within the social sciences the paradigms for studying play do not provide adequate models for studying play-drama as cultural and aesthetic-reflexive performance. My task consists of finding paradigms which can make this possible.

Historically, paradigms and discourses of theatre studies and social anthropology have differed. None of the paradigms for performance analysis within theatre studies and anthropology, on their own, seem to offer an adequate model for studying the simultaneous performer-spectator relationship to the extent that it, theoretically, would seem to be present in play-drama. - The total merging of performer-spectator appears to produce an internal form-dynamic not present in other performance genres. I will examine this contention below as I approach the *convergence* of theatre studies and social anthropology in the theory of performance studies - where one finds common ground between the two. On this ground one could develop the methodological approach for the research - to be discussed in the next chapter.

Theatre studies

Because this is a study of drama performance it would seem logical to develop analytical tools from the theory and praxis of theatre arts/dramaturgy.

Traditionally, research in theatre studies has considered the construction or reconstruction of "theatre history" and analysis of "theatre performance" as its primary work - focussing on historical monuments and the static theatre-product (Fischer-Lichte 1996). Performance analysis has not, traditionally, focussed on the socio-cultural context of a performance; nor on performance as cultural process; nor on performance, or rehearsal, as dramaturgical or aesthetic *process* - within its social and historical context (see Nygaard 1991 and 1993).

The current debate within the rapidly developing discipline has centered around "What is the research object?" (Hov 1993) What are the parameters of its "research object", and what would be suitable methods for conducting research about it/them? Is the object of the research the

fixed, finished product, "the static Object", the artifact - from the positivist stance of being able to construct verifiable/falsifiable knowledge? Or is it, rather, to explore the performance with an eye to understanding "*the theatre event*" as part of a non-static, cultural process, which embraces both the players and the viewers; and further, to understand this process in historical and social context? Gradations in viewpoints related to this question are evident in the literature of the past twenty-five years (i.e. Sauter 1975 and 1996, Nygaard 1991,1992,1993, Reinelt and Roach 1992, Hov 1993). Examples of a recent cultural-historical paradigm within theatre history appear in the articles in Winkler and Zeitlin (1990) - in the re-examination of the *cultural meaning* of the performance of Greek dramas in ancient Athens, in the light of the most recent historical research findings.

In modern theatre there has been a tendency toward ritualizing theatre - in the work of Antonin Artaud, Living Theatre, Jerzy Grotowski, Richard Schechner, Peter Brook, Eugenio Barba. These practitioners have developed theory from their experimentation/research that challenges the traditional views on use of theatre space, the creative process, the actors' identity, and the relationship between the performance and the audience (Christofferson 1997). In a recent paper, a champion of semiotic performance analysis during the past decade, the German theatre theorist Erika Fischer-Lichte, poses the question: "Theatre as Liminal Space" (1996)? The paper can be interpreted as an apology for the traditional research community's neglect of the phenomenon of performer and audience interactions, as well as its retarded attention to the explosion of theatre processes and forms that insist upon breaking down the segregation between theatre process, theatre performance - the "work of art", and life. The title might be a direct reference to anthropologist Victor Turner's research into the doubleness of the mental state of participant-spectators in ritual process - "betwixt and between" daily-day reality and the fiction of the performance (Turner 1982). I will discuss this point more thoroughly later in the chapter. Fischer-Lichte's question pertains to the possibility of considering contemporary theatre experience as a liminal space for the audience - a view which could perhaps return to theatre its lost cultural-aesthetic significance. However, there is no tradition within Theatre Studies for studying what could be called "cultural-aesthetic performance analysis". Such a paradigm is what I am searching for.

Cultural participation and aesthetic reception

Fischer-Lichte's article is a sign that the research community is attempting to develop paradigms which relate to the reality of the shifting practices about which it attempts to develop theory. An example of contemporary developments is that theatre performance *in* traditional institutional buildings has given way to theatre performance anywhere *but* in institutional settings - for example, in the use of real-life settings to frame the work ("site-specific"). One

interpretation that can be made of this practice is that it overtly connects the performance to its "real" cultural source and reference point. The performing space has both a cultural history and a cultural future and these become part of the aesthetic dynamics of the performance. Players and spectators are united in the same cultural space to a greater extent than they would be in a (bourgeois) theatre building, segregated from the everyday world. In the segregated arts institutional building, the traditional separation from the everyday world, and separation between performer and spectator, creates a spectator-expectation which affects his/her (aesthetic) reception of the performance in ways other than alternative spaces do. In other words, the experience of cultural participation must certainly play a strong role in the aesthetic perception and reception of the audience.

From structuralist and semiotic studies to hermeneutic, cultural process studies
Paradigms for research in theatre and performance studies are diverse (Reinelt and Roach 1992) and cannot be done justice here. I will address those that could be servicable for my project. Paradigmatic guidelines for analyzing theatre practice as part of a cultural process are in their embryonic stages, leading to a slow relinquishing of the structuralist and semiotic traditions for analyzing a work of art. This slow movement constitutes a shift in focus from study of a closed system of signs in the ostensibly static work of art, to a consideration of the process of audience response as part of the performance - and therefore, as part of a social and cultural process (Nygaard 1991 and 1993, Reinelt and Roach 1992, Gran 1993, Fischer-Lichte 1996). However, this paradigmatic shift is not radical enough to suit the study of play-drama where, as I have pointed out, the *internal* processual relationship between simultaneous performing and spectating is central to understanding its cultural-aesthetic dimension and the meanings being interpreted there.

Another possible paradigm is that presented by the disciplinary turn to "dramaturgical models" which represent composites of historical dramaturgical developments (see Szatkowski 1989 and 1993). Dramaturgical structuring is but one of the aesthetic means of performance, but to a greater extent than the study of signs and their meanings, Szatkowski's construction of models could capture the moving dynamic of composition of a performance; and because they are developed upon an understanding of the overall aesthetic principles and epistemological values inherent in the models, they are conducive to opening up a view of the reflexive process in the movement of a performance as well.

It can be argued that one should not expect adult artistic models to reveal hidden aspects of young children's dramatic playing. This might be so in regard to artistic product, but not in regard to the artistic process. - The research operates on hunches: We would not be surprised

to find resemblances between the contemporary, experimental workshop-rehearsal process of "devised theatre" and the practices in children's play-drama.

Although the existing paradigms are not adequate for this study, it is possible that the aesthetic, processual relationship between performer and spectator, as it is at work in play-drama, could be captured by combining elements from various strategies. One could apply theatre categories employed in semiotic analysis, for instance Kowzan's classification of sign systems (Kowzan 1968: 73)³, but without the semiotic analysis. These categories could, rather, be employed in conjunction with *expanded* "dramaturgical models". Furthermore, the models of varied aesthetic-artistic conventions/practices could be combined with paradigms for the study of the dramaturgy of cultural-aesthetic process, "ethno-dramaturgy" (Turner 1982: 100-101). This brings us to social anthropology.

Social anthropology

Social anthropology has as its domain the study of social life and practices, including both a social group's daily life and its cultural performances. Social anthropologists (hereafter referred to as "anthropologists") attempt to document social discourse and to interpret the *meanings* that are expressed there. The "social discourse" also includes out-of-the-ordinary, more exalted, aesthetic performances such as ritual processes. Social anthropology has, increasingly over the past three decades, defined as one of its research objects the cultural-aesthetic performance *process* (Geertz 1973, Schechner 1977/1988, 1985, Turner 1982 and 1988, Turner and Bruner 1986, Schechner and Appel 1990/1993).

Anthropologist Victor Turner, in a collection of his essays with the telling title *The Anthropology of Performance*, says:

What we are looking for here is not so much the traditional preoccupation with text alone but text in context, and not in a static structuralist context but in the living context of *dialectic* between aesthetic dramatic processes and socio-cultural processes in a given place and time (Turner 1988: 28, my emphasis).

This problematic mirrors the problematics in my study. But to what extent? Turner has framed the way a group performs their lives as "social drama". However, another influential anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, questioning Turner's "drama" metaphor, frames the historically lived process as a social and political "text" (Geertz 1983: 30-33; and 1980). Life process, then, can be understood as a *text* to be interpreted, or a *drama* to be interpreted. Turner, in his

³ Word, tone; mime, gesture, movement; make-up, hair-style, costume; properties, settings, lighting; music, sound effects

processual analysis of the social "dramas" of everyday living over time, and interpretation of their meaning, applies dramaturgical theory. He calls this "ethnodramaturgy". From this he has produced a dramaturgical model for understanding the structure of social process that resembles Aristotle's model for the dramatic form of tragedy: breach, crisis, redress, reintegration or schism (Turner: 9, in Schechner and Appel 1990/93).

Here Turner is concerned with the organizational structure of the dramatic actions of social process. He acknowledges the aesthetic force in everyday living, the dramaturgy of conflict, crisis-building, and resolution. Although he is using aesthetic terms for characterizing a social process that is *not* separated from everyday life, as aesthetic performance is, he maintains that social dramas "have been equipped by aesthetic dramas" (Ibid.: 17). He and performance theorist Richard Schechner have presented this relationship graphically - in a prone figure 8 - to show the crossover, or "mutual mirroring" between the aesthetics of performance and the aesthetics of social process (Turner 1982: 73) - and their mutual structural-aesthetical adaptations of one another. Turner uses understanding of aesthetic drama to interpret social drama and meanings which emerge there. Schechner uses understanding of social drama to interpret how meanings emerge in aesthetic drama (theatre).

Dramaturgy and ethno-dramaturgy

I ask where, in play-drama, are the borders between daily social living and aesthetic performance. To what extent is play-drama an equal partner to aesthetic drama, in terms of its aesthetic-reflexive and cultural significance? There are many aesthetic influences in children's lives. - Contemporary children are exposed to a myriad of narrative and dramatic forms through "being parented" and through the media of child culture - in adult entertainment and artistic products for, or processes with, children. These experiences of form can become incorporated and spontaneously produced in the ways children tell stories (Sutton-Smith 1983) and, hypothetically, in the way a play-drama is "told"/actualized. How do these experiences become mirrored and manifest in play-drama?

As mentioned in the conclusion to the section on theatre studies, one could employ Turner's ethno-dramaturgical paradigm for analyzing the aesthetic process in play-culture. One could examine how the performance process is structured - spontaneously, from inside the unfolding drama production - inside its "being played". "Being played" can be translated to theatre terms in the constellation of *action - reaction - new action*, etc. - a process that produces structure.

An aesthetic-dramaturgical paradigm for the study of ritual process and its meanings

The anthropologist Bruce Kapferer - who is working within Turner's dramaturgical paradigm - in his article *Performance and the Structuring of Meaning* (Kapferer 1986), defines his study of ritual process as a study of aesthetic process. He shows how the complex aesthetic components (performance modes) of the ritual process have been structured in accordance with its cultural context, the intention for the process - spiritual healing. The aesthetic principles are deeply embedded in long cultural and formal tradition and they create a context which is integrated in the cultural life of the participants. It is because of this fact that they can be culturally and personally efficacious.

In his analysis of ritual composition in a contemporary Hindu exorcism ritual performance in southern Sri Lanka, Kapferer regards the instrumental, compositional form as aesthetic form which reaches the senses directly. The cultural intention of the ritual is to exorcize the demon - to heal the spirit of an isolated, suffering member of the group and, thereby, to heal the community. The means for reaching the cultural goal are aesthetic. Kapferer discusses how the use of expressive components - narrative storytelling, music and dance, mask and costume, comic drama, etc. - are carefully structured to achieve aesthetic-emotional effect on the participant-spectators. The particular composition and structuring of the elements, their internal interplay and their interplay with the participants, work aesthetically - between emotional proximity and emotional distance, to transform the participants' awareness and knowledge (Ibid.: 191). In this last aspect, we could associate to Brecht's epistemological project in epic theatre.

The play of the ritual is constituted by a pre-designed structure. The process of ritual is structured aesthetically, in the long tradition of ritual specialists, to seize the participants in the liminal zone of consciousness, in ways that catalyze the desired reflexive outcome (Ibid.: 193). The concept of liminality, in brief, refers to the threshold between the participant's consciousness in everyday life and the consciousness in the ritual process. Kapferer is speaking of the transformation of consciousness of the participants at a non-conceptual level - as sensory knowing. (I will return to liminality in the section on performance studies below and at several points in the course of the other chapters.)

Kapferer specifies drama as *one* of the performance modes of ritual - a mode he calls "quintessentially *reflexive* as a property of its own internal form" (Ibid.: 199), pointing out that the very structure of drama enactment incorporates reflection - albeit of a different kind than conceptual reflection. According to Kapferer, the mode of drama in particular treats experience

as an object (Ibid.: 198). It can do this, he maintains, because of its intersubjective, dialogic mode - which is structured out of the different standpoints of the characters. - Drama is dialogically structured and, thereby, "*organizes its meaning* for the characters portrayed and for the spectator" (Ibid., my emphasis).

I would like to examine this theory in relationship to children's drama practice. However, in attempting to compare aesthetic process in a spiritual, ritual performance with secular play-drama, we must keep in mind one major distinction between them. - Briefly, the elements in the composition of ritual are pre-structured - by long tradition of the highest authority in the performance, the ritual specialist - for their intended cultural-aesthetic effect. They are designed for their efficacy in regard to the transmission and perception of intended cultural meaning. The ritual structure is instrumental: the participant-spectators operate within a pre-structured performance. We would not expect this to be the case in play-drama. Of course, there are pre-texts for play-drama, the children's experiences, but they are perhaps secondary to what happens/emerges in the dynamic of the formal process. *How* they are expressed and structured to interpret meaning can only be discovered through empirical study. We would expect the expressions and structures to be created *during* the performance.

Kapferer's cultural-aesthetic analytical approach to understanding ritual process bores deeper into complex dramaturgical components than does Turner's analytical model for understanding the development and shape of social dramas and their meanings. Turner analyzes whole sequences of social life in terms of their overall dramaturgical structure - and discovers the Aristotelian dramaturgical model for Dramatic Form; whereas Kapferer, in regard to ritual process, enters into the expressive modes and components of the aesthetic structure in order to evaluate the effect these have on the participant-spectators' shifts of consciousness in their internal process.

What are the cultural context and intention for play-drama? If we were to conjecture that children's cultural "intention" for play-drama is *both* to play and to be played, how would *these* intentions influence their aesthetic practice? This will be examined in the analyses.

In sum, in the search for servicable disciplinary paradigms, we have seen that the *aesthetic* perspective on (play)-drama on its own would place my study historically within theatre studies/aesthetics; but that the cultural and processual aspects of the aesthetic practice place the study in the overriding discipline of social anthropology. As we have seen in Kapferer's study, social anthropology and its solid cultural-process paradigm can provide a theoretical perspective from which to capture the *processual* "how-and-what" of aesthetic practice and

aesthetic knowing. In my discussion of the possible combination of theatre/dramaturgical theory for understanding performance *process* with what we could call "an aesthetic component approach" to understanding performance process and its efficacy (- or, we could say, its [spiritual -] epistemological value), I have already entered into an expansion of traditional paradigms existing in theatre studies/dramaturgy and in social anthropology. This leads us to paradigms within Performance studies.

Performance studies

Performance studies, an academic field developed in the past two decades, lies on the boundaries *between* theatre and anthropology, *cultural performance* being its primary research object. Richard Schechner, regards as "performance" a wide spectrum of what he calls *cultural manifestations* - including play, games, sports, theatre, and ritual (Schechner 1989). He views performance as "restored behaviour" - the *reconstruction* of living behaviour,

- treated as a film director treats a strip of film. These strips of behavior can be rearranged or reconstructed; they are independent of the causal systems...that brought them into existence....the strips of behaviour are not themselves process but things, items, "*material*"....(Schechner 1985: 34 - my emphasis),

to be treated in performance. Is this what children are doing in their aesthetic practice? In his definition of performance, Schechner characterizes its double nature of serious fun:

Performance comprehends the impulse to be serious and to entertain; to collect meanings and to pass time; to display symbolic behaviour that actualizes "there and then" and to exist only "here and now"; to be onself and to play at being others; and to be in a trance and to be conscious; to get results and to fool around; to focus the action on and for a select group sharing a hermetic language, and to broadcast to the largest possible audiences of strangers who buy a ticket (Schechner 1977: 218).

Except for public broadcasting, could this serve as a description of play-drama performance?

Turner defines the uniqueness of cultural performance *process*: "...what is normally sealed up, inaccessible to everyday observation and reasoning, in the depth of soiocultural life, is drawn forth. Meaning is squeezed out of an event...which cries out for *penetrative, imaginative understanding* " (Turner 1982: 13, my emphasis). If we added the word "formal" to the last three, emphasized words of Turner's insight, it could - temporarily - serve as definition for *cognitio sensitiva*.

Points of contact between theatre and anthropology

As Schechner outlines performance theory, it is concerned with points of contact between theatrical and anthropological thought. The points of contact lie in six aspects of performance:

- (1) transformation of Being and/or consciousness;
- (2) intensity of performance;
- (3) audience-performer interactions;
- (4) the whole performance sequence - training, workshop, rehearsal, warm-ups or preparations immediately before performing, the performance itself, cool-down, and aftermath;
- (5) transmission of performer knowledge; and
- (6) how performances are generated and evaluated. (Schechner 1985, Chapter I)

The first point, *transformation*, can be connected to my concern with sensory-symbolic reflection over the meanings of experience. - Turner posits that in ritual performance, "cognitive schemata are broken down" and that only "through destruction and reconstruction, that is transformation, may an authentic reordering come about"(1982: 84), and that "...dramas induce and contain reflexive processes and generate cultural frames in which reflexivity can find a legitimate place"(Ibid.: 93). In drama, "*to be reflexive is to be at once one's own subject and direct object*"(Ibid.: 100). - An "authentic reordering" of meanings in a play-drama performance would amount to a transformation - which can only come about through reflection in the concrete, sensory language of the drama medium - as distinct from abstract, rational thought.

The second point, *intensity*, can be related to the *ways* of giving sensory form to experience, and the forms' possibilities for sensorily seizing spectators in a significant way. I understand the third point, *audience-performer interactions*, as the premise for the first two points. In sum, the interrelationship between the first three points is the heart of my study. The last three points of contact can be connected to play-drama performance as an overriding cultural process and vehicle within child-culture, and can be understood as the premises for its successful continuation or failure as a cultural-aesthetic meeting place for the group.

I will re-examine these points of contact in the analyses of Chapter Five (Analysis 4).

Efficacy and reflexive outcomes

Schechner's project seems to be to show the interrelatedness of all performance genres. He starts from the vantage point of theatre and its possible historical roots, as well as its possible future as an efficacious cultural mode. This brings him to write about the cultural efficacy of ritual and the cultural function of play. He does not, however, enter into the discourse about to what extent *children's* play performance is largely an efficacious practice or largely entertainment. How is it the one or the other, or both? How would its aesthetic dimension contribute to its cultural efficacy? The *efficacy* of performance has to do with its cultural-

reflexive outcome. - Turner differentiates between *reflective* and *reflexive*. Cultural practices can be considered "*reflective* in the sense of showing ourselves to ourselves. They are also capable of being *reflexive*, arousing consciousness of ourselves as we see ourselves... we are made self-aware, conscious of our consciousness" (Turner 1982: 75). These definitions, however, can be problematic in regard to young children's thinking. The idea of *reflexivity* that I wish to explore could be approached through a consideration of efficacy - in regard to exploring one's own experience - although such an idea would first *seem* to run counter to Gadamer's idea of the non-purposiveness of play in general. In closer consideration, however, Gadamer does indicate that it is through the play of the formative process, and through the play between the work and the spectator, that the truth/meaning of the work of art emerges. Playing non-purposively does not, then, preclude reflexivity. The players may not set out with the *intention* to reflect over something, but we could examine to what extent the play-drama process is a sensory exploration of, or reflection over, both experience *and* expressive forms.

Cultural comparative theory

Performance theory is cultural comparative theory. Through cultural comparison the *distinctive* aesthetic practice and meaning-interpretation of a specific cultural performance genre can be clarified. Therefore, the theory of the aesthetics of theatre and ritual performance can provide comparative filters and vocabulary - concepts and categories - for describing and developing theory about play-drama aesthetics and reflexivity. For example, as a starting point, in "aspect 4 - the whole performance sequence" (in Schechner's points of contact above), *workshop* is listed as one of the phases. Hypothetically at least, it would seem relevant and fruitful to compare the aesthetic practice in play-drama with the workshop phase of theatre rehearsal ("workshop-rehearsal", Schechner 1986: 345). The workshop phase involves an aesthetic process for the performers - in relation to the script or other material that is to be developed into a performance for outside spectators. In this phase, there is no pre-planned structure, no immediate artistic intention, no refinement of the actors' technique nor of effects with which to communicate *outside* the performer circle. The workshop could be understood as an aesthetic performance-process not yet combined with communicative artistic intent - as is "process drama" in drama education. It is the time when the actors can perform and actualize their own life experience, and their own formal experience, for themselves and each other. In the workshop-rehearsal phase there are, then, *performer-spectators* in the play-drama sense.

The relationship between performer and spectator has already been highlighted as central to my exploration of the cultural-aesthetic and reflexive dimensions in play-drama. In regard to these aspects, the workshop-rehearsal phase may prove a particularly useful comparative aesthetic practice. Here, the actors are both performing and spectating their own dramatic expressions

and themes. However, in Schechner's *environmental theatre* practice, although he is concerned with the relationship between performer and spectator, he does not focus specifically on performer-as-spectator as being central to the *performance intensity* (aspect 2 above). He sees performance essence as:

"a set of exchanges between the performer and the action [the pre-planned action of the script which is being interpreted - my note], and of course among the performers and between them and the audience" (Schechner 1977/1988: 58).

The set of exchanges between the performer and the action and *among* the performers is an aspect central to play-drama. These sets of exchanges can be analyzed as part of the aesthetic practice in play-drama.

Schechner observes in theatre practice a double structure: the narrative - the action structure, as well as "the structure of the vulnerability and openness of the performer" (Ibid.). The first aspect is easily grasped, but the second aspect is less easily grasped as a *structure*. He may mean the structure that emerges out of the actors' "real" and immediate response to *being played upon* by the action-structure; as well as to their response to being *in-play-with* the other performers. Certainly, these ideas give a rich ground for studying play-drama aesthetics.

Playing and the structure of non-hierarchical production elements:

About play Schechner says:

..."it is behaviour that borrows or adopts patterns that appear in other contexts where they achieve immediate and obvious ends - not *rehearsal for* life, but a *derivation from* life situations" (Ibid.: 96, my emphasis).

In his turning on its head the inherited "truth" that play is rehearsal for life, Schechner makes an observation that is worthwhile to explore further. He also says that, "Play is what organizes performance, what makes it comprehensible" (Ibid.: 98). Schechner formulates a crucial theoretical foundation for my comparative study of aesthetics and reflexivity in his understanding of play as an organizing and meaning-producing presence in performance process, and in his focus on use of space and other *non-hierarchical production elements* - toward the practice of "whole-seeking" performance (Ibid.: 64-65). The idea of a whole-seeking performance founded on play-structures stands in contrast to pre-structured Aristotelian classical, dramaturgical principles. It raises a question about: to what extent and how play-structure is an organizing and meaning-producing presence in play-drama performance, to what extent we will find the use of space and the use of other production elements in a non-

hierarchical relationship, and to what extent we can say that the practice of play-drama is whole-seeking.

Varying foci in performance theory

In performance research, there is a qualitative difference in the foci of research conducted within the traditional academic establishment and that conducted by theatre artists/practitioners who themselves experiment in performance culture. Theatre practitioner-theorists other than Schechner have also developed performance theory, among them the influential theatre artist and theatre anthropologist Eugenio Barba of Odin Teatret in Denmark. I have referred to Barba's research in Chapter One. He has established the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA) which studies,

"the behaviour of the human being when it uses its physical and mental presence in an organised performance situation and according to principles which are different from those used in daily life. This extra-daily use of the body is what is called technique./.../The recurrent and transcultural principles on which these techniques are based are defined...as the field of pre-expressivity./.../ ISTA's field of work is the study of the principles of this extra-daily use of the body and their application to the actor's and dancer's creative work" (Barba and Savarese 1991: Introduction).

Knowledge of these principles gives the performer the possibility of learning to learn, rather than of learning a technique. It is an empirical approach to the performer's problems.

Barba's concept of theatre anthropology grows out of this focus on the physical dynamics available to performers in different performance cultures - the pre-expressive use of the body before it is employed expressively in dramatic action, genres, and collective traditions.

"Theatre anthropology is not concerned with those levels of organization which make possible the application of the paradigms of cultural anthropology to theatre and dance." (Ibid.) The Danish theatre theorist Exe Christoffersen maintains that ISTA provides a forum for a *non-normative poetics of the creative process in theatre* (Exe Christoffersen 1997: 132, my emphasis and translation).

When Barba refers to a "performance culture" it would seem that he refers to an artistic community's proscribed training system. ISTA's focus, then, differs from Schechner's and Turner's - which applies the paradigms of cultural aesthetics to both religious and social performances. Barba's focus does not seem to provide an overarching perspective for studying the aesthetic and reflexive dimensions of the whole performance in children's play-drama.

On another path than Turner and Schechner, Barba views performance as a phenomenon set apart from everyday life, the *set-apartness* of the *physical* performance culture being a major

characteristic. Turner, on the other hand, views a major value of the ritual process as *the in-betweenness* of Being and/or *consciousness*, a transitional mind-state between the performance of the ritual and that of daily life. The ritual process is for the participant-spectators - "a border, a margin, a site of negotiation" (Carlson 1996: 18 - 23). Turner is indebted to the French anthropologist Arnold van Gennep's theory about the three stages of ritual as encompassing a *liminal* stage. In this theory Van Gennep was concerned with *process-based structure* in ritual: separation, *transition*, incorporation; or pre-liminal, *liminal*, and post-liminal phases of consciousness.

The limen, or threshold... the second of three stages in rites of passage, is a no-man's land *betwixt and between* the structural past and the structural future....It is ritualized in many ways, but very often symbols expressive of ambiguous identity are found cross-culturally (Turner 1986: 41, my emphasis).

In the process-based structure of the ritual, the liminal phase is the stage of transition, or transformation, from the structural past to the structural future. The liminal phase, then, places the participant-spectator in simultaneous positions of consciousness. It is a transformational field. The symbolic-aesthetic structure of the liminal phase of ritual is itself a transformation of cultural and/or spiritual structures and it is the transformation to a symbolic-aesthetic mode, a sensory mode, that affords the transformation of consciousness, or the transition from one state of consciousness to another.

In regard to the concerns of my study with the relationship between the process of creating sensory form and reflexivity, this orientation toward transition or transformation of *states of consciousness* can prove central. I would, however, need to study both the physical and symbolic dynamics *and* the state of consciousness of the players - and their interrelationship.

This discourse raises questions:

- To what extent can we make visible states of consciousness?
- To what extent can an understanding of the transformation of states of consciousness contribute to understanding the potential for reflexivity in the bodily-sensory, aesthetic process in play-drama? And the converse: To what extent can an understanding of the bodily-sensory, aesthetic process contribute to understanding transformation of states of consciousness and reflexivity?

Here, Gadamer's philosophical thought about the "irrelevance of subjective consciousness" in the dynamics of play (Gadamer 1960/96: 102) would need to be examined. He could not be referring to *dramatic* play. - If aesthetic experience in dramatic playing has to do with being seized by the significance of symbolic form (for instance, its meaning) - either in the formative

process or in spectator reception - must not the subjective consciousness be activated? - In play-drama, it cannot *determine* the dynamics of playing, but it must certainly be at work, perceiving and deliberating, *in* the dynamics of playing. We would ask: What is the relationship between the individual player's subjective consciousness and the group's collective objectification in cultural performance?

Turner posits that the liminal phase "is predominantly in the subjunctive mood of maybe, might be, as if, hypothesis, fantasy, conjecture, desire - *depending on* which of the trinity of cognition, affect, conation is *situationally dominant*" (Turner 1986: 42, my emphasis). In analyzing play-drama performance in terms of liminal mentality, I would need to apprehend which of the trinity is situationally dominant. If cognition is predominant, one would not expect to find a liminal state of consciousness. But can reflexivity be found in liminal states of affect and conation? How we can design the study so that these aspects can be examined will be the task in Chapter Four.

Summary: Play-drama and performance theory

Schechner and Turner have developed theory about the common areas and boundaries between theatre and ritual as cultural expressions, where play and drama figure as predominant, common denominators. As I have examined the parameters of my study, theory about play, ritual, and drama, and theatre intersect.

Schechner's, Turner's, and Kapferer's cross-disciplinary work creates a theoretical framework within which the study of children's play-drama, as a distinctive kind of cultural-aesthetic manifestation and meaning-seeking, can be placed. *Theoretically* - as a performance genre, we can describe the cultural status of play-drama as being separate from adult culture and as part of heightened child-culture. It is performed by players in a transitional mental state between the cultural activity of adult hegemony and their experiences there, and the cultural activity of their child-governed aesthetic performance. It is a fourth kind of drama, in the same family as ritual process, aesthetic stage drama, and the drama of social living.

The aspects of cultural performance which Schechner presents provide an overarching alternative paradigm to those of the traditional disciplines - a broad cultural context and set of categories, explicit and implicit, from which to study the complex *dynamics* of the aesthetic performance practice/process - mental, physical, and structural. I will attempt to incorporate and modify these aspects in relation to the research object of this study.

It seems probable that in order to execute a shift in the normative perspectives on dramatic playing I must create a new paradigm by hopping back and forth among the understandings, paradigms, and vocabularies employed by the several disciplines examined above. This will be a movement in "hermeneutic circles", a term I will discuss in the next chapter on methodological thinking. The perspectives presented in this chapter must be rendered operational through a coherent analytical approach.

I conclude with a quote which emphasizes the point that the study of the cultural-aesthetic practice of drama places drama research within *performative anthropology*:

Performative anthropology documents that dance, music, drama, painting, sculpture, etc, which are artistic expressive forms in our society, comprise a social life in foreign cultures, where such "aesthetic" experiences are an expression of a *total social relationship*, because they are a part of an exchange which is *the factual reality* (Østergård Andersen 1993: 12, my translation from the Danish; my emphases).

Chapter Three

Methodological Considerations: Cultural-aesthetic Analysis

Hermeneutic Theory

The theoretical framework in Chapter Two places my research problematics and goals in the scholarly tradition of hermeneutics. In this chapter I will consider the philosophical underpinnings of the hermeneutic tradition and how it lends itself to realizing the description of cultural-aesthetic actions and the interpretation of its meanings. An in-depth presentation is deemed necessary because of Gadamer's theory that playing is a hermeneutic, interpretive activity (1960/96). A thorough discussion of the hermeneutic thinking in the study can, therefore, also provide an enriching theoretical perspective on the interpretative, reflexive nature of play-drama itself.

Hermeneutics derives from the Greek verb meaning "to interpret" and the concept was originally related to the specific practice of Biblical exegesis - in the search for the text's *underlying meanings and its relationship to the world*, but was later extended to embrace general textual interpretation. Hermeneutics can be said to be the art of understanding - the art of identifying meaning. Hermeneutics has also been referred to as "the interpretation of interpretation" (Reinelt and Roach 1992: 353). A text is created which interprets experience, and this is subsequently interpreted by the researcher for its possible meanings. For children, play-drama is an aesthetic interpretation of their own experience. In my interpretation of play-drama, I will be interpreting their interpretations. These are the two spheres of hermeneutic activity in this study.

The German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) established hermeneutics as the foundational discipline of the humanities and criticized the methods of positivism, adopted from the theory of science within the natural sciences. However, he is of the opinion that humanistic insight also has an empirical foundation, in concrete observations of human beings' unique forms of existence: in cultural systems - arts, sciences, religion, economy, law. Dilthey speaks of cultural "texts" as expressions of the life of the consciousness (Nordenstam 1993: 274).

How does one build understanding? How does interpretation proceed? Early in his career, Dilthey meant that the central concepts in the understanding of cultural texts on the part of the researcher are: *recreation, re-experiencing, sympathy and empathy*; especially the first two aspects, where what he calls the totality of the life of the soul is at work in the process of understanding. In *dialectical hermeneutics*, the researcher must recreate and re-experience the text with sympathy and empathy, in a dialectical movement between the text and one's own recreation and re-experiencing of it (Dilthey 1979). Theoretically, one can also understand that

this is what might be taking place while playing children are recreating, re-experiencing and interpreting earlier experiences.

Dilthey's teacher, Friederich Schleiermacher, meant that an understanding of a part of a text must be understood as a link in the whole chain of the text, while the whole text cannot be understood in any other way than in relation to its parts. This lay the ground for the concept of the *hermeneutical circle*, coined by Dilthey as a metaphor for the circularity of thought involved in creating knowledge about a text. As a consequence of this concept, he meant that scholarly method in the arts and humanities should be a matter of a *dialectical-hermeneutical relationship*, not just between the parts and whole of the text, but also between the researcher and the phenomenon being studied - this latter aspect arising from the individual's own experience. We *explain* nature, in a mechanical sense. We *understand* the life of the soul - and its manifestations in cultural products - in an empathic, descriptive, analyzing sense - as "experienced wholes". Use of the researcher's experience implies a subjective investment in the object of our research.

Hermeneutics and *phenomenology* are understood by their practitioners as *approaches* to interpretation and understanding of meaning. Although each has its separate history, each term has had an interplay with the other in twentieth-century European philosophy and critical theory. They are both mental disciplines of 'reading', perceiving and imagining (Reinelt and Roach 1992: 353).

Phenomenology was founded by the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). Husserl's goal was to make philosophy a stricter, more objective, science by concentrating on the phenomena which show themselves with certainty directly to our consciousness. Husserl did not try to find a methodology into which understanding could be pressed, but rather to present a phenomenological approach to Being itself. Although my project has not set out to study Being, in the strictest philosophical sense, it does study a cultural-aesthetic form of *being* for children, their collective playing.

Phenomenology derives from the Greek word meaning "that which shows itself". Husserl meant by this that which shows itself *prior* to interpretation. - A phenomenological approach would involve "intuitive apprehension and penetrating description" (Nordenstam 1993: 234) of the phenomena that show themselves directly. In the study of play-drama, this demands direct observation and penetrating description. One can ask if there can be such a thing as "that which shows itself prior to interpretation". In regard to this, Husserl had as a key to perception and imagination the concept of *epoché*, meaning a moment of suspension of all presuppositions

about the nature of experience - a suspension of the belief in the existence of the thing being perceived. In this suspended moment the *essential* qualities of the thing may be perceived. By phenomenological "essences" is meant "a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for the existence of an entity". These essences can be fully apprehended by the *imaginative intuition* of them. "The idea is to be able to pick the thing up mentally and see all its facets, in spite of its actual embeddedness in the rest of the experiential world" (Reinelt and Roach 1992: 353).

Before executing the study, I considered Husserl's bracketing approach an ideal which is impossible to attain. In retrospect, however, I see that to a certain extent I have been struggling to see the "phenomenon" *without* awarding my presuppositions about it the front seat in my consciousness, to perceive it without the habitual lenses with which the theory of other disciplines has shaded it. How can one perceive something free of presuppositions about it? After Husserl, the German philosophers Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer, and the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur have guided phenomenological analyses in a direction that places more emphasis on *describing the process of interpretation* than in building methods for "correct interpretation" (Kjørup 1996: 275). The sections of this dissertation with micro-analysis of the data are largely a documentation and description of the process of interpretation - of the attempt to develop a flexible set of analytical procedures - in the meeting with the phenomenon. One cannot *pre-build* flexible methods for "correct" interpretation - because this would lock one's ability to discover something other than what one already knows at the outset. However, in describing the process of interpretation, one can lay out one's choice of interpretative tools and one's reasoning minutely and, thus, guard against habitual ways of perceiving.

Martin Heidegger, a student of Dilthey's and indebted to Husserl's phenomenology, extended the thinking about the hermeneutical circle. He wished to show the extent to which it is operative in the interplay between what is to be understood and the one who is trying to understand - the extent of the *intersubjectivity* involved in interpretation. He meant that a *condition* for interpretation of a text is an understanding of that text: All interpretation which is meant to create understanding, must in the first place have understood what is being interpreted. The hermeneutic circle is an 'evil' circle, but it is a basic tenet for insight and we must enter into it. It is the interplay between what is done and the one who wants to understand what is done (Kjørup 1996: 276). This seems like a refinement of Dilthey's idea: *re-creation and re-experiencing* of the phenomenon *implies* that the interpreter is actively pulled into the phenomenon. He or she must relive it through her senses, imagination and intellect. This thinking can also be applied to the children's interpretive meeting with their experience in

the play-drama - the *Me*'s meeting with the *Not-Me* in the process of creating the *Not-Not-Me* of their drama.

Pre-understanding

Hans-Georg Gadamer, building on Dilthey's and Heidegger's insights into the difference between human and natural science, meant that all new understanding is built on earlier understanding, '*pre-understanding*'. We understand in new ways on the *horizon* of what we have understood before. The researcher's preconceptions and prejudices are important aspects of understanding a phenomenon. In his argument in *Truth and Method*, Gadamer can be interpreted as encouraging the scholarly use of our pre-understandings: by being aware of them and questioning them, systematically, as we proceed in our interpretive work.

In my study, I have constantly been confronted with how paradigms in other disciplines' play-theory have created pre-understandings that have influenced the way in which I have viewed the play-drama process. The research process has involved attempts to remove these filters for understanding the play-drama performance in order to be able to describe/see the *aesthetic* - reflexive dimension. I also have pre-understandings based on my own play as a child, my education in the theatre, and readings in cultural theory about the cultural likenesses in play, theatre and ritual. For Gadamer, the interpretive circle, or spiral, would seem to consist of an alternation between anticipation - based on pre-understanding - and retrospection after meeting with the "text". I must guard against seeing only what I have been enculturated to see, striving with my intuition, empathy and critical awareness to see other qualities.

Historicity

The French theatre theoritian, Patrice Pavis, points to the demand that hermeneutic research, "should include a concrete knowledge of the historicity of the object of study and of the interpreter's own situation of enunciation"(Pavis 1998: 168). In the background chapter I have presented my situation of enunciation, and below I play with the idea of play-drama's historicity.

The historicity of play-drama performance:

Although the demand for knowledge of the historicity of the research object originated in relation to historical, written texts, it is interesting to consider this problematic in relation to spontaneously performed, contemporary play-drama. Play-drama could be considered as an historical genre which changes over the decades. It is difficult to pinpoint where history intervenes in the forms and experiences which children actualize. The play-drama performances that I study can be understood as a contemporary "performance texts" which

reflect the historical period and culture in which the children live their lives. It can reflect attitudes, customs, and actions of contemporary life, or it can reflect inherited historical-cultural material, insofar as these are handed down by other children in child-culture or by adults - for instance, in fairy tales.

In purely social realistic play-drama, constrictive, contemporary social scripts are being performed - scripts which interpret the times in which the players live. In fantasy play-drama, non-constrictive scripts are being invented - scripts which may reflect modern media or historical media (i.e. fairy tales). These two types of scripts may also be intertwined. The children's attitudes toward the given material are expressed in dramatic form. - In their dramatic interpretations, they mediate in history as it has come to bear on their total enculturation. At the play-level they can accept it, question it, reject it, or turn it on its head. Also - the dramatic forms they use will, to some extent, reflect aesthetic enculturation. In order to enhance valid interpretation, the researcher, who is also part of the times, will strive to recognize what dynamic attitudes, ideational content and formal content are at work in the performance. In developing the tools during the analytical process, an understanding of the historicity of the *tools* will also be necessary.

In Chapter Two, I have framed play-drama as an art-like production process. In the following section I consider how we bring aesthetics into the hermeneutic research process.

Absorbing aesthetics into hermeneutics

A consideration of Gadamer's concerns regarding the interpretation of works of art can be useful for designing the analytical procedure for my study. Gadamer's undertaking in the essay *The Play of Art* (1967, in Gadamer 1977/1991) is to "absorb aesthetics into hermeneutics" (Ibid.: xvi). In the essay, Gadamer tries "to develop his description of what actually happens when we undergo an *experience* with a work of art, believing that this will prove more instructive than an analysis of the *logical status of aesthetic judgments*" (Bernasconi, in Gadamer 1977/1991). For Gadamer, understanding a text, a work of art, means undergoing an aesthetic experience of that work of art. This thinking is also applicable in regard to interpreting and understanding children's aesthetic practice.

In the thesis, I do not consider play-drama as a work of art but as an art-like aesthetic process. I shall try to experience it and re-experience it, to take it in, intuitively and empathically, and to describe what actually happens *for the children* in the formal process. - I try to understand the *children's* aesthetic experience: - what they do to keep *themselves* sensorily, mentally, emotionally, and perceptually involved in the formal process. I must do this by analyzing and

interpreting their play with form. I am, then, in studying the performance process *also* undergoing an aesthetic experience of this process. Such a willed, aesthetic spectator experience can enhance my understanding of the children's aesthetic experience *inside* the performance process. As researcher, I am a spectator to the performance and my work includes experiencing the whole and analyzing the parts that constitute the whole performance - in a way similar to a researcher in theatre studies analyzing a theatre performance.

Distanciation through the choice of analytical tools

As a counterpoint to Gadamer's concept of empathic 'belonging', in the sense of being in experiential *proximity* to the phenomenon one is interpreting, Paul Ricoeur sets up the concept of '*distance*' and distanciation. With this concept he means that one should have a set of interpretive tools that allow one to *stand back* in order to gain perspective on the phenomenon. Ricoeur is, as Husserl was, searching for more objectivity in the intersubjective paradigm of the human sciences. Although Ricoeur respects the confoundment of the hermeneutical circle, he wishes to examine what it is that holds the interpreter's pre-understanding *under control* - such that a *critical practice* can ensue in the interpretation process (Ricoeur 1981, my emphasis). Understanding is not seen as a subjective action on the part of the researcher but, rather, as a *dialogical action* between the researcher and the text. The text and the researcher are in dialogue with one another. In Dilthey's use of "dialectical" action between the two sides there lies the expectation of synthesis leaning in the direction of the researcher, whereas in Ricoeur's idea of "dialogical" action we intuit an equality of both sides, with less of a danger of the subjective slant.

In choosing interpretive tools that seem foreign to children's play, I can place myself at a distance from it and can, thus, keep my pre-understanding under control. In this way new understanding about the aesthetic-reflexive dimension may arise.

My proximity to the text is created by what I "pre-understand" as the *likenesses* between aesthetic practices in play, ritual and theatre performance. What can create distance to my pre-understanding, and what gives me a distanced perspective on the performance text, is the actual foreignness of considering play-drama in comparison to artistic or religious practice. I know it is not either of these. In other words, the eventual choice of comparative artistic categories from theatre and ritual performance, rather than being presuppositions about play-drama that could hinder my perceiving something new, may in fact create distance to the phenomenon. They can create a clearer perspective precisely because they *are* foreign to playing. The process of going back and forth between the aesthetic categories and concepts as they are understood in artistic and religious practice and the categories and concepts as they can be understood in

relation to play practice - can form the core of the discovery/research process. If play-drama expressions are not artistic expressions in intent, in their likenesses and differences from theatre or ritual practices, how *are* they? And, *how* are they? In actual comparison of aesthetic practices, what is the sum of the likenesses and differences? In comparison with other aesthetic practices, I am searching for each play-drama's *distinct* aesthetic profile.

Both Gadamer and Heidegger, who aligned themselves with the phenomenological movement, give the arts a central position, whereas Husserl says little about the arts. "Art is...for Heidegger...one way in which truth occurs" (Bernasconi, in Gadamer 1977/1991). I do not adhere to the idea of the existence of universal truths being found in works of art but rather to the idea of culturally contingent "knowing". Therefore, rather than asking if truths are discovered or are created in children's aesthetic practice, I ask instead if this practice is one way in which reflection, meanings, insight, knowing, or "recognitions" can occur.

Robert Bernasconi, in his introduction to Gadamer's essays, observes that: "Heidegger, like Merleau-Ponty, came to reflect on how it is that painters and sculptors can instruct us about a world upon which science depends but about which it finds itself unable to speak" (Ibid.: xi). In other words, rational scientific discourse does not have the concepts that can grasp the artistic or aesthetic experience, a problem for this dissertation as well. A poet can perhaps communicate a phenomenon or a sensation of the phenomenon better than a researcher's rational reporting of it as the result of methodologically correct procedure. Bernasconi elaborates further:

Essentially Gadamer's point was that we gain access through the arts to an irresistible truth that the dogmatic application of method overlooks. Method is not presented by Gadamer in crude antithesis to truth, but Gadamer's reader is left in no doubt that concentration on method can conceal much that art and history has to teach us (Ibid.).

I wish to understand what the aesthetic practice has to teach its own performer and to bring the performance alive for others through analytical description. Making the loosest possible interpretation of Gadamer, I can feel justified in dropping a rigorous delineation of method and trust my intuition and empathic reading/re-experiencing of the play-drama performance text to lead me to a valid interpretation of the formal play and its meanings - and following Ricoeur, by choosing analytical tools that create distance.

Artistic analogy - Qualifying the analytical categories:

Arts-analogous thinking can aid the conceptualization of the hitherto unconceptualized aesthetic, reflexive and cultural qualities of children's dramatic playing. A comparative strategy for studying play-drama practice in terms of theatre or ritual practice, can be considered analogical

thinking. The cultural-aesthetic vocabularies can be understood as analogical tools. Analogy sets the phenomenon (the research object) in a new light where *certain* characteristics - the aesthetic and the cultural - come into focus rather than others (see Kuhn 1962).

In describing children's drama production as an art-like formative process - *as if* it were a work of art in the making, I hope to enhance the understanding about how it is constituted aesthetically, as well as how the drama functions culturally, within child culture; and, as discussed in Chapter One, as distinct from how it functions and what it means psychoanalytically, social psychologically, sociologically, etc.. But it is not the intention of this research to view play-drama as art. Rather, as stated above, what is being explored is the distinctions between the aesthetic dimension of drama performance in play contexts, in artistic contexts, and in religious contexts.

In addition to creating a distance, when I use aesthetic categories and concepts from the adult culture of theatre arts and ritual performance as an analytical grip, or attitude, to my material, the strategy can raise questions about what the concepts actually *mean*. If they can be applied both to an artistic theatre practice, religious practice, and a theoretically "non-artistic" play practice, this can say something new about them as aesthetic concepts.

In the critical, hermeneutic tradition of Marx and Freud, Ricoeur favours the view of interpretation as the unveiling of veiled lies rather than the unveiling of hidden truths (Thompson, in Ricoeur 1981). Extending this turn of thought to my project, one could say that one of the motivations for the project is to unveil the *omissions* of earlier play research. I also wish to counteract the attitude toward the search for the aesthetic-reflexive dimension in play as merely a romanticizing venture. On the contrary, I believe that a deeper understanding of this dimension could contribute to new insight into the relationship between dramatic form-production and aesthetic reflection in particular cultural contexts - as cultural forces both in child culture and in adult culture.

Induction

Hermeneutics employs inductive, rather than deductive, thinking. I am generating, not testing existing theory. I am examining the unique texts of single cases of play drama, and trying to understand what constitutes the aesthetic dimension in the performance process of the single case. When I have studied one play-drama sufficiently - to be able to characterize the formal elements and patterns among the elements that constitute the aesthetic practice there - I move to another. - Common qualities may appear among the the cases. - Is the aesthetic practice of

each play-drama constituted uniquely, or are their similar patterns among the play-dramas? - Do patterns, and variations on patterns, common to all the material emerge - as well?

Cultural scholarship attempts to arrive at a synthesis of knowledge about the cultural phenomenon being interpreted. According to hermeneutic theory, the hermeneutic circle leads from the facts of the empirically studied texts to the theory, around and around, to form a synthesis between facts and theory. To arrive at a synthesis of knowledge about the individual cases of play-drama involves projecting a pattern over them - in order to make them graspable. By going to other performance practices and their theory I can find descriptions of aesthetic patterns (i.e. conventions, structuring of expressive components) which can provide concepts and, thereby, aid the description and interpretation of individual play-dramas. Do the facts of the play-drama create a pattern that exists in other performance practices - or do they afford the appearance of a new pattern? A synthesis between the facts of play-drama performances and the facts and theory of theatre and ritual performances can create new, aesthetic theory about play-drama performance.

It is not possible to make universal claims about the aesthetic characteristics of all play-drama. I must select a limited number of play-dramas and a limited number of contemporary theatre and ritual praxes (*praxis*: an example or collection of examples to serve for practice, Oxford 1955) - thereby conceptualizing aesthetic constituents of those play-dramas that have been studied in depth. Such a comparative strategy will necessarily be limited by this selection, and readers may have knowledge of other praxes which could provide equally servicable concepts/vocabulary for conceptualizing play-drama aesthetics and its reflexive and cultural value.

In comparing performance aesthetics in the differing cultural contexts, I will not attempt to deduce general formal laws governing all play-drama aesthetics but, rather, to find out to what extent the tools can open my eyes to aesthetic aspects I might otherwise have overlooked. The comparative analytical tools can direct my attention, reduce the complexity of the performance text, without locking my perception of the phenomenon. Furthermore, it may well be that the concepts and categories from the theory of performance will themselves be understood in a new way - having been applied to performance in a new cultural context. In regard to the discussion of aesthetic patterns, it should be emphasized that the goal is not to *find* patterns, as in social anthropology. - However, the aesthetic patterns in play-drama that *may* appear in the comparison with drama performance in other cultural contexts, may provide a surprise - the unexpected, thus providing theoretical "news" about its aesthetic dimension.

Through this descriptive-interpretive, dialogical movement - between what is already conceptualized about "my" familiar theatre culture and that which is unconceptualized aesthetic constituents in play-drama - the contours of the aesthetic practice and its meanings can take form. In this way, I wish to develop theory about and to understand *some* of the constituents of *these unique* cases, in the performance of *these* children.

Two perspectives for the methodological framework

As discussed in the theory of Chapter Two, I wish to describe and interpret play-drama as part of the players' social-cultural discourse - actualized in aesthetic practice. On the basis of the discussion, we see two perspectives from which to create the methodological framework for the study of play-drama:

- (1) As a cultural-aesthetic text, in the sense of being an anthropological "process-object", and
- (2) "As if it were" an artistic product - in regard to how the aesthetic dimension of a play-drama sequence resembles or differs from the aesthetic practice in contemporary theatre and ritual performance.

Because the analytical procedures we use are tools to find answers to our questions, we must continually clarify the questions being posed and design tools for finding answers to these questions. In the analytical process itself, I can develop a set of conceptual filters through which to describe what the French aesthetic-phenomenologist Mikel Dufrenne calls "expressive sensory constituents", and the "coalescence of sensuous elements" (Dufrenne 1973) in the play performance. As researcher I am also thrown into the position of spectator to the play-drama. While describing and characterizing the parts of the *internal* aesthetic process for the participants, I must also step back to view the children's performance *externally*, as if it were an aesthetic object for me - to experience/perceive its composition externally, as aesthetic structures, and to characterize these in a theory/language that will create distance and at the same time be recognizable to others as aesthetic performance vocabulary.

Chapter Four

Methodological Design and Overview:

Making the Invisible Visible

Introduction

In this chapter I present the design for, and an overview of, the qualitative procedure for the study. As indicated in the chapters on theoretical foundations and methodological considerations, qualitative researchers are interested in meaning-and-sense-making in social or cultural process. Qualitative research is meant to generate theory rather than to test operational hypotheses. Direct observation in the natural setting creates the data, and proximity and sensitivity to the phenomenon is the foundation for the development of research questions as well as for the choice of analytical and interpretive tools. In the research process the data collected in field study are mediated through the researcher's own life experience.

Documentation and analytical description are the cornerstones of the qualitative procedure (Grønmo 1980). The descriptive process is a process of discovery through inductive reasoning, which leads to the development of theory about the phenomenon in focus (Creswell 1994: 145).

Social anthropological theory about the study of cultural practice provides the methodological framework for the study. According to anthropological theory, the cultural researcher can best understand the meanings in cultural-aesthetic processes through field study - living in the culture and experiencing *with* the cultural actors, to the extent that this is possible for those who come from another cultural background.

Ethnographic method

In social anthropology, ethnographic method is applied in order to tell the story of the "other culture" (Hastrup og Ramløv 1988). In the field study, the group to be studied is observed through participant observation, or observant participation, *of/in* the culture. There would be no means by which to capture the text - the children's aesthetic-cultural practice - other than by "being there" in its ethnographic context, so that it can be interpreted and understood. The work of ethnography is "penetrating description" of a cultural text and has been characterized by Gilbert Ryle as "thick description" (Geertz 1973: 6).

In designing the procedure for the study I have had a basic understanding of ethnographic method. The meanings of a drama performance, as a cultural-aesthetic text, can only be understood as products of the specific cultural *context* within which they emerge (Hammersly and Atkinson 1996: 165-174). A spontaneous play-drama text is inseparable from its cultural context. To understand what constitutes its aesthetic dimension and how reflection takes place there, we must understand the relationship between aesthetic form and its meaning content as it is produced by the specific cultural group in its specific cultural context. The point is not to

explain the aesthetic dimension generally, but to perceive it in each unique performance and to grasp the reflexive process and cultural significance for the specific community of players.

In order to describe and interpret the performance text and its meanings we must carry out *cultural-aesthetic analysis* - analysis of how the aesthetics of the performance emerge in the culture of specific children's playing.

Cultural comparison

In social anthropology the *sine qua non*, the indispensable condition, for understanding the meanings of cultural acts is description, characterization and interpretation through cultural comparison. In cultural comparison our view of the unfamiliar culture we are interpreting is filtered through an understanding of our own, familiar culture. - What are the distinctions between that "other" culture and the one I am a member of? How are they alike? How do they differ? Within human science and aesthetic scholarship comparison can play a central role in the understanding the cultural significance of a phenomenon. - "If we know only one religion, we know none" (Nordenstam 1993: 132). If we know drama in only one cultural context, we do not know drama.

In the cultural theory presented in Chapter Two, we find support for the cultural comparison between drama phenomena in children's playing and in religious and arts contexts. Theatre, ritual and play-drama are three variations of dramatic culture, parts of the same cultural "drama family". Dramatic playing is a cultural form - as is ritual and theatre; dramatic playing is aesthetic ordering of experience - as is ritual and theatre. Even though contemporary theatre is part of the autonomous arts institution, and ritual drama is a religious/spiritual practice, there are enough *formal* family likenesses among the various types of dramatic cultures to warrant the transportation of production and performance categories from one to the other. And in spite of the contextual differences between drama performance in play, art and religion, aesthetic characteristics of the one have the potential for shedding light on characteristics of the other.

Through comparative work with drama performance in adult culture, I can develop analytical tools that fine-tune my vision, enabling me to describe, characterize, interpret, and build an understanding about play-drama performance in a way that breaks down habitual thinking. Using analytical categories from the one practice to characterize the other can structure the analysis in such a way that we perceive the phenomena on *both* sides of the comparative cultural equation in a new way.

This approach can be summarized as: analytical, aesthetic description of a cultural process within an cultural-aesthetic comparative framework.

Background considerations for the qualitative procedure

Indispensable for the development of theory about children's aesthetic practice is the development of the qualitative procedure and tools which can profile the aesthetic, reflexive and cultural aspects and which can generate theory - as well as further research. In the following section, I discuss issues that are central in developing the qualitative procedure.

Text/context

In field study, the *contexts* for the socio-cultural practice are strictly noted. It is understood that the *text* - in this case the drama performance - can only be analyzed and understood as part of the *context* in which it emerges. For a study of play-drama in child-culture, a stable site for study is the kindergarten. In this setting, the context for children's drama performance is multi-layered. Global, national and local culture are the external contexts for the kindergarten culture. Within the kindergarten culture, the pedagogical leaders - their values, personalities, and educations lead to their choice of pedagogical practice. Their practice reflects, to varying degrees, the epistemological values of the educational institution in which they have received their professional training. The values and pedagogical practices of the adults will influence the extent to which child-culture and play-culture can thrive. In this study, child-culture and its play-culture are the immediate contexts for understanding play-drama performance. This context is constituted by the individual children, their ethnic backgrounds, genders, ages, personalities and experiences. The peer-interaction context is also central to the performance (Corsaro and Streeck 1986: 24). In addition, a question to keep in mind during field study is to what extent the researcher's presence alters the context for the children's play-drama and, thereby, their aesthetic practice.

Sources of data

In ethnographic method, interview is widely used to capture how the group itself conceives of its practices (Hammersley and Atkinson 1996). Interview is not employed to find answers to the problematics in this study because as an ethnographic tool in regard to young children it can be contradictory. "It is unclear if (children's) verbal accounts are organized at the same conceptual level as the scripts and schemata of interpretation underlying *actual performances* in joint activity" (Corsaro and Streeck: 24). I would not expect young children to be able to conceptualize about something as abstract as their aesthetic practice and its meanings. Above all, I wish the playing to remain as natural as possible and, in my relationship with the children, to avoid making them unduly self-conscious about their spontaneous play-drama.

Flexible development of analytical categories

In the project's *ethnographic micro-analysis* the cultural researcher does not fully know what the analytical questions are *before* meeting the cultural phenomenon in the field (Hastrup og Ramløv 1988: Inledning). Flexibility is of central importance in the development of analytical tools and the problematics. The questions will spiral out of the meeting with the phenomenon, and the levels of analysis (development of analytical tools) will spiral out of the attempts to describe/analyze/interpret them. This will be a recurrent theme throughout Chapter Five, which presents the analyses.

Development of research data and descriptive analyses

The research data that is collected consists of contextual observation notes taken on location as well as videotapes of play-dramas. These are the original documents that serve as sources for developing and systematizing the empirical material prior to selection and indepth analysis. Further documentation takes the form of the construction of transcriptions from the videotapes, in order to record on paper as precisely as possible what the children do and say. Analytical description proceeds from the transcriptions - in descriptive/characterizing/interpretive narratives about them. The analytical tools are tested and developed/expanded during this process.

In the use of slashes between analysis/description/characterization/interpretation, lies a fact that in the analysis process, the separation between description and interpretation is a difficult to realize (Kjørup 1996). When we describe, we characterize - and the assignment of characteristics is an interpretive act. All four terms can be used interchangeably. In the process of transcribing the facts of the voluminous visual material (video-tapes), one already selects and registers, interpretively, what one describes in detail and what one generalizes. This is a consequence of "pre-knowing" what qualities one is interested in studying. However, when one later has chosen specific play-dramas for micro-analysis, one can go back to the video to correct eventual omissions - to fill out details one has overlooked in the first rounds of analysis.

The role of the researcher's Experience in qualitative procedure

The experiences and Experience of the researcher shape the values and biases brought to the research. They can be said to be an important part of the research context, in the same way as the children's experiences and Experience are an important part of the context for their drama performance. As stated in the Introduction, it is my own personal, artistic and professional Experience that has led me to the interest in the research object, and to the formulation of the

goal and problematics of this study. This personal history and Experience has led to a familiarity and keen interest in the subject matter, factors which influence the scholarly process because they stand between the data and my interpretation of the data (Hastrup and Ramløv 1988). This is a characteristic of ethnography and an acknowledged part of its method. On the one hand, participatory observation demands empathy with the uncharted aspects of the culture being studied. On the other hand, more objective observation is built upon the ability to distance oneself in order to be able to register the "facts" of the phenomena. The factual circumstances of fieldwork are the context for the cultural life we are studying, and this context will influence our understanding of the cultural phenomena and its meanings. Researchers *create* a cultural text and an understanding of a reality based upon their own experiences and Experience (see Hastrup and Ramløv 1988: Inledning).

In the next section I present an overview of the research procedure. The research was conceived in two parts: The field study and the indepth analysis. First, I present the design for the field study and, thereafter, an overview of its execution. Following this, I present the design for the indepth analysis of the material collected in the field study, and an overview of the analytical process.

The Design for the Field Study

The goals for the field study, which provides the empirical foundation for the analysis, was to collect firsthand data of playing children in a stable cultural context and to begin to develop tools to analyze the data. A duration of a half-year in a group of kindergarten children (2 - 7 years of age) was considered ample time in which to become familiar with the culture, to collect data and to begin to develop and test tools in analytical description. The plan included:

- Preparation for the fieldwork: Contact and contract with the fieldsite;
- Planning the entry-level analytical categories;
- Establishing relationships in the field;
- Observation/Collection of data;
- A systematized overview of the data,
- A raw analysis of the data, through the application of the entry-level categories,
- Preliminary selection of material for indepth analysis,

- Preliminary analytical description and interpretation of one or two of the play-dramas based on the entry-level categories,
- An evaluation of the usefulness of the categories,
- A reworking and clarification of the goals and problematics for the indepth study.

Description of the Field Study

As delineated above, the goals for the field study were threefold: to collect data of children's play-drama, to begin to develop tools for analysis of the aesthetic dimension, and to execute trial analyses. The results were the basis for a grant application for a three-year research project.

Preparation

Preparations for the field study were both of a pragmatic and practical nature, as well as a theoretical-methodological nature.

Choice of fieldsite and considerations related to this choice

I was interested in studying a group with an age-range from two to seven years. A stable site for studying one group of children is the kindergarten. At the time that I received funds for the field study I was undecided about whether to use a randomly selected kindergarten or one which I knew considered dramatic playing an important activity. However, because the research is entirely dependent upon collecting data (visual material) of playing children, I chose a kindergarten where educational drama and theatre is a central part of the pedagogical praxis. Because the kindergarten's focus on storytelling, theatre visits, drama processes, and dramatic playing has led to a high frequency of dramatic playing among the children, I will not attempt to make claims that all children play in the way my fieldgroup does. I will, therefore, describe *how* they play and present what I regard as the reflective outcomes, without attempting to generalize my findings. The point is not to generalize, but to develop understanding. The aesthetic practice of these children can *represent a possibility* for other children.

Steps taken to gain field entry and approval to collect data at the research site

My initial contact with the fieldsite occurred by chance. The pre-school teacher who led the group of children in Oslo was a former student in drama and theatre education with whom I had intermittent contact. It was her wish that I do the study in her group. She introduced the idea to her three co-workers, and to the leader of the six-group kindergarten. Once this initial procedure cleared the way for my presence in the group, I negotiated directly with the leader of

the kindergarten, who also was a former drama student and co-responsible for the kindergarten's growing drama profile. The leader informed the field-children's parents of my presence and of the videofilming that was to occur. She obtained written permission for me to film the children's play and to use the material in public contexts. All the parents answered affirmatively.

Agreement with the fieldsite

The data collection was to take place among a group of thirteen kindergarten/nursery school-aged children, 1 - 7 years old. Presence in the field would have a duration of six-months. In order for the staff in all six groups to develop their own project for studying dramatic playing, during that time I would conduct a course for the entire staff so that they could learn about my procedures and preliminary findings (see Jensen and Sivoll 1994). Plans for my presence and participation in the group of children and adults will be presented below.

Choices and reasons for data-collection procedures

The data to be collected includes participatory observations in the group's general activities, participatory observation in the children's dramatic play, and video filming of the phenomenon, with observation notes describing the immediate context. This was considered the most effective way to collect meaningful data for the study of the culturally embedded phenomenon.

Delimitation of data collection

In order to limit the amount of collected material, presence at the fieldsite was to be time-limited. The group leader and her assistants agreed that during the half-year I would vary my presence between morning and afternoon visits, two to three times a week for two to three hours each time. It was also accepted that, in order for the adults and children to become accustomed to my presence, I would be present more frequently in the first two months than in the following period. This amount of time seemed sufficient for collecting meaningful data. The children could get used to my presence and I could get used to the daily routines and find ways of being as unobtrusive as possible in my filming techniques. The plan was to film one hour for each visit so as not to have more material than could be systematized during the field study.

Preparation of the entry-level analytical tool: categories and worksheets

As a first step into the observation and analysis, I planned to try out an tool consisting of categories/positions from theatre and ritual performance, to see what they could tell me about the children's aesthetic practice. These positions have been used as a tool to open up the performance, as a starting point for observing, describing and characterizing how each player

contributes to the development of the drama and how they collaborate with one another in the aesthetic process. The categories represent the multiple functions that can be carried out in the production and reception of a theatre or ritual performance.

The following worksheets were created for each play-drama:

Figure 3: Worksheet 1: Entry-level analytical categories - Performance positions

Observation date: ____ Time of day: from __ o'clock to __ o'clock, Location _____	
<u>Positions</u>	<u>Name and age of children:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Dramatist - dramaturg- Actor -<ul style="list-style-type: none">- text production - creating dialog (Dramatist)- vocal expression- bodily expression- mime- blocking - movement patterns, spatial relationships- use of props- Choreographer - dancer- Composer - musician- Walk-on role- Narrator- Director- Scenographer (construction of the space)- Stagehand- Props person- Costume designer - Dresser- Make-up artist- Light designer - technician- Sound designer/producer- Ensemble interplay- Spectator	

Figure 4: Worksheet 2: Aspects related to reflexivity vis à vis form/meaning

Immediate impressions:

- Imitation: To what extent do the children seem to directly imitate an action or set of actions from a typical situation?
- Inventive self-expression: To what extent do they seem to create their own situation - breaking with a stereotypical situation?
- Transformation: To what extent do they seem to be transforming experiential material to create a new situation and set of actions?
- Theme/story for each child - and for the ensemble: What does he/she seem to be exploring and interpreting? Is there a common theme in the ensemble?
- Describe what makes the greatest immediate impression in regard to how a child performs in the various positions.
- Describe the main impression of the ensemble dynamics - how the positions are "distributed" among the players in the making of the drama.

Based on the trial use of these categories and questions that arose during the field study period, new analytical tools were to be developed for continuation of the analysis.

Fieldsite and field study description

After using one month to read and prepare the analytical categories, I entered the field - a six-group kindergarten on the east side of Oslo. I will describe the unit in which I conducted the study, with an overview of the space and activities, the framework for my presence there, the people who filled my life for a half year, and what was accomplished.

Characteristics of the space and the activities

Of the three rooms for the group of children, there was one large rectangular common room. It had two large windows overlooking the outdoor area - and two mattresses under each window covered with material in warm dark colours. The room was light with cheerful curtains. There was a feeling that the room was divided in two - because of a bookcase that extended sideways from one of the long walls. There were books and play material such as blocks in the bookcase. In the part of the room without windows there were two large wooden tables which were generally used for handicrafts and artwork, as well as for lunch.

The morning gatherings took place on the mattresses. During this gathering there was usually singing. Both teachers played the guitar and had taught the children a repertoire of Norwegian folk music that was impressive. Sometimes there were song and dance games, reading aloud, or teacher-led drama processes.

On Friday mornings the large room - or comparable space in the other groups - hosted a gathering of all the groups. Responsibility for the program rotated amongs the groups' leaders. Frequently the adults had prepared small dramatizations.

Ajoining the large room by a door was a smaller room about half the size. It was designated as "the play room" where the children could have privacy. It was sometimes used by the oldest children for lunch. It had a large window facing onto the outdoor play-space and was also light and cheerful. In one corner was a miniature toy kitchen and beside this, a child-sized table and chairs in front of the windows. Diagonally across the room, clothes for dressing up hung on pegs and lay in wooden boxes. A prefabricated puppet-theatre wall created an extra flexible, dividing wall: it was made of wood and was hung on hinges in the centre of the long wall across from the windows. It was divided into three sections by hinges so that it could be folded out straight, to divide the room, or shaped for play - according to what the children needed. Behind this room were the group's lavatories.

Across the hall from the large common room was a very small room used for quiet activities such as reading for, or singing with, a small group of children. Otherwise, the children could play freely there. The fairly wide corridor outside the group's rooms was a passageway to another group, as well as the place where the children hung outdoor clothing. A large wooden play apparatus was placed there, with a slide and small ladders to climb up and down. The children frequently played dramatically here too.

On the whole, everyone spread out in the entire space. It was remarkable how relaxed and natural the use of space was. Although there were eighteen persons, and little strict planning of how the space would be used, there never seemed to be congestion.

Presence in the field, time factors, frequency of collection

On the first day, at the first "morning gathering", I told the children that I was a teacher who taught kindergarten teachers, and that I was there because I wanted to learn more about the way children play.

During the first two weeks, in order to get to know the fieldgroup and for them to get to know me, I was present during the morning gathering of teachers and children - a teacher-led activity of approximately forty-five minutes duration; during the free-play time for about an hour and a half; and during the lunch meal which lasted about forty-five minutes. In this initial period I participated in the children's dramatic playing, on the children's premises, and made notes

about these experiences after lunch. During the rest of the period, as delineated under "delimitation of data collection", I varied my presence from mornings to afternoons as well as varying which days of the week I was present.

I collected data each time I was present. Although I had planned not to film more than one hour a day, this decision was sometimes impossible to abide by because of my inability to resist. However, because of injuries incurred from carrying video equipment and sitting on cold floors, there were some weeks in which I was unable to be present. This was an unplanned but natural delimitation in the amount of data that was collected. Twenty-three play-dramas were collected.

The children

When I arrived, the group consisted of five boys and seven girls. Two new boys arrived a few months into the study. I will characterize individual children and their relationships only to the extent that their play-drama is analyzed in the indepth study. As a group, they were playful and engaged and there was a sense of solidarity among them, reflecting in part the staff's solidarity with them.

Below I list the group's composition - gender and age - in *August -September* when the field study began, with fictional abbreviations. (*The stars refer to the children who perform in the play-dramas selected for the indepth study. The names are code names.)

1. Boy: P. A. - 2 years, 3 months
2. Girl: T. B. - 3 years, 3 months (Tessa)*
3. Boy: A. C. - 3 years, 10 months
4. Girl: L. D. - 4 years, 6 months (Lene)*
5. Girl: H. E. - 4 years, 7 months (Hilde)*
6. Girl: S. F. - 5 years, 4 months
7. Girl: A. G. - 5 years, 5 months
8. Girl: S. H. - 5 years, 7 months
9. Girl: K. I. - 6 years, 3 months
10. Boy: A. J. - 6 years, 1 month (Allan)*
11. Boy: L. K. - 6 years, 7 months
12. Boy: T.L. F. - 6 years, 8 months (brother to girl S.F.)

A thirteenth child moved to another city shortly after I arrived.

Two new children arrived in *December*:

13. Boy: A.M G. - 1 year, 9 months (brother to girl A. G.)
14. Boy: H. N. - 2 years, 6 months

The staff

There were four teachers. The leader was a woman educated as a pre-school teacher. Another pre-school teacher, a male, was employed as special teacher for A. G (girl - 5,5 years) who was physically handicapped but often played dramatically. Both teachers had a half-year concentration study in drama/theatre education during their pre-school teacher education. In addition, there were two female assistants. There was a good social and creative working atmosphere among the staff.

Consequences of my presence on the collected data

The children and staff were accustomed to having student teachers and other professional visitors in the group. Previously, adult-led activities had also been filmed by a professional team, for use in educational video-production. I became part of the context which I set out to observe but the natural context became altered by my observing presence - an aspect I continually attempted to modify. In the initial two weeks there were some children who were especially outgoing toward me and who wanted to include me in their play when I showed the interest. There were a few others who were more reticent and with whom I did not get to play. The latter group, not surprisingly, was also more self-conscious when I began filming - a self-consciousness that was either openly expressed or obvious to me. I respected this by leaving the room where they were playing. I did, however, get to film all the children, some quite extensively. Their attention, or relative lack of attention, to my presence is clear in the visual material and will be commented upon in the analysis. This is considered relevant contextual information, because in some cases, it is clear that the children are not only performing for themselves and each other, but also for the camera - or that they seem unduly reticent in play. When they are playing for the camera, the playform and the aesthetic dimension is altered (see section on "Findings" in Chapter Five, Analysis 3).

My presence also had an influence on the teachers' practice. A decisive influencing factor was the agreement with the kindergarten leader that I would hold an on-going course for the entire staff about aesthetic observation of dramatic play. The course included an introduction to the entry-level analytic categories, showing video data, discussion of my preliminary video-findings, and discussion about the use of the categories for play-observation. The staff began to film play-drama and to use my entry-level analysis categories as a way of understanding the children's play "competence", or lack of. Discussion of this material became the content at meetings in each group of teachers. They became more aware of their attitudes towards play,

as well as of routines and rules that can hinder free playfulness. In the course of the field study, the staff in my group had begun to change their attitudes, rules and routines. They became more tolerant of what appeared to be chaotic play, they avoided interrupting play in a group of children whom I was filming, they had less adult-led drama activities in order to allow for longer periods of free-play - in which the children could absorb the adult-led experience in their own spontaneous play; and they allowed the children to use materials for props and scenographic elements that had previously been prohibited (Jensen and Sivoll 1994). All of this had a positive influence on the children's playing, on my being able to collect significant data, and in feeling accepted and welcome there.

Data-recording procedures

Fieldnotes:

I recorded my participatory observation. In the initial two weeks, while I participated in the children's dramatic playing, I had in mind the entry-level categories which I had developed in the month prior to my fieldwork presence. Because of the ephemeral quality of these play sequences and my impressions of them, I did not wish to include them as data in the main analytical work. However, the experiences were informative and were recorded in observation notes which included:

- contextual information
- narratives that included information that corresponds to the worksheets
- what had happened prior to the play-drama performance
- my first impression of what the drama was about
- how long it lasted
- how each child contributed to the drama in relation to the categories; and
- preliminary interpretation of dramatic situations and themes.

In addition to recording the play-dramas, I recorded what I observed about general interactions on the unit, relationships among the children, and their attitudes to me and my presence.

Field notes were also taken in relation to the videotaped material and, in addition to the worksheets, consisted of contextual information describing activities and relationships that I observed.

Videotaping and protecting my observer-function while filming

When watching a play-drama in real time, it is over before I can fasten the details in my mind. Therefore, videotaping is invaluable for watching repeatedly - to capture the details, to see

patterns and to make sense out of the patterns, to comprehend and make sense out of what is being said and done.

After the first two weeks of playing, I began recording on video. I planned to use a further two weeks to let the children adjust to my presence with the camera and to allow them to use the camera if they wished. When they asked me to participate, I attempted to establish myself in the role of a *TV reporter* - refusing to take a role they wished to assign me if it demanded my putting down the camera. It was important to let them know I was not a person in authority and would not function as a judge or arbitrator in their social disagreements (see Åm 1989 on this point). I did, of course, help out if someone was injured. I had few expectations for capturing valuable material during these initial filming attempts, but took observation notes about impressions surrounding the play event during the same day, as mentioned above. As it turned out, some of the children remained interested in trying the camera during the whole field study, on and off, something I always allowed for. I lost valuable material, either because their filming disrupted the play-drama or because the child focused the camera on something else.

Review of the video material and raw analysis

At the end of each day, I reviewed the video material collected that day and applied the entry-level categories on the worksheets in a raw analysis.

The video material, observation notes and transcriptions have formed the entire body of data to be analyzed and interpreted.

Summary of the field study

I conducted observant participation in many group activities, and participant observation in the play-culture/play-drama. In all, twenty-three dramas were collected on video-tape, including seven filmed by the staff during my incapacitation. Observation notes written directly after the filming provided information about circumstances surrounding the performance and filming, as well as first impressions of how the children performed in regard to the entry-level categories and their composition, and the drama's themes. I reviewed the filmed sequences later in the day, observing more closely how the categories are employed, as well as the dynamics among the children in the performance of the theatre functions. I also registered the information on worksheets and in rough narrative descriptions that elaborate on the worksheet questions. Towards the end of the field study I created, for use in the selection process, an overview-systematization of all the dramas with the following information:

Location in the kindergarten, children's/ensemble's names, date, time span, type of dramatic playing - "projected" play or "personal" play,¹ and themes. This is not included here as documentation, especially because my preliminary evaluation of themes was necessarily superficial and, therefore, not significantly representative of the material. To elaborate: an indepth analysis is necessary in order to understand "what the form says" about what the children are exploring thematically.

I selected two performances for preliminary analysis, and transcribed them to resemble manuscripts for theatre production (see criteria for selection in the next section). Two articles about these were written for publication with preliminary narrative descriptions/interpretations of *how* the different players contribute aesthetically (in the theatre positions) to the composition of the drama. The descriptions provided the basis for understanding what the use of the entry-level categories could tell me and what they could not, and generated questions for further study. The questions led me to theoretical literature. An example of the first attempt at applying the entry-level categories is presented in the Chapter Five in the analytical description of *On a Boat at the Beach*. The other drama, *Capture the Wolf, We Shall!* is also included in the final study, but the levels of analysis have been developed far beyond what was accomplished in the first, preliminary analysis based on the entry-level categories.

Evaluation of the entry-level categories

By identifying which theatre positions the players are in, I am able to make sense out of the action and dialogue. I can see how each player contributes to the production and enactment of the performance and, eventually, how they build on each other's input and communication. This is a necessary foundation for being able to see and describe aesthetic qualities in the actions and to ascertain aesthetic structures - as well as to understand what the form says.

In the following section I present the design for the indepth study of the collected material.

The Design for Indepth Analysis

Subsequent to the field study the plan was to conduct indepth analysis. The first step was to select the empirical material (play-drama performances) for micro-analysis. It was expected that the analytical process would involve going back and forth between the study of each play-

¹ These are the English drama pedagogue Peter Slade's (1954) terms for dramatic playing. - In projected play, the player enacts the drama by projecting roles and situations onto objects. In personal play the player enacts with her own body.

drama and the study of theatre and ritual theory and selected contemporary theatre performances. The plan was to find theory and praxes for the development and application of comparative analytical tools - categories, vocabulary, concepts. From the findings of the analysis, the last step was to develop cohesive theory.

Subsequent to the trial analyses at the entry-level during the field study, it was expected that the design for a servicable analytical structure would emerge. It became clarified far into the analytical process.

The play-drama was to be explored from two perspectives. Within these perspectives, I have designed three main analytical levels. I outline the structure below:

A perspective on the players' internal aesthetic process

From this perspective I have designed two analytical levels:

Analysis Level 1:

- Identification of which position each player is performing/operating in. (I employ the term "operate" because the "spectator" position is not a performed action.)

Analysis Level 2:

- Analysis and description of how each player operates/performs in the diverse theatre/ritual positions.

- Analysis and description of the extent to which, and of how, the individual operations in each of the positions seem to contribute to the ensemble's sensory engagement and collaboration and, therefore, to the dynamics and composition of the whole performance; and to its meanings.

- Analysis and description of how the expressive "parts" merge into wholes - structures; and to what extent and how these structures hold the players immersed in the performance.

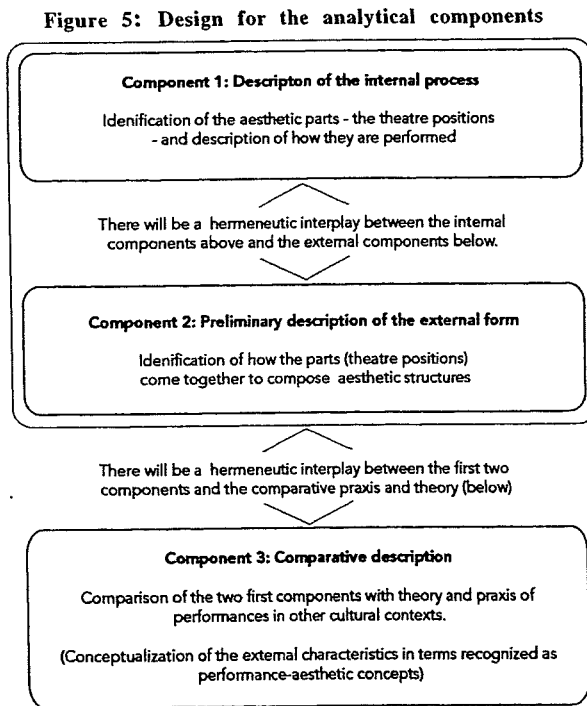
A perspective on the external form

From this perspective I have designed one analytical level that could open for sub-levels:

Analysis level 3:

- Analysis and description of how, in the whole performance process, the compositional structures of the expressive parts *appear* to me as an outside spectator. The plan was to employ comparison with contemporary performances in other cultural contexts.
- Interpretation of the extent to which, and how, the composition of the expressive elements carry and express the meanings of the performance.

In the Figure below, I summarize the analytical components and structure.



In *Component 3*, there is room for the development of unforeseen cultural-comparative analytical tools.

Through this analytical structure, the distinctive cultural-aesthetic profile of the play-drama performance can be drawn, and the meanings that emerge in the aesthetic practice can be interpreted. In the interplay between the internal and external perspectives, the hermeneutical-phenomenological attitude is at work. My proximity to the phenomenon created by the thick description of the players' internal process - description of the players' internal expressive

process - can be counterbalanced by the distance of the external perspective involving the use of comparative tools. In the dialogical field of tension between proximity and distance, insights can arise as to the meanings being explored in the aesthetic practice.

William Corsaro and Jürgen Streeck, two researchers in the sociology of child-culture, maintain that the analysis procedure consists of what they call two main *levels* of analysis - which they characterize as (1) "moving from surface level descriptions of specific features" in the "micro-level interactions" of the performance, to (2) "a comparison of these features" with performances outside the context being studied (Corsaro and Streeck 1986: 26). (Corsaro and Streeck are speaking about comparison with other social play performances and not about *drama* performance, per se.) Their "levels" do correspond to the two analytical perspectives in this study. However, from within the second perspective of this study, the analytical process is open for development of new analytical levels.

One will continually move back and forth between the two perspectives, due to the fact that analysis from one perspective can result in findings that shed light on the analysis from the other perspective. In this way new tools, and additional analytical levels, can be developed.

Details of the analytical levels and their questions

The transcription made from the videotaped play-drama performance is the empirical foundation upon which the analysis of each performance is built.

Level 1:

The entry-level analytical tool is the assignment of theatre/ritual performance positions:

- *Which position is the player in?*

After transcribing the play-drama from the video, the micro-analysis begins with the identification of which positions ("specific features") the players are operating in. (see Figure 3) This assignment is a *starting point* for being able to describe/interpret the performance dynamic and its meanings.

There is either tacit or recognized knowledge among parents, other play-observers, or play-theoreticians that in dramatic playing the children are both "actors", "directors", "scenographers", and "spectators" - what Sutton-Smith calls the performance "quadrologue" (see Chapter One: Sutton-Smith 1979, Mouritsen 1987, Åm 1989). In the drama-cultural perspective of the project I have, in the entry-level categories listed above,

extended this set of basic expressive and communicative categories to include the wide range of symbolic-artistic and supportive functions that can constitute a theatre or ritual performance event.

This selection of categories represents production and performance positions which are commonly present in the creation of theatre or ritual practices. In play-drama it is not expected that the way in which these positions are filled will be identical to the way in which they are filled in theatre or ritual practices. The choice of categories does not represent a specific view of art in regard to theatre or ritual. These are positions around which all types of theatre and ritual could be organized - at differing levels of technological advancement - according to varied performance intentions and values. I am using modern terms because, in the comparative work, I am discussing play-drama in the light of *contemporary* theatre and ritual performance. In ritual, one would not use the terms in this way but, in spite of this, many of the terms denote categories that also can be present in ritual. - I have listed "actor" where, in the case of ritual performance, I would have listed "performer" or "ritual specialist" (i.e. *shaman*) or "participant".

After the assignment of theatre positions, the analytical description can proceed. Level 2 is the first step in the narrative of analytical description.

Level 2:

The tool is open (non-comparative) analytical commentary and description. Rather than comparing with other aesthetic practices, I simply point out aesthetic qualities and describe analytically what I see, without the use of concepts from theatre/ritual other than those at Level 1:

- *How do the players perform in the theatre/ritual positions? What do they do, step by step? What are the aesthetic qualities?*

This work is executed partly by inserting commentary directly into the transcription, and partly by description subsequent to presenting the transcription.

Aesthetic qualities:

Huizinga's concepts about the aesthetic sphere of play provide a preliminary list of aesthetic qualities. Some of them can be applied to separate expressive actions, some to structural aspects of the whole performance, some to both aspects:

- movement, rhythm, change, association, alternation, repetition, ever-recurring patterns, beat and counterbeat, contrast, variation, tension, exaggeration, confusion of proportions, balance, rise and fall, succession, separation, solution, resolution.

We can also list characteristics in Schechner's definition of *playing*, which have a decidedly different flavour than Huizinga's terms. Many of them imply risk:

- off-balancing, loosening, bending, twisting, reconfiguring, transforming, permeating, eruptive/disruptive

The lists suggest aesthetic qualities that relate to composition and its dynamics, energy and direction. It does not address all the specific qualities that are found in the symbolic representations of the diverse artistic media that can constitute a performance, for instance qualities expressed by/in the actor's body and voice, music/sound, pictorial representation/scenographic elements, lighting, etc.. These qualities will be described in the meeting with the specific performance acts being analyzed.

After identifying which position the player is in, I begin to examine the dynamics between the positions in order to discern the aesthetic organization and structures that emerge from their interplay. From this information, I can *begin* to interpret what the actions and dialogue mean within the whole structure of the performance.

In the steady stream and chain of sensory representations, aesthetic structures emerge. To what extent can the overall compositional structures reveal how meanings are being explored? - What meanings seem to emerge when we learn to see and understand this aspect? Through open analytical description, I will *begin* to describe the external "product" and whole forms, as they appear to me. - What are the dynamic relationships among the elements that constitute the whole aesthetic practice? - Does the formal process create characteristic aesthetic patterns ?

Level 3:

The analytical tool used at this level is dramaturgical comparison with contemporary performance practices in other cultural contexts:

- *How does the aesthetic practice in play-drama resemble or differ from the comparative practice?*

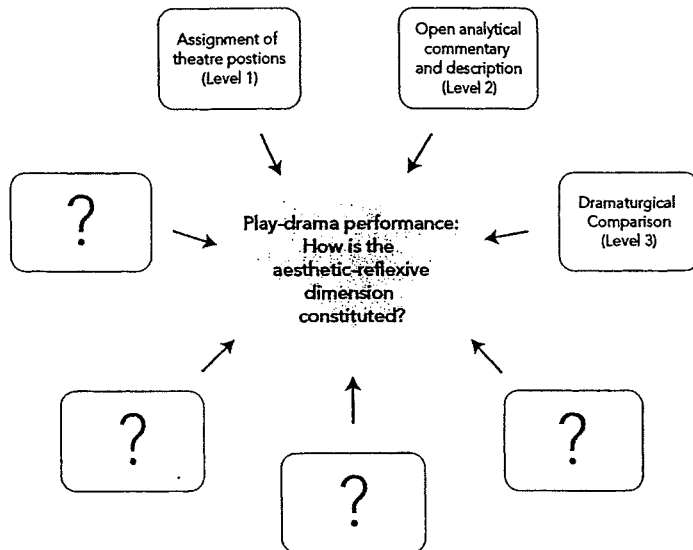
- *What does this information tell us about the distinct aesthetic characteristics of play-drama?*

- *What more does it tell us about the meanings being explored in the play-drama?*

Sub-levels:

Level 3 is planned as a general tool, but sub-levels will be developed in the meeting with the play-performance. I will further develop the perspective on external form with the choice and application of more context-sensitive tools. The comparative source will provide established aesthetic, analytical tools - vocabulary, concepts and theory - for further characterizing the play-drama practice. Analysis at this level will place the performance in a broader cultural perspective, as a member of the Drama Family.

Figure 6: Preliminary plan for methodological tools



Questions about reflexivity:

At all levels I will pose questions about reflexivity:

How, in what mode, would it seem that the children's (body-)minds deal with "ideas" received through the sensory perception that occurs in the acts of the performance?

How do the sensations and perceptions that emerge "turn and direct themselves back upon the mind itself"?

In a consideration of the reflexive value in the play-drama performances, we can compare the project's two perspectives, the internal and the external.

- In regard to the children's internal work with form-making, we would *expect* the reflection of the child to emerge through and in the aesthetic actualization process itself. However, we can also ask: To what extent do the children, spontaneously, "stand back" to reflect objectively and verbally about their representations and perceptions?(vis à vis Gadamer's "aesthetic reflection", Chapter One). What happens at the meta-level of communication in play, behind or alongside of the fiction (see Bateson 1977)?

- In regard to the external level, what meaning-interpretation and reflexive qualities can be discovered by viewing the performance as a whole dramaturgical structure?

Common aesthetic-reflexive characteristics?

For each new drama that is analyzed, new characteristics of what constitutes the aesthetic practice can be discovered. Is this characteristic also found in the next drama? And can it be said to be a common characteristic of the aesthetic dimension in all three dramas? - Findings about aesthetic characteristics in one analysis can inspire the development of a new analytical tool/level for use in subsequent analysis.

There are limits to what can be encompassed in the analyses. In regard to *each* of the categories, in the whole analytical process, there are infinite possibilities for micro-analysis and characterization of aesthetic qualities. Therefore, I attempt to find a balance between "zooming in" on and depicting certain expressive and communicative elements and "a wide angle focus" on the overall, aesthetic-dramaturgical sweep of the performance. However, experts - in, for instance, theatre, literature, musical composition and performance, and choreographic composition and dance - could focus on and expand upon descriptions of their domains and, thereby, enrich our aesthetic understanding of play-drama beyond what I am able to encompass here. What is begun here can generate further research.

The invention of analytical tools as a hermeneutical process

In the next chapter, the presentation of the building of analytical tools from analysis to analysis, will provide a picture of the development of the methodological thinking process. At each level in the analytical process there has been total immersion in one play-drama at a time. This immersion has been followed by immersion in the next analysis. The move to the next analysis creates distance to the previous analysis, allowing time for the mind's subliminal work and the refinement of reflections. In this way insights have accumulated and been reflected back upon the material developed at the previous levels. That is to say that the insights that have emerged

during the later stages of analysis have also enriched the descriptions/interpretations of the earlier analyses.

After initial analysis of the three dramas and the initial design of new context-sensitive tools, I have returned to re-study each drama, travelling mentally back and forth between all three dramas and all levels. This reflects the hermeneutical approach, wherein the parts and the whole are in constant interplay in the mind of the researcher. The research insights have not grown in a straight line, but in a reversible, spiral looping movement. (Picture a prone Figure 8 with movement back and forth between the circles - i.e. play-movement.)

Constructing the cultural text to be interpreted

Transcribing the material, although it reduces the sensory information, fastens some of it to the page, making it possible to work with in detail and to develop an understanding of what is taking place.

Before presenting the transcriptions and analyses, some qualifying comments about the way in which the empirical material is presented are necessary. The unruly quality of the performance is misrepresented in the dissertation's presentation of orderly transcriptions. The production of a transcription demands many, painstaking video viewings. The first, raw manuscript that is produced - in which the actions and dialogue are written down with no attempt to make sense of the material - is a truer representation of the seemingly chaotic form-process involved in creating the drama than the transcription in the main body of the dissertation. Therefore, two versions are included here. The raw, unsystematized transcriptions are found in the *Appendices*. The transcriptions that have been systematized during the analytical process are included in the analytical text.

Which play-drama text is the foundation for the final analysis? The research process has involved my relationship to four texts:

- The primary text was the play-drama performance as it was being actualized. This was ephemeral.
- The secondary text is what is captured on the video film. However, because the camera does not always capture the actions of more than one player at a time, the secondary text is only a partial representation, an editing, of the primary text - the result of what the photographer has focussed upon. This is based on immediate and intuitive interpretative choices. (One could wish for several cameras.)
- The tertiary text is the transcription of the video text into a preliminary manuscript-form - through the process of multiple video viewings, writing down the dialogue and actions without

interpreting which positions the players are in. The transcriptions in the Appendices are the tertiary texts used as the basis for the analysis process.

- The mediated texts, the transcriptions included in the main body of the dissertation, are the result of interpretation of the performer positions. This mediation continued far into the analytical process.

The construction of the mediated text

In order to create transcriptions, repeated viewings of the videotape are necessary. When one comes to the stage of analyzing the transcriptions, questions arise which send one back to the film and the field notes, and so forth - in a continual interplay between writing the description and going back to the source and correcting the transcription. The rough transcription is reworked continually to resemble a lucid, scripted drama, as if it were a manuscript for theatre production. In the assignment of theatre positions to each child's bodily and verbal actions - one has reached an advanced level of interpretation. The deeper the analysis of the drama bores, the better the interpretation of the positions becomes. I will return to this aspect in the next chapter.

Before delving into the density of the analyses in the next chapter, in the next section, I give an overview of the whole analytical procedure.

An Introduction to the Analytical Procedure

As soon as one enters the field, is present in the life that is creating the data, and begins to collect the data, the analysis and interpretation process is in motion. Data analysis and interpretation began simultaneously with the data collection, and continued with the descriptive-interpretive writing about it. The entry-level tools that were pre-planned functioned subliminally. One attempts to see the relationship between the pre-planned categories - the expressive parts - and the whole dynamic of the drama performance, by asking: what each child does, what the meaning of each child's actions is, what they do together, how their explorations/interpretations enter into an interplay, how their actions come together to form a whole drama, what the form says, what the drama says. In reviewing field notes and videotapes and in beginning analytical descriptions, one sorts out and systematizes one's thinking.

Criteria for selection and "representativeness"

In this section I will discuss data reduction and the criteria for and selection of data for analysis.

Reduction of the data

Even after I had reviewed all the play-dramas and developed a systematic overview, I had developed no criteria for selecting material for the final study. However, after reviewing and categorizing all the material at the "entry level" several times, I was drawn back to certain play-dramas. Something about them seized my attention, and I had an intuition that there was something valuable to understand that I had not seen represented in other studies. Many micro-analytic studies of play in the social sciences present rather standard socio-dramatic, social realistic themes and playforms. I was drawn back to the dramas that seemed to represent other qualities. What were these?

Because my problematics have to do with *how* the drama is performed, I have had no mandate to represent a microcosm of play-themes or play-forms. I chose, therefore, to follow my intuition about aesthetic qualities free of such considerations. Much play theory is pre-occupied with children's imitative "reproduction" of daily-life situations in social realistic play, and its contributions to development as rehearsal for adult life (for an opposing view, see Mouritsen 1986 and 1996). This has resulted in studies of social realistic themes and play-styles which confirms theories of reproduction. In his sociological play research William Corsaro has, for this reason, excluded what he calls "fantasy play" (Corsaro 1992). However, in my preliminary analyses, I found it difficult to clearly separate social realistic play from fantasy play. Children could begin by playing "house" with mother, father, child - in a social-realistic daily-day situation. However, fanciful, serious, macabre, and dissonantly humorous actions and themes would suddenly emerge - such as baking babies in the oven and burying them in a basket with lego blocks - without pathos. These eruptions challenged the social realistic situations and created dramatic tension where it otherwise might not exist. They also introduced important themes that are not directly related to the social realistic situation in which they emerged. - Social realistic and fantasy elements become intertwined. Because my goal is to understand how dramatic form is employed in the children's interpretation of a broad spectrum of experiences, I have not excluded any themes or play-styles. The work of the imagination and fantasy is highly important in this research context.

After the first selection process, seven dramas were chosen for micro-analysis from the twenty-three collected, but only three are included in the study. These three have provided the possibility to make full-scale analyses to meet the goals of the study. The original seven

included a wider age-range and thematic range than the three which are presented in the study, as well as both genders.

In retrospect, I see three important factors that created my immediate interest in the dramas included in the study :

- 1) The wish to include one drama that reflects the group's common experience with a theatre performance that was well known for me, in order to study if and how elements from the performance were brought into the play-drama. My prior knowledge gave the opportunity to examine to what extent this knowledge is a methodological advantage in interpreting the meanings in the aesthetic practice. (Analysis 2: *Locked In*)
- 2) Recognition of certain surprisingly familiar conventions or aesthetic patterns from theatre or ritual practices. (Analysis 3: *Capture the Wolf, We Shall!*)
- 3) The *acting* technique, brevity and clarity of one play-drama. It had unusual focus and coherence, was well-filmed and its meanings were readily accessible. This made it attractive as a starting point for applying the first level of analysis. I also took into consideration that in the event of presenting findings for "beginner" audiences, its clarity would be useful. (Analysis 1: *On a Boat at the Beach*)

Methodologically, three performances are considered adequate for realizing the goals of the study. In theatre arts scholarship, the performance is not just an *example* of something. It is not an "average". A performance is complete onto itself. Its aesthetic practice represents a unique case that has special characteristics. Full-scale dramaturgical readings of a few performances can provide more answers about aesthetic practice and process than less indepth analysis of many performances. I take each performance seriously, as performance analysis in theatre studies does. It is the analysis and the findings that are representative - of a unique performance by unique players.

It was not until very late in the process, after I had completed the three indepth analyses represented in Chapter Five, that I began to consider into what over-groupings this material falls in terms of gender, age, and "ensemble"-composition.

Gender, age-range, and ensemble-composition:

- In the three dramas three girls are represented and no boys.
- All three sequences involve two girls playing together, with an age-range of from 3.8 - 5.2 years. None of the younger or older children is represented.
- In all three dramas, the same girl - at the ages 3.8 and 3.9 - performs centrally.
- In two of the dramas the same pair of girls perform.

- Only three of the fourteen children are represented.

Themes:

- The first drama is a quiet "reminiscence enactment" of a stay at the beach or on a boat (five minutes).
- The second is an exploration of the girls' experience of a theatre performance, in which they play with the themes of building an invisible wall and being locked in and escaping (five minutes).
- The third is a ritualistic and carnivalistic fanfare which involves capturing, punishing and attempting to put an end to *The Wolf* (40 minutes).

Priorities and time factors:

A broader representation was not prioritized over the wish to make *full-scale analyses* of the two most complex dramas. Especially the third drama has offered rich material for developing dramaturgical tools to uncover the formal complexity of the performance. The work involved at each level of micro-analysis is time-consuming. Up to four months were needed for the third analysis. The more one works with one performance analysis, the more one feels the need to return to the earlier analyses for review. The following procedures took unexpectedly long periods of time:

- to build up the full transcription of the drama through repetitive reviewing of the video material,
- to identify the theatre positions,
- to write an open (non-comparative) characterization and interpretation,
- to write a comparative characterization based on reading of theatre and ritual theory and analysis of contemporary performance that I had experienced;
- to produce a descriptive-interpretive text that can articulate the findings - in a way that both makes the forms and formal process visible and creates understanding about the meanings that may lie in the children's work with form.

Representing the findings of the two most complex dramas, in an adequate narrative form, has demanded laying the writing away and returning to it after completion of other writing. After each absence and return, new facets of the performance appeared and new questions arose.

Development of context-sensitive analytical tools

Except for the application of the pre-planned entry-level categories (theatre and ritual positions) and analytical description based on these categories, the development of the comparative tools was context-sensitive, growing out of the meeting with the specific play-drama performance

being studied. The process of transcribing the drama and the first discovery of what it contained generated ideas about appropriate theoretical tools. After the analytical work with each drama, I have evaluated to what extent the new tools have been useful in creating an understanding of the practice. - If findings at one level suggest that they might be common aesthetic characteristics of play-drama, these characteristics have informed the choice and development of tools for the analysis of the next drama.

Aesthetic Pre-understandings

The design of the analytical procedure is built around two conjectures, or hypotheses. The first conjecture, as discussed in Chapter Two (under Performance studies), is that the aesthetic practice in play-drama performance might have more of a "family resemblance" to the aesthetic practice of an experimental *workshop-rehearsal process* than to that of a traditional theatre performance event. As discussed in the second chapter, in the workshop-rehearsal, an ensemble explores experience and experiments with formal expression in relation to an "idea", a chosen theme or text for the performance, without refinement of expression to communicate with an outside audience.

The second conjecture is that the reflexive outcomes of the aesthetic practice cannot be understood in traditional cognitive, logico-rational terms but, rather, in terms of the intertwinement of body-mind actions - in terms of how and to what extent the mind-actions reflect the body-actions and the body-actions reflect the mind-actions.

We can approach an understanding of the body-mind fusion in contemporary play-culture in terms of pre-rational thought in pre-literate cultures. "Prerational mentality does not distinguish between speech and action, cognition and emotion... By contrast, a rational mentality is largely a conscious one (with the preconscious mentality becoming incorporated into it as its "unconscious" or "subconscious")" (Sprioso 1989: 8). In pre-literate culture in archaic Greece, knowledge is thought to have been holistic - coming into being in the merging of music-making, dancing, and the recitation of poetry - in which "dominant cultural values and...social cohesion are preserved and transmitted" (Ibid.: 9). I will examine to what extent the same can be said about the phenomenon of self-initiated play-drama in young children's culture. In the study of play-drama as reflexive practice, we are not searching for the conscious, rational mentality. Rather, we are searching for the way in which the performance might incorporate diverse poetic-symbolic media in holistic and prerational reflection - *inside*

the expressive, sensory medium. We do not select a single mode - i.e. spoken thought-actions - as *the* efficacious aesthetic medium.

Both these conjectures will be explored in the reflection over the findings.

Research integrity

In cultural research of this nature, over-interpretation and over-subjectivity are pitfalls to be avoided.

Guarding against over-interpretation of children's culture

There are special issues involved when adults study child-culture and children's worlds. All researchers have been children. In striving for ethical and valid research in child-culture, what is a strength in terms of recognition can also be a *problem* in terms of blindness. We have habitual ways of thinking about children and about playing. Our own memories and experiences with certain aspects of play-culture, as well as being a positive tool, can give certain expectations and make us blind to what we actually are observing (see Alver 1993: 73). I have discussed earlier the fact that we must develop procedures with which to gain distance from our own habitual ways of thinking about children's playing, so that it can be rediscovered. We must make the familiar culture unfamiliar for ourselves, so that we *can* think unhabitually about it.

However, it could be argued that the distancing approach in the use of comparison with aesthetic practices outside the cultural context of playing constitutes an overinterpretation of the data. As a rebuttal, I wish to re-emphasize that the comparison is employed chiefly in order to:

- 1) find an established aesthetic vocabulary which is servicable for characterizing the aesthetic dimension, and
- 2) to highlight the culturo-familial connections between between drama performance in differing cultural contexts.

In order to analyze and understand complex cultural processes it is necessary to think in terms of the application of multiple theories and praxes, rather than one theory and one praxis. The methodological position is chosen because it can provide multiple tools for seeking answers to the problematics, and for profiling what is distinctive in the aesthetic practice in play-drama. The eventual aesthetic concepts from other cultural contexts will

always be used in relation to their original aesthetic and cultural context and function. - Contemporary theatre and ritual are constituted by varying aesthetic practices. As outlined, a specific performance, in a specific cultural context with its specific aesthetic components, contains defined cultural values and intentions. Therefore, in the hermeneutical spiral created by my going back and forth between the aesthetic features in a play-drama performance and the features in other kinds of cultural performance - I must continually ask, "What is the *function* of the aesthetic components and of the whole aesthetic practice - in relation to *its* cultural context and *its* values and intentions?" The aesthetic features, although similar, may have one function in one cultural context, and another function in another cultural context. It is through reasoning about the reasons for the eventual likenesses and differences that I can hope to find what is distinctive about the practice and how the performers seek and/or construct meanings.

In addition to the above reservation, there is also the danger of overinterpreting the data from an adult perspective due to the eventual "audiovisual recording of natural events"(Corsaro and Streeck 1986: 28) and the "overthinking" that can occur in repeated viewings of the material. This danger can be modified by constantly attempting to be aware of the child-cultural context and the wholeness of the performance. We must be careful to avoid the interpretation of data fragments separate from the context of the whole play sequence. We must keep in mind children's life situation and experiences, as *children*. This demands an awareness that the drama is a reflection of the *children's* culture, it is a performance and commentary about *their* culture. It reflects "local knowledge" (Geertz 1983), even as it reflects the broader culture in which it emerges. - A play-drama can also be understood as a fiction about the children's *position vis à vis* adult culture (Mouritsen 1996: 106).

Validity and reliability in the intersubjective approach

In qualitative design there are inbuilt limitations in regard to generalization and replication of findings. Because the analytical procedure *creates itself* in the specific researcher's meeting with the data, it is not certain that one researcher will discover the same qualities as another. This, however, does not mean that the research is unreliable and, thereby, invalid. A critical reader can check her/his insights and questions against mine because the procedure is clearly documented in the narrative structure of the dissertation. I have chosen to report the analytical process in the meeting the data, laying out minutely scripted documentation of the concrete play-dramas, and "publicly" developing the tools and categories and my theoretical understanding in the context of these meetings.

Today, as an argument against the fear of soft criteria for testing the validity of research methods and results implied by intersubjective approaches, the cultural theoretician Stanley Fish sees the authority of an interpretation as resting upon what he calls "interpretative communities" - into which we are socialized, and which protect us against (exaggerated) relativism. Fish states that we open ourselves for the contents of the text in order to *transcend* our own preconceptions and prejudices (Kj rup 1996: 285) - echoes from Husserl and Gadamer. The theoretician Wolfgang Iser speaks of "projective creation" of connections - a *synthesizing understanding* between himself and the text. The reader/interpreter is, therefore, *not* free to create the meaning of the text separated from the intention of the one who has created the text (Ibid.: 284). I must hold my interpretive eagerness in check by awareness that the interpretations will be judged by other members of the interpretive community. They must be convinced by the scholarly discourse.

Descriptions are always selective, never complete. To describe is to enumerate characteristics and everything has infinite characteristics. A description cannot be a copy of what is described, but must simplify, by emphasizing some aspects at the expense of others. I focus on aspects that represent my special goals and perspectives. This *reduction* is a form of structuring the phenomena one is studying (Ibid.: 178, my translation). Because research is a human activity, a description will always contain traces of the describing subject. However, the researcher goes through a continual evaluative process in attempts to represent the cultural expression as clearly and precisely as possible. I attempt to answer the problematics by describing as thoroughly as possible what the children do and how they do it, through what I deem as servicable analytical categories. It is not a complete description, but a description that tries to capture central facets of the aesthetic dimension and its reflexive play.

The Narrative Outcome of the Analytical Procedure

The next chapter represents the analytical process itself. In the analysis and interpretation process, I attempt to display *how* the aesthetic-reflexive dimension is discovered (Corsaro and Streeck 1986: 27). The text focusses to a great extent on my thinking process; but through this, the children's collaborative aesthetic practice will hopefully be captured in the richest possible way. In addition, there will be a concluding chapter which summarizes the findings in the development of new theory.

This is a systematic, "public reasoning" from data to conclusion in which I try to prove myself wrong as often as possible" (Agar 1986: 71), and in which I am concerned with "the scientific

integrity of acknowledging the commitment involved in all understanding" (Gadamer 1960/1996: xvi).

I conclude here with Clifford Geertz' words about characteristics of cultural analysis and ethnographic description:

"...it is interpretive...and the interpreting involved consists in trying to rescue the "said" of such (social) discourse from its perishing occasions and fix it in perusable terms. "(Geertz 1973: 20)

I will try to rescue the "said" of children's aesthetic discourse in play-drama from its perishing occasions, and fix it in perusable terms - in order to make it part of our understanding of cultural-aesthetic actions. The "perusable terms" are terms borrowed from theatre and ritual performance theory.

Chapter Five

Analysis:

At Play in Hermeneutic Spirals

The title of the chapter, "at play in hermeneutic spirals", refers both to the children's interpretive play in their drama performances, and to the researcher's interpretive play in regard to understanding the form-making and meaning-making play in the performances. The chapter is organized in three parts, each one centering around the analysis of one of the performances. The performances are presented in the order of their complexity, such that the analytical tools build in complexity as the analyses progress.

ANALYSIS 1: *ON A BOAT AT THE BEACH*

The analysis of this performance consists solely of the application of the entry-level categories. The performance was chosen because of its brevity (under five minutes), simplicity, and relative visual clarity. The leading performers are Tessa - 3 years and 9 months old, and Lene - 5 years and 1 month old. (Tessa also performs in the two other dramas included in the study.)

Contextual Information

Before turning to the transcription and analysis, I present some background information that places the performance and the performers in perspective.

- In regard to chronology, this performance is filmed at the end the fieldwork period, two days after the drama in the next analysis and six weeks after the drama in the third analysis.
- In terms of *ensemble* relationships, Tessa and Lene have established a kind of performance group with Anders, whom they both have as a favoured play-partner. The collected data includes several performances with one of the girls and Anders. Anders is seven months older than Tessa and eight months younger than Lene. He has been absent for many days so that Tessa and Lene play alone together. There is an age difference of sixteen months between them. In this period, Tessa has also found another fruitful play-partner in Hilde, whom we shall meet with her in the following two analyses. The collected data also includes play-drama among the three girls.
- The play-styles of Tessa and Lene differ. Tessa has enormous physical energy and fantasy which comes into play in her typically rambunctious performances. Lene has a quieter style and usually plays social realistic themes in the home. In *On a Boat at the Beach* we see that Tessa, to a great extent, has adapted to Lene's quietness and to her relatively realistic theme.
- A common experience may be the impulse for this performance. It was filmed a few days after both girls have seen a theatre performance for children in which one of the two main characters has played that he is out on the ocean, on a boat, where he rescues his pet dinosaur

from drowning (see Analysis 2). After the theatre, several of the children, including Tessa, have played themes related to boats, and this performance falls in that category.

- The performance is already established when I come into the room - in that the children have already built the scenography. They have apparently established what the play-space represents and have, perhaps, already begun playing dramatically. Even though it is the end of March, the strong sun streaming through the window may have given the players associations to summer and the beach. - In the dialogue it seems that Lene imagines that she is on a boat, and that Tessa imagines that she is on the beach. Because of this, I have entitled the drama *On a Boat at the Beach*.

- My arrival with the camera does not disturb the players: I sit on the floor at a distance of one meter, directly in front of the playing space. The players seem almost entirely oblivious to my presence, perhaps due to the fact that they are already deeply immersed in the performance before my arrival, as well as the fact that they are, after so many months, perfectly comfortable with my presence.

- In the transcription included here I have already assigned the theatre categories to each child's actions - which are inserted before each child's dialogue and actions - in the attempt to understand which aesthetic function the actions and dialogue fill in the whole performance process. I have, thereby, already reached a partial interpretation of meanings of the actions. These assignments represent findings at Analysis Level 1 and are the result of multiple video viewings and textual interpretations of the secondary and tertiary texts. The resulting transcription, below, is the site at which the final analysis/interpretation of the relationship between form and meanings takes place.

The Assignment of Theatre Positions and Micro-analytical Commentary

The performance: *On a Boat at the Beach*

First, I present the elements of the drama: the outline of the story, the role-figures, the fictive location and time; thereafter, the performers, and thereafter, the mediated transcription with analytical commentary. The commentary is placed in brackets directly below the actions it comments upon.

The elements of the drama

- The story/What happens: Two female persons are on a boat at the beach. There are crabs in the water. The girls swim, sunbathe, put on sunscreen, and eat their lunch. One crab disturbs them intermittently.
- Role-figures/Who: Two women or two girls, and a crab.
- Place/Where: On a boat at the beach?
- Time/When: Summer, at a time of day when the sun is strong.

The performers

Tessa: 3 years and 9 months - A woman/girl
Lene: 5 years and 1 month - A woman/girl
Allan: 6 years and 7 months - A crab?

(See Appendix 1 for the unmediated transcription)

kl. 10.49

When I enter the large common room Tessa and Lene are playing in a lively manner. They have already built an enclosed (set-apart) rectangular play-space, approximately 1 1/2 x 1 yards. At the back of the space are two mattresses lying under a large window, at the front of the space is a "Tripp-trapp" chair¹ and a square pillow beside it. Between the front and back borders of the space lie four square foam-rubber pillows which, when they stand on end, reach up to the girls' waists. - The pillows are formed as chairs - with two, dark blue ones lying flat and two red ones leaning against the mattresses. A long wooden bench closes the space at Lene's end and a Trip-trapp chair closes it at Tessa's end. When the girls face the camera, Lene has taken the place stage right and Tessa, stage left.

Tessa is dressed in a white t-shirt and bright pink tights. Lene is dressed in a long-sleeved white shirt and black and white horizontally striped slacks.

(Line 1) **Tessa/Woman/Singer** : Is standing outside the space. She speaks in a sing-song manner: *Crab, crab, crab.*

(It seems that they have already established a fiction in which crabs are involved.)

Lene/Woman: Is seated in the space.

¹ Wooden chairs, constructed for young children, that have two sitting levels - in a ladder-type construction. The child can climb up onto the lower level and sit on the upper level.

Tessa/Woman: Climbs into it.

(5) **Lene/Woman:** *Uaaaaaahh*, a contented sigh. She pulls Tessa's sweater, which is lying on the floor outside the space, into the space. In a *sing-song voice*: *Here's your sweater.*

Tessa/Woman: *Our sweaters.* She takes her red sweatshirt and picks up Lene's bright yellow sweatshirt. *There.* She lays Lene's down beside Lene. *And there.*

(10) She places her own on the chair to the left of her pillows.

Lene/metafictional: Sits down on her pillow, looks up : *We're in the ocean.*

(When I write the player's name in italics, it indicates metafictional communication.

When Lene says her line, she looks briefly at the camera and is perhaps informing *me*.

Otherwise, she is telling *them* that they are on a boat - i.e., *in the ocean.*)

Lene/Woman?/Scenographer?: She continues to arrange the pillows.

Tessa/Woman: Sits down on her blue pillow, with the red pillow leaning against the mattresses. She leans back and lays her feet on the chair-step in front of her.

(15) **Lene/Woman:** Turns and runs her hand along the rim of the pillow behind her. *I have both oars under my behind.*

(It is difficult to hear what she says.)

10.50:

Tessa/Woman: *Uaaaaah* (loudly, frustratedly). She stands up and arranges the pillows she was sitting on. *This chair is like that.* She sounds determined. *Do you understand, Crab? No, he doesn't understand. Yes, you understand!* She sits (20) down again, lays her arm on the lowest step of the chair to her left and stares contently ahead of her.

(She has crabs in her thoughts. Does she imagine there are crabs in the boat?)

Lene/Woman: Climbs up on the bench to her right. *I sit up on my ---* (unclear) *first.* She lies on her stomach on the bench and arranges a pillow so that it lies straight in relation to the chair in front of it. *And I make it. - Good.*

(She comments on her own actions while she performs them.)

(25) **Tessa/Woman/Singer:** Is watching Lene. When Lene is finished, Tessa lays her head back against the pillow and sings quickly and rhythmically: *Here's my bed - I'm lying here and getting sun.*

(In her role as a person on a boat at the beach, she performs the position of the *dramatist* as she introduces the sunbathing theme. She sings her line, operetta-like.)

Lene/Woman: Sits down again beside Tessa and sighs as if content with the sun: *Ahhhh.*

(She adopts Tessa's action.)

(30) **Tessa/Woman/Singer/Dramatist:** In a loud sing-song voice: *I have to go out and swim!* She stands up and climbs out of the space between the chair in front and the one to her left. (Is this a boat?)

(She sings her line.

She introduces a new action, swimming - a *dramatist* position. I will not repeat the assignation of *dramatist* position, as it is implicit in all of the role dialogue/actions.)

Lene/Woman: Rises, *And I have to swim too.*

(She again follows Tessa's dramatist-idea.)

Tessa/Woman/Singer: Goes out on the floor outside the boat and

(35) sings again: *I have to go out and swim!* She leans forward as if she's diving into the water, slides onto the floor for one split second. *Oh, - a crab, a crab, a crab!* She hurries up on her feet, waving her arms in panic, and climbs into the space beside the bench.

(The crab theme is re-introduced - a dramatic tension.)

Lene/Woman: Is standing up on the bench and hops into the water. She lays (40) herself down on her stomach and moves forward on her elbows in an eel-like movement, while she breathes heavily. She looks pleased.

(The swimming action is mimed thoroughly. Perhaps she can swim and Tessa cannot.)

Tessa/Woman: Has climbed up on the bench.

Lene/Woman: Rises from the water, goes toward Tessa. *No, - why did you come up on my... -*

(I cannot hear what she says, but she has defined the bench as something special. She gives direction to Tessa within the fictional frame.)

Tessa/Woman: Goes back to her "chaise longue", sits down, lays her feet between the chair-steps in front of her, and lays her head back on the pillow.

Lene/Woman/Director: Goes to her chair. *You have to come up there*, - she points to the space between the chairs, *And I have to come up there*, - she points (50) to the stool. She sits down.

(Again she gives direction to Tessa and herself within the fictional frame.)

10.51

Tessa/Woman: Lies back quite low on the pillow and sighs, *Ahhhh*. She mumbles, closes her eyes, turns her head toward Lene, *We can sleep on the beach, we can*.

(She imagines she is on the beach.)

Lene/Woman/Props person/Singer/Dramatist: Takes her sweater, *I have to get (55) some suncream from my backpack*. She lays the "backpack" in her lap, turns it upsidedown so that the bottom is up, sticks her hand into the hole, takes it up again and begins to pat the invisible suncream onto her arms, on her neck, and behind her back at waist-level. She hums, *Lo-lo-lo-la*.

(She transforms the sweater to a backpack prop and introduces the suncream action.

She mimes with abbreviated pats on her body.)

Tessa/Woman: Watches Lene, sits up and looks around. *Where is my backpack?* (60) She sees her sweater - her sack - on the chair to her left and takes it down.

She also turns the sweater upside-down, puts her hand into the opening at the bottom, takes something out, then mimes that she is putting on suncream.

(She imitates Lene's transformation of sweater to backpack.

She mimes in thorough movements so that you can see the cream being rubbed into her stockinged legs and bare arms.

There is a difference in Lene's and Tessa's mime-styles. Lene uses abbreviated motions, as if to demonstrate that she is using cream; while Tessa uses realistically thorough movements, as if she is re-calling and re-experiencing the bodily sensation of the action. She seems to be sensorily immersed in the bodily memory of rubbing in cream.)

Lene/Woman: Stops her humming. *There!* She is temporarily satisfied with her creaming.

(65) **Tessa/Woman/Composer-Singer:** Continues to rub in suncream. She sings, *Sola, sola, sola, sol* ("The sun, the sun, the sun, sun.") She takes the invisible tube of cream with both hands and squirts cream in her face. *Sssssss* (the long sound of the squirting cream). She lays down the tube and rubs the cream heartily onto her face with both hands.

(70) **Lene/Woman/Singer:** *Sola, sola, sola, sol.* She rubs her face with an invisible creamstick and rubs the cream in a circular motion twice, with one hand but without touching her face. *Now I think that I put on suncream. Now I've put the suncream....in my sack.* She folds her sack and lays it down on her left right beside her.

(She adopts Tessa's song.

She comments on her own actions, within the fiction.)

(75) **Tessa/Woman:** Continues to rub in cream.

Allan: *Comes over to them and sits on the bench on Lene's right. Both girls look at him.*

(The morning gathering is supposed to take place at this time, in the very spot where the drama is being played.)

Lene/Woman: *Oh, oh.* She looks startled and alert.

(Her look says "What happens now?" Allan is known to interrupt or dominate the other children's playing.)

Tessa/Woman: Takes her right arm in front of Lene and points toward the water (80) where they have been swimming. *There are crabs in the water.*

(She brings up the crab theme for the third time.)

Lene/Woman: Looks at Allan. She looks very frightened and points her arm in the same direction, with her pointing finger directed down over the far side of the bench. *There are the crabs!* For a split second both girls' arms are pointing in the same direction at the same angle.

(Before Allan's arrival there has been calm, co-operative, reminiscent kind of actualization. Allan's arrival could be a turning point in which a dramatic tension emerges.)

(85) *Allan*: Goes over to the mattresses and lies calmly behind the boat. He sings:
Crabs, crabs, crabs - in the water.

(Another girl has sat down on the mattress but does not get involved.)

Both girls turn around to face Allan behind them.

Tessa: *We're pretending that there are crabs in the water.*

Tessa/Woman: Continues to rub cream into her body.

(90) *Lene*: *We're pretending that out there is the ocean, and that there are crabs out there.*

Allan: *Oh, boy!* (He says it in English) - *pretend!*

(When *he* plays he never comments that he is pretending. He may think their playing is childish.)

Tessa/Woman: Has sat down and is rubbing more cream on her legs and her feet. *I have to put cream on my legs.*

(She doesn't seem interested in pursuing the crab theme, perhaps because Allan doesn't explicitly accept the role assignment. He doesn't *impersonate* a crab.)

10.52

(95) *Lene*: *She has sat down again. What is "Oh boy", dummy?*

(She seems to like it that Allan is there, even though she calls him names, and even though he hasn't yet shown that he is playing in the drama. She is balancing between holding the fiction and negotiating with him outside the fiction.)

Tessa/Woman: *And I put a little cream on my legs, me too.* She crosses her arms over her chest and looks at Lene. *And a little on my forehead too.* She mimes this.

(She is not pre-occupied with Allan and the crab idea, and is remaining inside the suncream fiction. She is very fair-skinned and using suncream thoroughly seems important to her for verissimilitude.)

Lene/Woman: *And my forehead too.* She pats her forehead. *I took cream*

(100) *everywhere*. She crosses her arms over her chest and looks at Tessa.

(We see several times that Lene adopts Tessa's bodily expressions, in an *echo-like pattern*. The performance becomes a physical duet.)

Tessa/Woman: Has been creaming herself and now she looks startled. She holds her hands out in front of her as if they were full of suncream. *Now I have to - Where is my towel? - There*. She pretends to dry her hands on an invisible towel which is lying between her legs. She grabs her backpack. *My (105) sack shouldn't lie here, it should lie there*. She tosses her sweater onto the chair to her left, but holds onto it. *Now I have to take out my bread*. She takes the sack down again and pulls it right up to her face as if looking deep down into a dark space. She mimes that she pulls out the food and arranges the pieces of bread on her lap. It looks as if she is buttering them with her right hand while (110) she holds the bread in her left hand. Then she moves her right hand up to her mouth daintily, takes a small bite and chews. Her cheeks bulge as if her mouth is full of food.

(She introduces two new actions - the towel-wiping and the eating. Again, her sensory memory is detailed and she is thorough in performing the action.)

Lene/Woman: Has sat up on her knees and turns away from the camera. *I have to find my bread now*. When she turns back, she has her sweater on her lap. (115) *There are my cakes. I'm only going to eat my cakes*. She mimes rapidly that she takes something out, lifts her hand to her mouth and chews once, then she lifts the whole sweater to her face as if it were the cake.

(In daily life, Tessa has relatively unhealthy food with her, whereas Lene has healthy food. Also, Tessa eats without "fine" manners and Lene eats daintily. As these role-figures they are trying out the *alternative behaviours*.)

Tessa/Woman: Turns toward Lene and looks concerned while Lene gobbles her cakes. Tessa holds her slice of bread carefully in her right hand. *It's smart to eat (120) a little*. She nods her head slightly, as if giving dietary advice.

(Tessa is chubby and may be told by her family that she shouldn't eat alot. Or else she is imitating an adult who is concerned with her/his own weight.)

Lene/Woman: Places the sweater beside her. *I've eaten up everything*. She pats her sweater. *And I have more candies in my sack*.

10.53

Lene: Continues to pat her sack. She says to herself, *This is the sweater.*

(She comments upon the reality while they are pretending it is something else. - Or else she has transformed it back into being a sweater.)

Tessa/Woman: Is looking at Lene while she continues to eat carefully. She takes (125) the last bite and takes her sack down from the chair (side-table?). She looks into the sack and puts her arm deep into the empty space: *Now I have to take the candies.*

Lene/Woman: *You can't have my candies.*

Tessa/Woman: *I have eaten up all my cakes.* She smacks her lips.

(130) **Lene/Woman:** *I have eaten all my cakes and now I'll drink my cocoa.* She takes her sack onto her lap and sticks her hand into it. When she pulls out her hand she has made a fist. She moves her fist to her mouth, leans her head backwards a little and drinks from an invisible cup. She smacks her lips slightly and stares contently into the air. She moves her arms up and down repeatedly (135) and rhythmically as if tossing something into her mouth. *And now I have to eat up all my candies.*

(Her action of taking the cup out of the sack is not true-to-life-mime but, rather, abbreviated and stylized. She adopts Tessa's lip-smacking action.)

Tessa/Woman/Sound designer: Takes something carefully from her sack and lays it in her lap. She lays the sack on the sidetable. She seems to move an invisible implement rhythmically up and down, between an invisible plate and (140) her mouth. *M-m-m.* She stops the movement. *Chomp, chomp, chomp* (in a raw voice). She rushes the rest of the food undaintily into her mouth with both hands, lies back and groans. She sits up for a second. *Chubby and fat in the stomach.* She lies back again.

(She introduces sound effects. She seems to be conscious of how much she eats.)

Lene/Woman: Makes a facial and body movement that says she's very full. *Me (145) too.*

(Lene is slim and dainty. Although she is a year and four months older than Tessa, she is the same height. Her mother is Japanese and her father is Norwegian. She again adopts Tessa's idea.)

Tessa/Woman: Turns and sits up on her knees in order to rearrange her pillows.

Allan/Crab?: Comes and lies down over the bench to the left of Lene.
He leans over close to Lene.

Lene: *Ooohhhh.* She waves her arms around. *You scared me.* She turns and sits up on her knees and engages Allan.

Lene/Woman: *Are there crabs, or...?*

(150) **Tessa/Woman?/Scenographer?:** She tries to place her pillow, which stands straight up and down, on a slant like Lene's, but doesn't manage. Instead, she begins to rearrange her space. She leans one pillow against the chair in front of her. She shoves the chair forward, takes a pillow from the mattress in back of her and places it where the chair was. This now resembles the space in front of Lene.

(155) She straightens up the sidetable.

(She is not interested in Allan-as-crab.)

Allan/Crab?: Has been lying peacably on the mattress. He is gently trying to take pillows from Lene.

(Although he does not appear to be personifying a crab, he accepts the role of "an intruder" - as if he were a stand-in for a crab. In another play-drama with the oldest children he chooses to play an intruding cat with full symbolic expression.)

Lene/Woman: Stands and tries to hang onto the pillows. She takes her sack and throws it over the crab.

(160) **Allan:** *What?* Laughs and throws her sack out into the water: *Out in crab corner!* He slaps Lene gently on the back.

Lene: *What?* She squats down again. *It's Allan who's done it.* (She says this to someone outside the picture, a teacher.)

Allan: Someone outside the picture hands him the sack. (An adult)

(165) **Lene/Woman:** Stretches out her hand: *Thanks so much. My sack. That's my sack.* She has the sack and lays it on the pillow behind her head, lays her head against it lovingly and leaves it there. She laughs contently.

(She says "thanks so much" in Swedish, perhaps an indication that she is playing someone other than herself; perhaps just playing with language.)

Allan: Throws himself down on the mattress/in the water behind her, lying on his side. He pushes a little with one leg on her head pillow.

(It seems clear here that Allan has not been participating as a crab, but as himself. Lene accepts this bit of reality without it destroying her fiction that he is a crab.)

(170) **Lene/Woman:** Hops up and gently hits his leg with the sack. *You are a dumb crab.* She tries to straighten up the pillow.

Tessa/Woman: Has finished rearranging her space. Now both girls' back-pillows lie perfectly on a slant.

Allan: Continues to kick Lene's back-pillow and tries to take it.

(175) **Lene/Woman:** Stands up and holds onto her pillow but gives up. She throws her sack at the crab again.

Allan: Throws the sack into the ocean again.

Lene/Woman: *I have to save my sack. I have to save my sack.* She climbs out into the water and fetches her sack which she puts in her mouth as she climbs (180) back onto the boat.

10.55

Allen: *What are you going to do - bite your sack?*

(A teacher: Now it's time for the morning gathering here.)

Tessa: Looks up. *Oh, darn it!*

(Another teacher: Yes, it's too bad.)

(The teacher and the children start to move the mattresses out onto the floor for the morning gathering.)

THE END

Open Analytical Description

In order to describe and characterize the aesthetic practice, in the following run-through of the categories, I summarize the analytical commentaries.

How is the aesthetic practice constituted?: How do the children perform the drama? How do they sensorily represent their experience, and how do they perceive and respond to their sensory representations in a way that keeps them sensorily engaged in the performance? How are meanings explored and interpreted in the formal process?

As we have seen from the assignment of categories, some actions are performed *inside* the fiction and *some* outside, and some on the threshold between the two. I organize the comments with these aspects in mind.

Inside the dramatic fiction

In this drama, the *dramatist* and *dramaturg* positions cannot be observed as being executed outside of the dramatic fiction itself. Therefore, they are included as positions inside the dramatic fiction:

- *Dramatist*: Both children contribute equally to the thematic development through their role-figure's dramatic actions and dialogue (*actor*: text production).

- *Dramaturg*: - In regard to how, as *dramatists*, the girls collectively structure the actions, both children introduce new actions in an even distribution. In this way, there is variation on the theme of being at/on the ocean. - First sunbathing, then swimming, then spreading sunscreen, and then eating.

In regard to what expressive means and conventions the children employ to express the actions: they transform objects to represent something they are not outside the play-drama, and they mime actions that otherwise could not be actualized (to be discussed further under "Actor" and "Props person").

In regard to building tension, Tessa brings in the crab theme intermittently and Lene holds it alive in her intermittent interactions with the designated crab, Allan. The crab's presence causes a slight excitement, or tension, but otherwise the scene has a fairly flat, or horizontal, structure. Within each mimed episode, the tension seems to lie in maintaining expressive focus on their own actions and in their contrapuntal communication: point - counterpoint.

Lene attempts to assign a role to a passerby (Allan) in order to actualize the imagined crab, in all probability to create greater dramatic tension through an antagonist, than what the two girls can achieve on their own. She is only partly successful.

- *Narrator*: The children do not narrate or comment upon their drama inside the play frame.

We see that Lene comments upon her actions, but it is not clear whether or not this is outside the dramatic framework, in a *metafictional position*. (lines 11 and 23) In the event that it is outside, her metafictional position would be that of the *spectator*: explaining what she, as performer, is doing.

The discovery of this metafictional aspect of the *spectator* position will be followed up in the next analysis.

- *Actor*:

a. Text production - As discussed above under *Dramatist*, the girls produce a steady stream of dialogue within the fiction. However, much of the dialogue is an *explanation* either about what they are going to do or what they are doing, rather than an enactment in dialogue of the role-figure's attitude. An example in line 27. - Tessa: *Here's my bed - I'm lying here and getting sun*, as well as the whole sunscreen episode. However, in exclamations such as Lene's, "Ahhhh", in line 28, she seems to express the *role-figure's attitude* to relaxing in the sun; as does Tessa in her song: *The sun, the sun, the sun, sun*, in line 66; and in Tessa's *Mmmm*, line 140 and in, *Chubby and fat in the stomach*, line 142 - her reactions after eating dessert. Also, when Tessa asks, *Where is my towel?*, she is expressing - in role - a need that is a logical consequence of her role-figure's action. In line 119, when she tells Lene: *It's smart to eat a little*, she is also expressing her role-figure's attitude to what the other role-figure is doing: *her role-figure has fine manners, whereas her companion needs advice on etiquette.*

b. Vocal expression: When the women/girls explain what they are doing, their expression is rather flat. When they exclaim in role, there is more emotional expression. Tessa has several

temperamental exclamations when she addresses the imaginary crab or is expressing fear of the crabs in the water. Both women, in role, speak several times in sing-song, rhythmical cadences. Tessa sings several times, and Lene follows her lead, which I have indicated by assigning *Composer* and/or *Singer* after their names. Lene has a long episode of humming while she is putting on sunscreen.

c. Bodily expression/mime: The women-figures are not characterized physically in ways that diverge from the girls' own movement patterns in everyday actions. What typifies the drama performance is the use of pantomime in taking invisible objects from the backpacks and in the sunscreen and eating episodes. I have already characterized the differences in their mime styles in the transcription commentary. When Tessa mimes her role-figure's actions, the movements are uncharacteristic for her, more calm and contained than her daily unruliness. She seems to be more sensuously immersed than Lene, and seems to be re-experiencing the actions. Except in the swimming episode where Lene exerts a great deal of energy and seems to re-experience swimming, she has a style that *demonstrates* the action rather than one that suggests she is re-experiencing the action.

d. Blocking (Arrangement of movement and spatial relationships): The way in which the children structure the space produces a spatial intimacy that is common for sunbathing situations. This determines how they relate physically and spatially to each other. They sit very close to each other, the seats touching each other, and there is little leeway for variation of arrangement while inside the space. In the swimming episode, Tessa first uses the space in front of their seats, while Lene goes "deeper out into the water" stageright of the boat.

e. Use of props: The sweaters are transformed to backpacks which have a prominent place in the action. Lene introduces the prop transformation but uses the sweater/imagined backpack more perfunctorily than Tessa. Tessa seems, also here, to vividly recall using her backpack - in the way she represents the removal of objects from it.

Here we can, perhaps, find a clue to their different play styles: Both girls use backpacks daily and have equal experience for recalling their movements in taking things out of them. Therefore, it would seem that the difference in their play styles is related to Tessa's keen observation of sensory experiences, her sensory memory, as well as the satisfaction she derives from representing as credibly as possible her kinesthetic experience. Whereas Lene seems content to recall the surface experience and to demonstrate the actions without immersing herself in kinesthetic/sensory re-experiencing. The aspect of play styles may be age-related, but appears here to be related to personality. Shotwell, Wolf and Gardner (1973) support the

theory that children have differing play styles which they retain throughout their play development. I will return to this question after further analytical study.

The *actor* position in this drama incorporates the positions of *dramatist*, *dramaturg*, and *director*. That is, it is from *within* the performed actions and dialogue that the dramatic story is developed, that the dramaturgic structure emerges, and that the *mise-en-scène* is developed. The way in which Lene and Tessa perform in the *actor* position is a central constituent in the aesthetic practice. I expand upon this point in the summary below.

- *Extra/Walk-on actor*: In her first line of dialogue Tessa is talking about crabs and imagines crabs intermittently. When Allan enters their play-space *by chance*, Tessa immediately tells him there are crabs in the water. He is not engaged in their drama but spectates and comments upon their explanations about what they are playing. It is not until after a couple of minutes of eating that Lene, after Allan makes contact for the second time, seems to suggest that he is a crab, - *Are there crabs, or...?* (line 148). In line 170, however, she says to him: *You are a dumb crab*, directly assigning him the role, a clear indication that she has thought of him in this light and wishes him to take that role. Allan in no way tries to personify a crab, but lies on the mattress (the water?) and gently "intrudes" - a compromise to please her, one could think. We could call him a half-hearted spectator-participant, outside the realm of the dramatic fiction.

- *Choreographer/dancer*: There is not a central choreographic component.

- *Composer/musician*: Many of their lines are said in a sing-song manner. Lene hums her own melody, and Tessa sings a few lines as well as singing about the sun - which Lene imitates. (see *Vocal expression* above) This could be thought of as an aesthetic expression for well-being, or as the desire to represent dialogue in another form than everyday speech.

- *Ensemble interplay*: The first thing that struck me is how sensitive the ensemble interplay is between the two players. Their actions build on each other in a musical way, with duo-like dynamics. - One player performs an action, like a line of a melody, which the other one picks up and develops into a new melodic line, or drops - moving to another melodic line, and so forth. Under *Spectator*, below, I comment on how observant they are of each other. They weave the performance together into a smooth, musical score.

Inside or outside the dramatic fiction?

- *Spectator*: The girls are clearly very observant of what the other is doing. In improvised performance the intertwinement of the performing and spectating positions is a necessity. It is this aspect that keeps the performance so alive. Neither of the girls is a passive spectator. They rarely look directly at each other, but seem to pick up and build on the smallest nuances out of the corner of their eyes, while they are looking straight ahead. (see *Ensemble interplay* above) In this case, the *spectator* position remains within the fictional frame; as spectators, the players do not comment on the fiction from outside the fictional frame.

Outside the dramatic fiction

- *Director*: We find only one instance of explicit direction, in line 48, when Lene tells Tessa not to climb on her special object, the bench. (It is unfortunate that it is impossible to understand what Lene calls this object.) There is no need for direction because both girls are so attentive to, and in tune with, what the other is creating that the actions flow into one another. (see *Ensemble interplay*) They give direction to the drama through dialogue and actions *within* the fiction. Therefore, except for line 48, this position could be listed together with *dramatist* and *dramaturg* as being executed inside the fictional frame.

- *Scenographer* : They have built the set before I arrive but continue to rearrange it. Especially Tessa is occupied with arranging her pillows and the chair in front of her, in order to improve the set. Whether or not this has to do with representing an inner image or with making herself (in reality) more comfortable is unclear. Lene has several comments in which she tells what she is imagining - that they are on the ocean and surrounded by water. Lene has assigned a special identity to the bench, and Tessa makes frequent use of her "side-table". The *scenographer* position is a central constituent in the aesthetic practice which I discuss further in the summary below.

- *Props person* : Lene manufactures the backpack in the form of her sweater, and the backpacks become central to the action. Otherwise, they use imaginary props through mime - Lene suggesting the suncream, Tessa, the food.

- *Costume designer/dresser*: Dressing/undressing for the situation has not been an important aesthetic component.

- *Make-up artist*: This has not been a component.

- *Light designer/technician*: It has occurred to me that one of the girls may have gotten the idea for being at the beach because of the strong sun streaming into the room. They have placed themselves in relation to the sun, with their backs to the window. Several times when Tessa stands up and turns, it strikes her directly in the face. We could, perhaps, say that nature has both provided the impulse for thematic choice and, thereafter, the appropriate atmospheric lighting.

- *Sound designer/producer*: In line 67 Tessa makes the sound effect for squirting sunscreen: Sssssss; and in line 140, the sound effect for eating: *Chomp, chomp, chomp*.

- *Stagehand*: They are both stagehands to the extent that they have constructed the set, and that they adjust the placement of the furniture in their scenographic perfectionism.

Summary and Reflection

Because the drama is so thematically and formally straightforward, this has been a relatively uncomplicated analysis. Through description within the theatre positions, a picture is drawn of what constitutes the aesthetic dimension in the performance. The use of the positions by themselves functions well in this task.

The children's aesthetic practice is constituted by performance in fourteen of the twenty-two positions which we find in a theatre production. Which categories pre-dominate? The drama is produced and performed predominantly within the *actor* and *scenographer* positions. The physical space, real and imagined, is important as a framework for the dramatic actions, and the thematic substance of the drama is developed (*dramatist/dramaturg* positions) primarily through the *actor* function, with little meta-communication *about* production - in terms of external voices from a *dramatist-dramaturg* or *director* standpoint. *How* the girls "act", how they express the action, is the central aesthetic constituent. It is here that their sensory representations and their perceptions of these representations keep them sensorily immersed in the performance and in the reminiscence of earlier sensory experience.

The experience can said to become clarified, becoming Experience. The players demonstrate sensory knowing, *cognitio sensitiva*, about the beach/boat experience they are interpreting and they are sensorily immersed in their own and each others' sensory representations.

The findings about the aesthetic dimension do not seem remarkable in the written description, but the aesthetic qualities of the acting and the focus in the ensemble collaboration is beyond what one would expect, especially from a child under four years of age. What is perhaps impossible to communicate through the transcription and my interpretive words is what Schechner designates as the "intensity of performance", in the players' concentrated focus and expression in the mimed sequences - in which they are, sensorily, totally immersed.

- *Acting*: The aspect of expressing the situational actions, rather than a role-figure's stereotypical traits, is paramount in their aesthetic enjoyment, especially in the mimed episodes. How can we characterize the *kind* of acting this is? The girls are not representing "psychological characters" or "stereotypical characters". They are perhaps actualizing *themselves*. Tessa seems to have a vivid memory of being at the beach and her suggestions and enactment details are witness to this. One could say that her actions are expressed in concretely illustrative mime - we *see* her in the sun, we see what she is actualizing, and feel the atmosphere. Lene's mime form is more stylized and abstract. She demonstrates actions rather mechanically, except when she is swimming (see "Use of props"). Although at this level of analysis I have not chosen to execute a comparison to acting styles in the theatre, I have associated to Brecht's acting theory (and epistemological values) - his call for demonstration rather than naturalistic acting as a way of creating emotional distance in the audience (Brecht 1964/1978). Rather than a hot or passionate aesthetic exploration of an acute dramatic present, Lene's style appears to be a cool, aesthetic reminiscence and gaze at the past. Whereas, Tessa activates a presence rather than a gaze.

- *Conventions*: Mimed action accompanied by explanatory dialogue is the predominant acting convention in the performance and it is this form of sensory representation that keeps the children sensorily engaged. The play movement finds its direction in the movement of the mime, and the movement from one mimed episode to the other. Once this convention is established, the girls seek several actions to keep the mime convention in play.

- *Dramaturgy*: We could call the performance a "reminiscence play" in which the girls are recalling and sharing experiences in a horizontal structure. The beach-boat-theme is not, in Huizinga's words, tension-producing in itself. The players link several mimed episodes together in a chain which has no decisive dramatic high points or "points of no return". Only in the intermittent episodes in which crabs make their *entré* do a few, fleeting tension-points emerge. However, these tension points do not direct the movement of the drama, they simply evaporate. Lene seems to have a greater need for these high points, whereas Tessa seems more immersed in the *being* of sensory experience.

The script of "a day at the beach" is proscribed by actions that are traditionally performed at the beach. When transposed to the performance, it is composed and ritualized through the filters of their own sensory experiences.

- *The relationship between being inside and outside the dramatic action:*

Although the transcription looks like a manuscript for theatre production, some of the action and dialogue that emerge are not expressed inside the dramatic fiction. - They have to do with reiterating what has been enacted or explaining what is being enacted.

The assignment of theatre positions to each child is my interpretation of *how* the performance in the theatre positions contribute to the aesthetic practice. A study of these assignments can also map how much of the action and dialogue is *inside* the fiction and how much is *outside* the fiction - a consequence of spectator-evaluation, planning, producing or commenting on the performance. Tessa and Lene have very little communication outside the fictional frame and give each other little direction within the fictional frame. They are highly tuned in to each other and cooperative. They share equally in the development of the aesthetic practice. We do not see a clear separation between what Mouritsen calls the "director" and the "actor" (1987 and 1996: 106-107) and what Åm calls the "director plane" and the "roleplay plane" (Åm 1989: 42). The "hidden structure of play" (Ibid.) created by the two planes, will be examined further in the subsequent analyses.

The Value of the Categories: Reading Between the Lines

The theatre categories have provided an aesthetic vocabulary for making visible which positions the players are performing in as well as for interpreting the thematic and aesthetic content of the performance. What have the categories told us about the reflexive value of the formal process? In the analysis process the question has arisen as to whether or not an additional value of understanding what position the player is in lies in being able to read what is taking place "between the lines". - What is occurring *mentally* between the actions executed in the performance? Here, we can return to Victor Turner's social anthropological theory about the liminal, "in-between" state of consciousness in ritual performance. Participants in ritual are immersed in expressive-symbolic elements and structure that are pre-designed and performed for them; whereas in play-drama the players are actively choosing symbolic elements, and the structures emerge in the the spontaneous play movement which activates pre-texts. In spite of this difference, we can attempt to read what is taking place in the players' minds *between* being

immersed in the reality of enacting the fiction and in the reality of producing the fiction - of making and carrying out decisions either about what should happen next or about how an imagined action should be given expressive form.

Because the thematic simplicity and the ensemble interplay in *On a Boat* makes the movement of the drama so fluid and unproblematic, we don't see clearly the in-between state. It is a split-second occurrence in the minds of the players which is not made explicit in the rapid development of their actions. However, in the analysis of the next, more complex, drama I will examine more thoroughly the spaces between the actions - in search of the reflective and reflexive state of mind.

ANALYSIS 2: *LOCKED IN*

Introduction

As noted earlier, the order in which I analyze the three dramas does not correspond to the chronological order in which they were performed. Rather, I have chosen to present them in the order of their complexity, to correspond to the increasing complexity of the analytical tools.

In Analysis 1, we saw that the performance of *On a Boat at the Beach* has a simplicity and straightforwardness in its theme and structure. As discovered through the application of the theatre positions, what characterizes the performance is the way in which the drama is developed in the *actor-dramatist-dramaturg* constellation, the way in which the players "act" their role-positions, and the strong underlying current of performer - spectator connection. As motive powers in developing the drama, the other theatre positions do not hold the same force. In contrast to the process in *On a Boat*, in viewing the drama *Locked In* one cannot immediately grasp which theatre positions the players are filling, what role-positions they are taking, what the sequence of dramatic actions is, nor what themes these actions express. The players fill more of the theatre positions, and the performance has a more complex structure than *On a Boat*. As a consequence, an interpretation of the drama has demanded more comprehensive analytical tools.

Below, I begin with analysis at Levels 1 and 2 and progress to Level 3, comparative analysis, developing sub-levels as they are called for.

Contextual background and overview of the play-drama

In the research, I wished to do one set of analyses after the children had had an out-of-the-ordinary common experience into which I had insight. In this way I hoped to grasp to what extent and *how* they treat a *specific* experience in their aesthetic practice - how they play with the meanings of this experience in dramatic form. The data being analyzed, then, is a play sequence filmed four days after the children have seen a theatre performance, *The Circle*¹. I have participated in the theatre production as co-dramatist, dramaturg and, in the early phase of rehearsal, as director. This production experience has given me insight into the formal-

¹ *The Circle* is produced in Oslo by Arken Theatre, consisting of Bruna Molin Bruce and Torgeir Alvestad.

thematic content which can help me to understand whether or not and, eventually, *how* the children's playing actualizes some part of their theatre experience.

During the two weeks after the children had experienced the performance for the second time², I filmed the group's playing. *What* do they play, and *how* do they play it? *How* do they sensorily represent their experience from the theatre? What elements from the theatre are they playing with in their own drama performance? - Of all the filmed material in which I have identified either thematic or formal elements from the theatre, I have selected one drama because of its transformative nature. This is a five-minute drama performed by two girls, Tessa and Hilde, 3 years and 9 months and 5 years and 2 months of age respectively.

- In regard to chronology, the filming of Tessa and Hilde took place approximately five months into the fieldwork - two days *before* Tessa and Lene play *On a Boat at the Beach* (Analysis One). I do not have an overview over how much Tessa and Hilde have played together, but three weeks earlier I filmed two of their dramas, one of these also including Lene. The other drama with Tessa and Hilde alone is analysed in the last analysis: *Capture the Wolf, We Shall!* (Analysis 3)

- Hilde's aesthetic practice is evolving rapidly in this period: She is a socially shy child. In the material I have filmed earlier, where she is playing with the oldest children - a group of five boys and girls ranging from 5 -7 years, she appears reserved and unexpressive. However, in the two weeks before and after the theatre performance, she has begun to play with Lene and Tessa and here she shows an increasing ability to take the aesthetic lead and to express her own themes.

Because of the ordering of the analyses, we will see Hilde's ensemble development in its reverse order. - In *Locked In*, immediately below, she has come further in her performance skills than she has in the drama in the third analysis, *Capture the Wolf, We Shall!* - in which Tessa dominates the performance in many of the theatre positions. In *Locked In* she holds her own.

- In their forplay, Tessa and Hilde play for twenty-three minutes before the drama which is documented in the transcription below crystallizes: First they play with a large crate³ which is

² The children had seen the performance approximately seven months earlier, before my field study. I filmed the children while they watched the performance the second time, but am not using this material here.

³ The crate is a smaller version of the crate used in *The Circle*. In the rehearsal process, there were originally two sturdy wooden crates with ladders built into the long sides. However, the smaller crate was eliminated for spatial reasons. After the children have seen *The Circle* I have placed the crate in the kindergarten to see if and

lying on its side with its open side up. They ask me to lay a blanket over it so that they can have "complete darkness" (*Light design*). Another adult covers the crate, which the children pretend is a boat. They then play a sequence that very loosely recycles a few thematic and formal elements from *The Circle*, but which does not cohere in an aesthetically satisfying way for them. The play changes direction after they have transformed the crate/boat to a witch's cottage.

I have called the five-minute drama *Locked In* because Hilde builds an invisible wall behind which Tessa is "built in" - in her witch's cottage. She is locked in and escapes several times. From what do these actions derive, and what do they mean to the children? The analysis provides the foundation for some qualified guesses.

The experience being interpreted

The performance *The Circle* is about two persons, a male and a female. They each discover a garden wall, and behind it a garden, which is where they meet. The garden inspires them to play, but their fictional roles and actions come into conflict. At this point the garden gate magically locks them in, and they are forced to weave their themes together into a common drama. The drama contains many conflicts and there are several emotional episodes of being locked in and becoming free. (See Appendix 2 for excerpts of the performance that I interpret as having bearing on the children's play-themes and play-forms)

The stage is bare except for a large crate and some hats and pieces of material that are used as costumes and scenographic elements. The garden wall and gate are made visible for the audience at the beginning of the piece, by the use of classical mime.

The performance event has two fictional layers that reflect one another - a fiction and a fiction within the fiction:

- 1) On the first layer of the fiction, we meet two role-figures : *Bruna and Torgeir* (Role-figures I). (We also meet Torgeir's small plastic friend, *Dino*, a dinosaur, but he is a passive partner.) They begin to play:
- 2) On the second layer of the fiction, we see Role-figures I transform to Role-figures II (*Witch-Bruna and Sea-Captain-Torgeir*) and, later, to Role-figures III (*King Torgeir and Queen Brunna*).

how the children use it in their play-drama. It definitely serves as an aesthetic reminder of *The Circle* and, as such, is used as a kick-off point for six play-drama episodes which I filmed during the two-week period following the theatre event. These will be explored in post-dissertation research. See Guss 1994.

Throughout the rest of the performance the actors switch back and forth between the first and second layers of the fiction.

The structure and dynamics of the performance are modelled on what we understood at the time about children's ways of constructing and enacting dramatic playing. Adult and child audience members who are familiar with the dynamics of dramatic playing will recognize the transformation from the first layer of fiction to the second layer of fiction as a parallel to what takes place in dramatic playing: the creation of a fictive space and moving from being oneself to being a role-figure, inventing underway what one needs to enact the drama.

The way in which the actors invent the fictional universe on the second level, the dramatic playing level, can have served as a model for the children's subsequent dramatic play-technique.

What do the children do with their experience of the wrathful Witch and the masterful Sea-captain, and being locked-in behind a mimed garden wall - and escaping? To help the reader navigate in the transcription of the play-drama below, I first summarize (my interpretation of) the children's actions. I return to this in greater detail in the analytical description and interpretation.

Synopsis of the play-drama

The synopsis represents my final interpretation of the story line of the dramatic actions:

Tessa is a Witch-mother. Hilde is a Witch-captor who locks the Witch into her cottage behind a wall. The Witch escapes and captures her Captor, placing her in another house. She returns to her own cottage to sleep. The Captor returns to the Witch's cottage while the Witch sleeps. This time the Captor says she is building an *invisible* brick wall (which is visible) which the Witch (supposedly) does not know is there. The Witch does not escape this time, but the (invisible) wall falls down. When the Captor returns, she rebuilds the invisible wall. But this time the Witch, after enduring her incarceration for a short time, becomes so angry that she knocks down the invisible wall and escapes forever.

In the play-drama there are two levels of awareness: there is a fictional level - the dramatic action; and a meta-fictional level - the players' "real-life" comments about their playing at the fictional level.

Below I present the transcription which includes the assignment of theatre positions at Level 1 and micro-analytical commentary at Level 2.

The Assignment of Theatre Positions and Micro-analytical Commentary

In the transcription, I have already interpreted which theatre positions the children are filling and which role-figures they are playing. The placement of these interpretations beside the children's names represents a large step into the interpretive process. In the analytical commentary which is interpolated in the transcription, I am making general assessments about the aesthetic practice as well as pointing to its reflective value. I summarize and reflect over these in the analytical description following the micro-analysis of the transcription.

The performance: *Locked In*

The basic elements of the drama:

- Story/What happens: A Witch-captor locks a Witch into her cottage several times, behind both a visible wall and an invisible wall, but the witch always manages to escape.
- Role-figures/Who: A witch and a witch-captor
- Place/Where: At the witch's cottage and surrounding area, including the captor's cottage.
- Time/When: Undefined - Now

The performers:

Tessa: 3 years and 9 months - Witch

Hilde: 5 years and 2 months - Witch-captor

The girls have been playing at one end of the large common room of their unit for over twenty minutes. For a minute they have been running around on the mattresses that lie under the windows. They laugh a lot. A large wooden crate (from *The Circle*) lies on the floor and a few large rectangular foam rubber pillows in various dark colours stand on end in the same area. The players stop running. (They are playing in the same space as Tessa and Lene did in *On a Boat*.)

(For the unmediated transcription, see Appendix 3.)

(Line 1) **Tessa and Hilde/Scenographers:** Raise the crate up into an upright position.

Tessa/Scenographer: Stands in front of the crate and pushes away pillows that are in her way.

Hilde/Scenographer: *Take away the rope.*

(5) **Tessa/Stagehand:** Takes away the rope that is lying under the crate.

Hilde: ^{3a} Begins to climb up the rungs on the side of the crate. *I can be up here and you can be down there.*

(This *could* also be a Director's suggestion, illustrating the difficulty in assigning "mental positions" to their actions. As a Director's statement, it relates to the physical starting point, the blocking for the drama, without further plans about what the dramatic action will be.)

Tessa/Witch: *Yes, this is my witch's cottage.*

Tessa goes inside the crate which has its opening on the side turned away from (10) the camera.

(As it stands now it is almost as tall as the girls.)

Hilde/"Torgeir"?: Sits with crossed legs on top of the crate. *Hallo!*

(This is a physical position the role-figure, Torgeir, felt safe in.)

Tessa/Witch: She stands inside the crate. *My witch's cottage.*

She comes out of the cottage. With a witch-like voice: *Ha, ha, ha, ha.* She (15) looks up at Hilde.

Hilde/Witch?: Leans slightly toward Tessa. *Hee, hee, hee* - with playful mimicry and a witch-like vocal quality.

Tessa/Witch/Casting director: *You are my witch-child.*

Hilde: *No I'm not.*

^{3a} When I set the names in italics, I interpret these as *meta-fictional positions*, self-referential positions which seem to show the players' level of consciousness outside the dramatic action. I return to this aspect below and dwell upon it in Analysis 3.

(20) **Hilde/"Torgeir"**? She turns on her axis in the sitting position - in a full circle.

(This resembles an action in *The Circle* when Torgeir feels unsafe at such a great height.)

Tessa?/Director?: *Come down.* She stands with a knee on the lowest rung of the crate.

Hilde?/or "Torgeir"?: *But how should I get down?*

(Is this a *Torgeir*- question? She knows how to get down, but *he* was afraid of heights and afraid to hop.)

Here - okay. She looks down at the ladder.

(It seems that she is playing Torgeir's role-position.)

(25) **Tessa/Witch**: Goes back to the cottage entrance.

Tessa/Dramatist: *Now you built me locked in.*

Hilde/Co-dramatist: *Yes, but then....*She gets ready to climb down.

Tessa/Dramatist: *But then I tip it over.*

(When I first interpreted this statement I thought she said it as a meta-commentary outside the fiction, reassuring herself that she could escape. Because of later statements (see lines 38 and 90) I have come to believe that this is a Dramatist's conception for the plot development.)

Hilde: *Don't tip it over now!*

(30)**Tessa**: *No.*

Hilde: *Now I'm standing on top.* She turns and climbs down.

Tessa/Witch-mama: Is inside the cottage: *...because then mama came. I... eat...*

(She has a monologue which is difficult to hear, but she is in a pretend world talking to an imagined child - her witch-child?)

(35) **Hilde/Torgeir?/Witch-captor**: Stands in front of the opening to the cottage. She takes a large pillow and places it with its long side up in front of the entrance. *Now I locked you in.*

(N.B. - The Nordic use of the past tense in pretend playing.

- Does she imagine that the pillows are bricks?)

Tessa/Witch?: *It doesn't matter - because I can just tip it over.*

(Is it as Witch that she has the power to turn it over? - Or is she speaking as herself and as Dramatist?)

Hilde/Witch-captor: Takes a pillow and sets it on top of the first one.

(40)**Hilde:** *No, you couldn't tip it over.*

(Is she inside the fiction, talking to the witch? Here is another point of indeterminacy.)

Hilde/Director/Scenographer: *This was a pretend wall which I put there.*

Hilde/Witch-captor: She presses the second pillow down hard and both pillows fall over.

Hilde/Witch-captor: *I locked you in because I....*

(45) She builds up the pillows once more.

(Lines 39 - 45: She switches back and forth between positions, in the fiction and outside the fiction. The statements are outside the fiction, the actions are inside, with the exception of line 44. This pattern is often repeated below.)

Tessa/Dramatist/Director: *I'm going to come out afterwards.*

(Here she is planning a future action, giving herself an alternative option to being locked in, and creating a point of tension as to when she will choose to come out.)

Hilde/Dramatist: *Now, you slept - in pretend; now you slept - in pretend.*

Hilde/Witch-captor: She goes around to the other side of the crate.

Tessa/Witch/Co-Dramatist: *I'm sleeping.*

(She says "I" as the witch, but a sleeping witch couldn't talk, so I interpret the statement as agreement with Hilde's Dramatist suggestion above. Here is a point of indeterminacy as to which level of consciousness she is operating on: within the dramatic frame or outside the dramatic frame.)

(50) **Hilde/Witch-captor:** Finds one more pillow which she sets on top of the others. The wall is now higher than the cottage.

Hilde/Dramatist: *And now you woke up when I had run away.*

Hilde/Witch-captor: She runs away from the cottage.

(55) **Tessa/Witch:** Pushes away the wall so that it tumbles over. She comes out carefully, purrs a little and looks for Hilde/Witch-captor.

Hilde/Witch-captor: Comes back and is very close to Tessa/Witch before she runs away again.

Hilde/Dramatist: *Then you wanted to capture me, but you didn't manage.*

(60) **Tessa:** Runs in front of Hilde/Witch-captor - toward the entrance to the adjacent play room, stopping at the threshold.

(*Tessa runs in front of Hilde even though she is supposed to capture Hilde-Witch-captor. They are planning.*)

Hilde/Dramatist: *When you captured me, I managed to escape again.*

Hilde/Witch-captor: Is running, and continues into the other room, where there is a playhouse built up behind the wall of a puppet theatre.

(65) **Tessa:** Waits at the threshold until Hilde/Witch-captor has gone into the other room.

Tessa/Witch: Enters the room where the Witch-captor has run. Standing behind Hilde, she takes her around the waist.

Hilde: Laughs.

(70) **Tessa:** *We're only playing, Hilde.*

Tessa/Witch: Drags the Witch-captor backwards into the house, and places her in a sitting position on the floor.

Tessa: *We're playing.* She smiles while she looks at the camera.

(*She seems to be reassuring me that it's not a real conflict.*)

(75) **Hilde/Dramatist:** *Now it's night-time, so you went back to sleep.*

(*She seems to use sleep-action as a pause for deliberation - a "time-out" ploy.*)

Tessa/Witch: Closes the door to the "prison", and returns to her own cottage.

Hilde/Witch-captor: Escapes from capture through the window of the house (puppet stage) and runs lightly over to the witch's cottage.

Hilde/Dramatist: *And you were sleeping and I built you locked in again.*

(80) **Hilde/Witch-captor:** She takes a pillow and places it in front of the opening.

Hilde/Dramatist: *And I built you in with an invisible brick wall.*

(My emphasis)

Hilde/Witch-captor: She takes away the pillow again, and shoves away all the other pillows lying in front of the opening.

Hilde: *And then....* (She is interrupted by Tessa)

(85) **Tessa/Director:** *Then you built here and here and here.* She points all around in front of the cottage.

(When "Bruna" mimed the garden wall into existence, the placement of her hands indicated that the wall was "here and here and here".)

Hilde/Dramatist: *And everywhere, and you never came out.* She gets up and swings her arms around to illustrate where she is going to build.

(90) **Tessa/Spectator:** *Yeah, that was smart.*

(She seems to be supporting the idea that she'll never come out, even though, as Dramatist, she has already planned that she will come out. She is supporting a dramatic knot - a tension between herself as protagonist and Hilde as antagonist, also a Dramatist-dramaturg decision.)

Hilde/Witch-captor: Runs once around the cottage during the next sentence, which she finishes in front of the opening,

Hilde/Dramatist: *And it is invisible, and you thought I hadn't done it, because it was invisible.*

(Here she is running as the Witch-captor and speaking simultaneously as the Dramatist.)

(95) **Hilde/Witch-captor:** Runs away again, comes back, tiptoes behind the cottage, to the front of the entrance, but then disappears (from camera view) again.

Tessa/Witch: Sits very quietly inside the cottage, and through the ladder-rungs we can see a sprig of red hair sticking up as she rises.

Tessa: Now she turns slowly and steals out the entrance, peeks out (100) around the side in the direction where her captor has run, turns and steals in again.

Tessa/Witch: She sits down and puts her face in her hands.

(It seems clear that she is unsure whether or not the witch should try to escape. There is great tension for her here.)

Hilde/Witch-captor: Returns to the witch's cottage.

Hilde/Dramatist/Dramaturg: *You didn't come out yet.*

(105) **Hilde/Captor:** She circles around the cottage once.

(There is tension here also.)

Tessa/Dramatist: *You had to build.*

Hilde/Co-dramatist: *Because I had to build. Because I had glued...* She is standing in front of the entrance.

Tessa/Director-dramaturg: *Okay, then you have to build with all the (110) pillows.*

(She wants the invisible wall to be visible to her.)

Hilde/Dramatist: *And then the wall was invisible, and then you could never come out.*

Hilde/Captor: She sits down and begins to build the pillows up in front of the entrance. *You never escaped from there.*

(Here it is of great dramatic importance that the witch should never come out.)

(115) **Tessa:** *Of course I did, I could just tip it over.*

(I interpret this as outside the fiction in argument with Hilde. Tessa says "did" in the past tense. She also says "could", not "can" or "shall". In contrast to this, in line 28, she has said, "But I knock it down", the future tense indicating that she plans to do so in a future dramatic action.)

Hilde: *No!*

Tessa: *Of course I could.*

Hilde/Dramatist: *You slept. You slept....you slept, in pretend.*

(Hilde ends the argument by changing the subject, by suggesting "sleep" as the next action. That way there will be an opening in which they can reconsider their actions. She has also used the "sleep" device after being captured, line 75, a device that avoids immediate conflict.)

Hilde/Captor: She has now closed up the entrance. As she leaves, the visible invisible wall tumbles down. She circles the cottage once.

(It doesn't matter to her that the wall has tumbled down because they have agreed that it is invisible.)

(120) **Tessa/Witch:** Kicks the bricks/pillows, rises and swats them away with a hand. She escapes, stands at the side of the cottage and looks around with an angry expression.

Hilde/Captor: Comes back laughing, then runs away, across the room.

Tessa/Witch: Runs after her.

(125) They stop in front of a large cupboard, turn around and stop up beside a table. They look toward the cottage.

Tessa/Dramatist: *We'll be foxes who live in that cottage over there.*

(Her decision to make a final escape has released the tension of the drama. The non-resolution of the conflict seems to be satisfying enough for both of them. They have explored the experience with form and meanings to their common content.)

THE END

No final text, no final interpretation

I have viewed the video of this drama approximately thirty times. I have written about and presented analyses of it on several occasions. Each time, I have discovered new aspects related to the reflection that takes place in the aesthetic practice. The documentation in the transcription and the interpretation that it incorporates must be considered as a resting point with infinite possibilities for revisal.

Below, I discuss possible interpretations of *this* text-construction as an aesthetic and reflective practice. How do the players seem to be engaging themselves sensorily in the process of creating dramatic form, and what does this practice suggest in terms of reflection? In the course of preparing the transcription, which aesthetic aspects drew special attention to themselves?

Open Analytical Description

In the open analytical description of Analysis Level 2, I do not describe through comparison with other performances, but build on the analytical commentary interposed in the transcription. I begin by framing analytical questions to the material.

Analytical questions

I have developed three sets of questions to help me along the analytical route:

1. *What are the dramatic actions and episodes in the play drama?*

- *Is there a linear storyline?*

- *What themes and meanings emerge there?*

2. *How is the drama produced?*

- *What expressive elements and means constitute the production process and how are they produced?*

- *What themes and meanings emerge there?*

3. *How do these relate back to aspects the children may have experienced in "The Circle"?*

The combination of meta-fictional dialogue and fictional action

In studying the meaning of the *dialogue*, what has been clear is that very little of it is carried out within the fictional frame - for certain, only in lines 13 -15, 32, 37, and 114. In the majority of lines the players are either in the positions of *Themselves (metafictional)*,

Dramatists, Dramaturgs, Directors, Scenographers, or Spectators - considering/reflecting over, and choosing production actions and dramatic actions. The dramatic actions, as *Actors*, then follow up the ideas they have suggested in these positions. The general pattern is that they tell each other their ideas about what is going to happen and, directly afterward, they enact the actions. The enactment, then, is executed with little dramatic dialogue - i.e. verbal acting. Eli Åm (1989) has posited that much of the dialogue and action in social fantasy play is at the "director level", whereas I am attempting to pinpoint aesthetic nuances within her category - several *aesthetic* positions; for instance, *dramatist, dramaturg, scenographer*, etc..

In the moments of transition *between* suggesting the ideas for the story/situation, producing the necessary means for enacting it, and enacting it - there exist reflections over and conscious choices about *what* they want to represent and *how* they want to represent it. In the

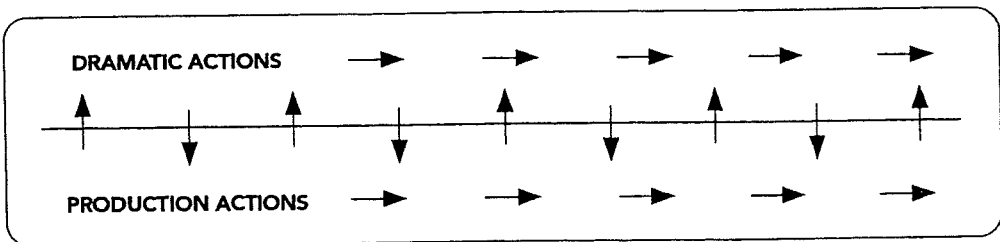
transcription above (as opposed to the raw transcription in Appendix 3) I have made an initial attempt to render the reflection and the choices visible.

The interweaving of production actions and dramatic actions

I will now examine a distinguishing aesthetic characteristic of play-drama: that there is a very little separation in time between the production actions and the enactment actions. However, for theoretical purposes, I try to make them visible as separate entities. It may sound self-evident that in spontaneous drama performance, production and enactment go hand-in-hand. However, this aspect is a central aesthetic component - a component that contributes to the players' sensory immersion and excitement in the performance. They are not just enacting, they are continually *making choices* about what to enact, how to enact it aesthetically, how to provide the necessary auxilliary aesthetic ambiance and concrete environment, as well as executing these ideas. The presence of this necessary dual structure of performance resembles to some extent the pre-designed aesthetic in some instances of "new performance", a point I will return to below (see Comparative analysis). As distinct from most traditionally performed drama, where the two processes are separated into different phases, and where the supportive machinery is more or less hidden from the audience during the performance (Quick 1997) - in the enactment of a play-drama the visible production process runs parallel to, and *enables*, the enactment process.

There is a continual interplay between the production actions and the dramatic actions because there is no pre-planned text or supportive production apparatus in advance of the performance. The relationship between the two processes in play can be given in simple graphic form:

Figure 7: A play-structure. Interplay between dramatic actions and production actions



The top line represents the DRAMA (the performance of the fiction). The bottom line represents the PRODUCTION (the enabling of the dramatic action), including all the *aesthetic choices* (which I judge to be) ancillary to, but determinant for, the enactment; as well as for the direction(s) in which the dramatic actions move, linearly or non-linearly. The production actions consist of how the children envision the dramatic situation (the *dramatist's*

storymaking) as well as how they form the environment - *the scenography, props, costumes; sound effects, etc.*

We can call this a *play-structure* in which the complex interaction between the two levels is a strong constituent of the aesthetic practice in the performance.

Aesthetic practice and sites of reflection

This *distinctive* aesthetic practice in the play-drama mirrors the players' exploration and interpretation of meanings.

Before moving on to an interpretation of the meanings apparent in the children's work with form, I will reverse direction briefly in order to revisit the philosophical field of Aesthetics - to be reminded that this is a branch of the *study of knowledge*: As mentioned earlier, in the field of Aesthetics philosophers have been interested in how "truth" (significance, meaning, knowing) is apprehended in sensory perception - rather than in rational, conceptual thinking. As outlined in Chapter One, "the aesthetic practice of play-drama" refers to the formgiving-process in which children can interpret and produce meanings. - More specifically: aesthetic practice refers to such aspects as the players' sensory representations and their sensory perception of these representations - through bodily movements, physical acts, gestures, dramatic actions; voice-, sound-, speech-actions; use of space and time, rhythm - beat/counterbeat, tempo; structure; creating mood; and the build-up and resolution of tension.

As we have discovered in the above transcriptions, it is clear that the aesthetic practice also incorporates production actions *outside the fictional framework* of the performance. In searching for a key to understanding the aesthetic-reflective process - how it seizes the children's senses and minds - I have found that *space or seam* serve as metaphors for a hidden location between production-actions and enactment-actions. Even though the production actions and dramatic actions are visible simultaneously - the player picks up an object and immediately uses it symbolically in a dramatic action - there is a *mental seam* between the two sets of actions. This invisible seam can be understood as the site of reflection - between being in the fiction and being slightly outside it, in non-fictional, instrumental production actions. Hidden in this seam, some very rapid, intuitive choices are being made - about which direction the players wish to take the dramatic action and *how* they are going to take it there.⁴

⁴ See Szatkowski 1994: 10, for a discussion of two "sets of actions" in the production of the theatrical expression of a drama: "one set of actions around the production of the theatrical expression, and another self-reflective action in which we see ourselves from the outside, and start asking questions as to why we produce the things we are producing." These are two different sets

What is most interesting is the indeterminacy of the players' mental positions. For example, in many places it is difficult for the outside spectator to know if they are commenting as themselves, if they are creating dialogue as *Torgeir* and *Bruna* or as their own invented role-figures, or if they are making suggestions as *dramatists* or *directors*.

I wish to interpret the meanings that emerge from the children's play with creating form, both in production actions and dramatic actions; and to examine the *sites* where their interrelationship and interchange occur. In the final analysis, my question has become: to what extent can the reflexive value in the exploration of form and of meaning be understood as a product of *the interplay* between the two levels of actions?

The analysis/interpretation examines the back-and-forth-movement between:

"What are they doing? - Which level are they on?"

and

"What does what they are doing *mean* in light of the interrelationship between the two levels of actions?"

In the previous analysis, *On a Boat at the Beach*, I discover little production action. The dramatic action glides forward without the players' collective verbal envisioning and reflection, perhaps because of the simplicity of the performance theme and its reminiscent, social-realistic nature. By the time I start to film, the "stage" is already constructed - such that there seems to be no need for co-ordination of ideas nor for production actions. In *Locked In*, on the other hand, we can see from my assignment of the various theatre positions that there seems to be a great need for idea-envisioning, co-ordination and common deliberation/reflection - especially on the level of *dramatist-dramaturg*. Perhaps this is because the players are inventing a new scenario together, based on their *differing* experiences of *The Circle*. - Within the common drama each player seems to be exploring her own themes.

Although there is a common plot, the children are exploring differing experience and meaning: Tessa states that she is a witch and wants Hilde to be her child. Hilde rejects the offer. Tessa suggests that Hilde "build me (her) locked in". They agree on this element of plot. However, within the same plot, the perspectives of their role-positions differ. Hilde seems intent upon

of actions than the two I try to articulate here. However, it would seem that the children - almost four, and just five, years of age - are, to the best of *their* conceptual ability, self-reflexive. In their concrete actualizations and deliberations in the production-action, they seem already able to ask questions about their production choices - vis á vis what they have experienced in the theatre.

exploring the relative visibility or invisibility of the wall, and of whether or not Tessa will escape. It is not clear whether Tessa has initially been drawn toward the exploration of the wall's visibility or invisibility. It does not seem so. She asks to be locked in, but does not request an invisible wall. However, when she accepts Hilde's suggestion of the invisible wall, we see her struggling earnestly with whether to stay locked in or to escape from behind it. We see her reflecting (from line 99).

Interplay between the production actions and the dramatic actions

Below, I will further examine the aesthetic dimension in *Locked In* by analyzing the construction and dynamics of the whole process. As a way of interpreting the meanings of the actions, I attempt to identify the expressive components individually and then put them back together. First, I separate the dramatic actions from the production actions. After this I proceed to put them back together again in an interpretation of the drama-production as a whole.

The dramatic actions:

In apprehending how the children's experience is actualized in their aesthetic practice - how it is sensorily represented and perceived - the first step has been to distinguish between the dramatic action and the production action. If we dissect the whole creative process of the play-drama to construct a thematic synopsis of the enactment, we find a dramatic situation composed of fairly clear *episodes*. These episodes comprise a *thematic* content. (In the brackets, I give aesthetic information which is supplementary to the distilled action.)

1. Hilde "builds Tessa locked-in" (*with a wall that is visible, but which they say is invisible*).

Theme: entrapment.

2. Tessa stays locked in for a little while.

Theme: being entrapped.

3. Tessa escapes, captures her captor, and returns to her cottage to sleep.

Themes: escape, revenge, (*sleep = rest - waiting - time to develop ideas*).

4. Hilde returns and "builds Tessa locked-in" once more - (*first with pillows, but then removes these in order to have a really invisible wall*).

Theme: entrapment/being entrapped.

(5. Tessa comes out (*through the invisible wall*), but goes in again.

Theme: *testing the relationship between fiction and reality?*).

6. Hilde again builds Tessa in, with a *visible* invisible wall (which falls down).

Theme: entrapment/entrapped.

7. Tessa kicks the remains of the visible, invisible wall and escapes. (*Tessa suggests a new theme for a new drama.*)

Theme: escape from entrapment (*escape from the fiction*).

(The contents in brackets will be considered further in the analytical description below.)

Collective representation of differing impressions from the same theatre performance

The players have experienced the same theatre performance but, as stated above, they have two different experiences of it. Different aspects have fascinated each of them and, therefore, they have differing impulses to contribute to the common drama. - The drama gains momentum in a spiralling interweave of their *pooled* sensory representations. In turn, their collective symbolic representations are sensorily perceived in different ways. We are witness to this in their verbal considerations about their production work regarding the wall.

The themes:

In *Locked In* the *apparent* themes in the dramatic action are capture - entrapment - escape - revenge. These are common themes for children's play-drama and, so we have thought, especially characteristic for boys. The impulses for the themes in the play-drama can be found in three episodes in the theatre performance. As outlined earlier, the theatre characters are *locked into the garden*, behind an (for the audience) invisible wall. From this *entrapment*, they *escape* at the very end of the performance. Secondly, Bruna-Witch *captures* and *hides/entraps* Dino several times throughout the play-journey. In the final scene, she is about to cook him, but Torgeir-Captain *rescues* him/helps him escape. The build-up and release of tension in this drama reaches closure when the Captain entraps the Witch in the final rescue-action. The Bruna-figure *escapes* and *entraps* the Torgeir-figure, taking *revenge*. The (invisible) gate opens and Bruna and Torgeir are *set free*. From all the actions and meanings in the theatre drama, it seems to be these impressions that have been crystallised in the children's play-drama.

The production actions:

In the dramatic action (THE DRAMA) we have found the themes of capture/entrapment - escape - revenge. The production actions *enable* the dramatic action. The idea for "building in" comes first (line 26); then the production of the wall (from line 35) - which is the locking in; then the dramatic action of escaping, etc.. Adding to the complexity, the "building in" is *both* a production matter and an enactment matter. - *How* to build an invisible wall, and how relate to an invisible wall *in order to enact* "being built in", become major production themes.

This is manifest both in *meta-fictional talk* about the problem, in the experimentation with and without pillows, as well as in the *tension* of Tessa's dramatic action - as she waits ("is captured") inside the cottage, behind the wall.

The wall, in all its visible-invisible *ambiguity*, is a *presence* in the drama. A *formal* element becomes part of the drama's subject matter. *Form and content converge*: Dramatic content emerges out of work with dramatic form, and dramatic form emerges out of work with the dramatic content. In other words, there is a drama and dramatic form inherent in the production process as well as in the enactment process.

How does this take place? How do the two dramas co-exist in the two different sets of actions?

In the production action Tessa and Hilde deliberate (reflect) a great deal about the wall that shall lock Tessa in (lines 44, 75-86). In this deliberation, they are responding to the *means* of expression in the theatre performance - the *mime*-form. In the performance, as we have seen, *mime* was used as the expressive means to create the imaginary scenery. In mime performances the actor first creates the illusion of an object (a scenographic production action, as it were) and, thereafter, enacts the drama.

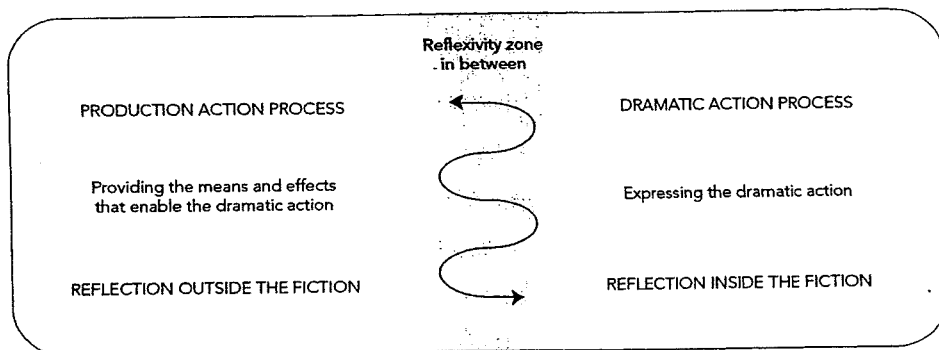
The children's production work is dominant in their performance and takes place *before* and *during* the drama's escape-and-capture episodes. The children deliberate over what formal means they should use to represent the wall that locks Tessa in: first, should it be visible or invisible? - Hilde wants an invisible wall, as in "The Circle"; second, how to represent it? - with pillows or without?; and third, how to relate to it once it's "there"/not there? - This is Tessa's dilemma.

In the theatre piece, the existence of the (invisible) wall has a central function in the drama. The characters are, indeed, locked in behind it. Because of this they resort to collective play, to fill their time and bypass their anxiety about being locked in together. However, although mime is employed as a *formal* element - to depict a wall that, for the audience, is actually invisible - invisibility is *not* explored as a *theme*. The children, on the other hand, *are* exploring it as a theme. They are exploring the *consequence* of the mime-form: invisible objects. In the production process, in the children's work with form, "Invisibility" - how to *express* it and *relate* to it - becomes a major *theme*. In *producing* the "built-in - escape" drama, the deliberations seem to create an immediate, common drama for the players, *parallel* to the

locking-in drama. This is especially so for Tessa, who has to *act* in relation to the invisible "it". The two dramas *co-exist*.

The reflection inherent in the movement back and forth between the dramatic action and the production action can be summarized in the figure below:

Figure 8: Reflexivity zones in-between parallel form-processes



As I discussed above, the wall is a "presence" for Tessa to reckon with in the entrapment drama - an almost living antagonist to fight against, even when Hilde is out of the picture as antagonist. We see that there is a spillover of the invisibility-theme from the production process into the dramatic action - in Tessa's *real* quandary about whether or not to remain locked in behind something that isn't there. The reflection in regard to that quandary lies on the limen between the dramatic action process and the production action process.

Distinguishing between an action and the expression of an action

It would seem that in their interpretation of the theatre performance the girls have made an aesthetic distinction between an *action* in the performance (i.e. "Bruna discovers a wall"), and her *means of expressing this action* - in the symbolic form of mime. Mime is the symbolic language with which she *expresses* the action of "discovering a wall". The artistic choice of symbolic language in the theatre has fascinated and challenged the children. In the play-drama they collectively objectify their aesthetic experience of a formal element (mime) in the theatre. However, unlike the theatre, in doing so they explore and interpret the consequence of mimed action: - invisibility.

A summary of themes in the dramatic action and the production action:

In the dramatic action-process - from their experience of the theatre performance, the children have sifted out, crystallized, and transformed the themes and actions having to do with being

locked-in, captured, and escaping/being set free. These themes are *formulated* by their use of the *dramatist-function* and *actor-function*, - in what we could call "*dramatists/dramaturgs-as-actors*".

In the production action process, on the other hand, they explore the theatre performance's *aesthetic means of representing* the garden wall, the imaginary environment produced by mime. Here, the theme is: How shall we formally represent the invisible? - and how shall we act in relation to what we have represented? How shall we express and relate to something *doubly* fictive, something invisible-but-"there"? This is formulated in deliberations and formal experimentations which resemble the co-operative work in the theatre between *dramatist, director, actor, dramaturg and scenographer*.

Reflexivity in the intertextual field

In the transformation of thematic and formal elements from the theatre performance in their own drama, the players set up an intertextual field, a set-up which is, in itself, a reflection over the theatre performance. The production action related to deliberations about the *form* for the wall seems clearly traceable to the theatre performance. The mime-form in the theatre has made a sensory impression which gives a strong impulse for exploration and, therefore, the children dwell upon *how to represent* the invisible wall that shall build Tessa in. Should it be invisible or not? - Can it be invisible if one uses large, rectangular pillows to build it up? I return to this in greater detail later in the analysis.

The dramatic action is related to the *theme* of being entrapped /captured and the condition of being locked in. The enactment involves Hilde "building in" Tessa-Witch (in what Tessa *has*, at the outset, stated is her Witch's cottage), Tessa-Witch's escape, her capture of the Witch-captor, Tessa-Witch's re-imprisonment and final escape. The building-in and escape pattern is repeated three times. In the theatre performance, *Bruna* and *Torgeir* are locked in behind the invisible garden wall. In addition, in the last scene, *Torgeir* threatens *Bruna* with locking her into the darkest dungeon. He holds her in a locked position between his arms, a position she reverses - as she tells him he would not like to be locked in that way. The moment of his capturing her and her reversal of the position is full of tension for both the role-figures and the audience.

However, it is not yet clear to what extent the girls imagine that they are enacting "role-figures" from *The Circle*, even though Tessa says "This is my witch's cottage."

We have now preliminarily interpreted *what* and *how* the children transform fascinating impressions from the theatre performance. We have a sketch of the way in which they reflect over and interpret these impressions in their own aesthetic forms.

The hermeneutic spiral in play-drama

The idea of the hermeneutic spiral enables us to conceive of the way in which meanings are explored and can emerge in the play-drama process. The children go back and forth, *sensorily - psychologically - physiologically*, between their earlier experience and the experience they are collectively creating in the drama-process. They are exploring, "describing" "characterizing", "interpreting" - in dramatic form - until, perhaps, something gets and is understood more clearly than it was previous to the play-drama. The children grasp "this something" in and through their sensory representations and perception of their representations.

The interpretive process in their playing resembles mine in the research. A dominating feature of hermeneutic process is the impossibility of a clear separation between description, characterization, interpretation and understanding. When we characterize a phenomenon we are selecting positions from which to interpret the phenomenon. This very selection demonstrates our current understanding, or pre-understanding, of the phenomenon. We will be able to develop our understanding to the extent that these categories have the potential for creating a distance to the phenomenon and for allowing us to frame it and express it "just right". In research, description/interpretation is dependent upon understanding, and understanding is dependent upon description/interpretation. In interpreting, one travels mentally in circles, or spirals, through one's experience of the phenomenon, the set of categories and concepts one is using to describe it, and an ever-increasing understanding - around and upward in spirals (Dilthey 1914/1976, Gadamer 1960/96, Kjørup 1996). In the interpretative process of play-drama performance, the players travel back and forth between their earlier experience and the expressive means they are employing to express it "just right".

The playing children start with an experience and questions about it. They do not describe, characterize and interpret through conceptual categories, as does the researcher, but through representational symbolic actions. However, the concrete symbolic actions represent an abstract questioning. Hilde has been seized aesthetically by the paradox of mime. What is unveiled above is how her (their) aesthetic experience of the mime-form in the theatre has been symbolically and sensorily represented in play - *without* the use of mime. In the theatre production, we had used mime and imaginary scenography as fantasy-elements. However, we had not considered the aesthetic tension created by the paradox of mime: You *see* the mimed

action, you *imagine* that you see the mimed object (with your mind's eye), but you do not really see the mimed object. There are several episodes in *The Circle* which involve the use of imaginary objects. However, in all the play sequences filmed after the performance, these other mimed actions and objects are *not* explored. Hence, I am led to believe that what fascinates Tessa and Hilde, is the invisible wall having the "ability" to lock the figures into the garden. The themes in both dimensions of their play combine the ideas of an invisible object and being locked in behind it.

The children seem to be asking if that which is invisible can, or cannot, work as an *agent* in play. What does "invisible" mean in *The Circle*, if the wall is invisible but can, in spite of this, be the cause of *Bruna* and *Torgeir* being locked in? A child can wonder, and wonder they seem to do in the aesthetic reflection and experimentation in the play-drama. In the production dimension of the "entrapped-escape" drama, the children bump into the paradox and tension of visible mime creating invisible objects. In order to "build Tessa in" (to entrap someone), they must have a wall. The wall in the theatre is invisible, but they see it being created - by mime. In their play, however, Tessa seems to prefer something concrete to relate to. This preference to relate to concrete objects rather than to an abstraction may be related to the fact that she is not yet four years old. (In *On the Beach*, she is miming actions, but in an active position.) It is the action that is important for her, whereas for Hilde, it is the abstract problematic. The *mise-en-scène* question, "To use pillows or not to use pillows in an invisible wall", captures the paradox that lies in mime: something that is invisible in the objective world can be visible in the subjective world, "to the inner eye", the imagination, and can be related to - acted upon or acting upon - *as if it were* visible.

Reflexivity and liminality - The "tripleness" of consciousness

We see here that dramatic playing is a combined formulation of sensing, feeling and thinking - where the mind is at play *between* the everyday world and the imagined world that the players are actualizing. For children, dramatic enactment in play is a special form of Being. An adult can step back from a puzzling experience "out there" and reflect over it conceptually. How does a child reflect over an experience that puzzles her? - for example, the paradox of mime and the virtual existence of the invisible. How does a child explore the invisible? She enacts. In the enactment the child's mind is moving back and forth between three territories: there is the territory outside oneself: the experience one has had (i.e. the theatre experience) and the impulse to explore it - to play it; and in the acts of interpreting that experience in the play-drama performance, there are two territories: the experience of production actions and the experience of dramatic actions.

We can say that there are three levels of consciousness that come into play in this process - which can be understood in Donald Winnicott's terms. Victor Turner, in his performance work with Richard Schechner, invokes these terms in relation to the work of the actor (Turner 1982: 121):

- The first level: *Me* - the actor's person, sensibility, intuition or consciousness (about herself).
- The second level: *Not-me* - the *role* or the situation the actor meets, either in the written text or in observations of cultural and social life - someone/something who is outside the actor's *Me*.
- The third level: *Not-not-me* - the intuitive and/or conscious cobbling between *Me* and *Not-me* - in bringing the *role-figure* to life onstage. The cobbling between *Me* and *Not-me* produces someone/something new, a *Not-not-me*. In the process of breathing life into the *role-figure* and the fictive situation, a new experience arises for the actor, a new level of consciousness. Even in drama that is not psychologically motivated, in creating the *Not-not-me*, the meeting between the *Actor* and the *Role* creates a break-through to new insight for the actor, in the enactment of the *Role-figure*. This third level of consciousness cannot necessarily be articulated in rational concepts. It can be sensed.

All artists involved in the theatre production work on this premise, filtering experience from the written dramatic text - or the life situation - through one's own consciousness and transforming it into symbolic language/action for the stage.

In regard to the spectator, we can conceive of a theatre performance as a *Not-me*. When we experience a theatre performance, our *Me* meets a *Not-me*, and the eventual insight we gain in the experience can be thought of as a *Not-not-me*. Tessa (*Me*) and Hilde (*Me*) have had an experience of *The Circle* (*Not-me*). Subsequently, in their playing, they explore this *Not-me*. In both their production actions and dramatic actions we can say that they *actualize* a meeting with *The Circle's* *Not-me*, and cobble their own previous life experience with their impressions from the theatre. In their enactment of the role-figures and the dramatic action, the children create a *Not-not-me*, a new fictive situation - a situation that differs from their own lives and one that differs from the theatre performance. This is made possible by their mastery of the dramatic medium.

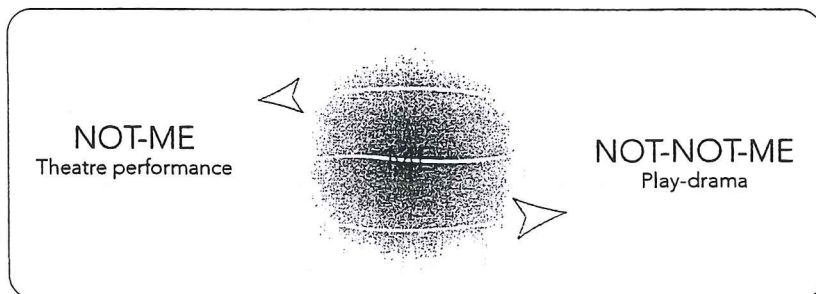
The play-drama performance is, then, both a reflection over themselves and over the theatre performance. In this play-drama the children are mentally positioned in between these three territories - *in* the tripleness and its complexities. To see this tripleness in action we need only

examine the position assignments. The theatre experience is the *Not-me*. We can think of it as a film that is playing on the back screen of the players' minds. It is a constant presence. What we see performed are the rapid shifts between dialogue *about* the action and performance *of* the action. In the production actions, the *Me*'s are talking, but in the dramatic actions the *Not-not-me*'s are enacting. The shifts between these two states of mind are most clearly visible when we study the assignment of positions in the players' shifts between *Herself, Dramatist, and Role-position*. Here we see reflection-in-action over: what action from the background film to express and in what form to express it, and the formal expression itself.

Mime in the theatre is *real*, that is *-visible*; the wall it creates is *unreal*, that is *-invisible*. The paradox is most likely mentally-conceptually-logically ungraspable for the children. It would seem, nevertheless, that they explore it *aesthetically*. Moreover, it would seem that it is in this reflexive, liminal territory, between the real and the fictive, that the magic magnet of their performance lies.

In the Figure below, I attempt to concretize the children's reflection in the back and forth mental movement *between* the three territories: the experience they have had in the objective world - as spectator to the theatre performance; their experience in the production action, and their experience in the the dramatic action. The *Me* consciousness mediates between the *Not-me* in the memory and the *Not-not-me* that it is being formed and brought to life in the play-drama.

Figure 9a: Reflexivity between *Me, Not-me and Not-not-me*

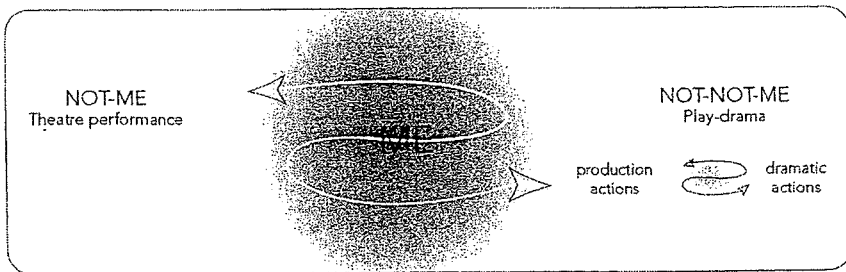


The reflexive complexity is multiplied when this individual figure is put into the intersubjective performance context: When there are two players, we can imagine two of these Figures placed on top of one another, to show the *intersubjective* interweavings in all the spheres. Each player has her own impressions of the *Not-me*, and these interpenetrate in the intersubjective

forming of the play-drama. We could say that at an individual, psychological level, there are two different *Not-me's* and *Not-not-me's*. These interpenetrate in "the collective forms that appear".

In the Figure below, I attempt to show that not only are there reflexivity zones between the *Me* and *Not-me*, and between the *Me* and the *Not-not-me* of the play-drama, but that, in addition - in the play-drama sphere - there is a reflexivity zone between the production actions and dramatic actions. The *Me* is continually aware of itself, but is at its highest degree of self-forgetfulness in the dramatic actions of the role-figure.

Figure 9b: Reflexive complexity



The *Me* experiences the theatre performance sensorily. In the play situation the *Me* feels impelled to represent impressions from this experience and does this, sensorily, in dramatic actions and production actions.

In the transformation of impressions from the theatre performance (*Not-me*) to both production actions and dramatic actions in the play-drama (*Not-not-me*), the *Me* is moving back and forth between the *Not-me* and the *Not-not-me*.

This whole picture is one of sensory experience. The reflection over experience, vis à vis both the theatre performance and the play-drama, and the eventual insight that is gained, takes place in the process of sensory representation (form-making) and sensory reception of and sensory response to the representations.

Reflexivity takes place in the relationship between *Me*, *Not-me* and *Not-not-me*.

Tessa's reflection - as *Herself* - appears to be related to whether she shall or shall not, go along with the fiction of being locked in behind the invisible. *How* shall she relate to the part of the

play-world that is invisible? On this level, it appears that she and Hilde, in the wall-episodes, are exploring aesthetically the border landscape between the rules of the Fictional World and the Non-fictional World (outside the play-world). In these episodes they are, in formal, aesthetic experience, confronted with the dual existence of the real and the not real - the existence of the visible in the invisible, and of the invisible in the visible.

Hilde, however, shows a greater inclination toward abstraction than Tessa, not surprising in light of their age difference. In their performance process, there appears to be a very thin separation line between Tessa's play-acting (*Not-not-me*) and real-being (*Me*). In the "real" world, she knows that she can tip over the pillow-wall - (violate the invisible wall) - and set herself and her role-figure free, whenever she chooses. BUT, if she does this she also tips over the whole fiction - and its rules of pretend. That she doesn't choose to do this in the first instance, is possibly due to the sensory excitement that lies in the unknown territory. However, in her role-position as "the one who waits", the question is: how long can she tolerate the tension, measured in her experience of time? After five minutes Tessa rejects her role-position and tips over the fiction. The "real-time" factor, the duration of her *real* tension, (or eventual boredom - i.e. lack of tension), decides the end of this fiction.

Reflection over the phenomenon of pretending: A meta-drama

In the sequences related to the the wall, the mental movement back and forth between questions in the production action - related to pillow or not pillows - and questions in the dramatic action - locking in and being locked in, it appears that the girls, on a meta-level, are reflecting over the phenomenon of pretending - both as they experienced it in *The Circle* and as they enact it in their own drama. The drama which revolves around The Wall can be defined as a *meta-drama*, a self-referential drama. - It is a drama *about* drama enactment, about how to stage it; and *about* how one should relate to one's simultaneous existence *in* a fiction and *in* the reality of producing the fiction - all inspired by the theatre experience. The mysteries of the borders between the established world and the pretend world can be read as the children's *meta*-theme - albeit, represented in concrete, aesthetic form-making.

At an early stage in the research, I gave the play-drama the title *Locked In*. After this analysis it could be more aptly called *The Wall* because a major point of tension and reflection is the real/not real doubleness of the wall in interplay with their aesthetic experience in the theatre.

Reflection and meaning-production are play with form

Hermeneutic analysis of aesthetic practice in play-drama is interpretation of meaning in the *processual text*. Meaning for the players does not exist in advance of the performative-

interpretive process. Meaning is produced, or emerges, not in static form, but in the process of playing with form; and not in the drama enactment process alone, but in the production process of the drama as well. It is in this whole text, the combination of the production actions and the dramatic actions, that the meaning of the drama can be read/interpreted. Furthermore, it would seem that in the production process, the presence of the wall and the drama concerning it, hold at least as much aesthetic magnetism as the dramatic action in the "siamese twin"- theme of being-locked-in-and-escaping. The aesthetic experience being explored and the complex meanings being interpreted could most likely not have *been* in any other medium than the play-drama medium, with its unique mode of sensory representation and sensory reception and perception. It would be difficult to imagine a conversation about the same issues, even between adults.

In the analysis above, I have been operating from a perspective on the internal aesthetic process for the players: the ways in which they explore expressive forms and meanings. I have described the diverse expressive elements and structures and interpreted what kinds of experience they are actualizing and what this might mean for them. Below, I will step back and discuss the findings on reflexivity in more theoretical terms.

Reflection Over the Findings

The dramatic mode as quintessentially reflexive

As a way of reflecting over the reflexive value of *Locked In*. I would like to return to theory about ritual drama performance.

Bruce Kapferer maintains that the dramatic mode is "quintessentially reflexive as a property of its own internal form" (Ibid.: 199). His main point is that the very *structure* of dramatic enactment incorporates reflection, albeit of a different kind than conceptual reflection. *Drama* performance, in particular, treats experience as an object (Ibid.: 198). It can do so because of its intersubjective, dialogic mode - which is structured out of the different standpoints of the characters. Drama is "structured" in the sense that it "*organizes its meaning* for the characters portrayed" *and* for the spectator (Ibid.). To this last statement, in keeping with my findings above, I would rather say: drama organizes its meanings for the role-positions being actualized, rather than for the "characters portrayed".

In the conflicting positions of the role-figures in *Locked In*, there is an inherent structuring and organizing of meanings. There is also an inherent structuring of meanings in the dramatic confrontation between Tessa-Witch and The Wall - the wall being an active, albeit sometimes invisible, antagonist.

The particular composition and structuring of these expressive elements, their internal interplay, and their interplay with the participants, work aesthetically - between emotional proximity and emotional distance, to transform the awareness and knowledge of the participants (Ibid.: 191). The children seem to do this for themselves, in-between fiction and reality, and in-between mental and bodily states.

Reflexivity in-between body-action and mind-action

When watching *Locked In*, there are moments when we cannot determine whether the children are communicating "inside" the fiction or "outside" the fiction. In these moments of indeterminacy we can, however, sense the acute tension that exists for them. In the transcription, if we look at lines 75 to 105: Hilde-Captor has kicked away the pillow-wall and announces that there is an invisible wall. Then she leaves. We see that Tessa-Witch complies with this illusion, momentarily. However, after waiting a minute for the Captor to return, she (Tessa-Herself) sneaks out of the cottage - *not* relating to the invisible wall - to see where Hilde is. We *see* the tension, in her indecision about what to do in relation to "The Wall". The *really* invisible wall does not hinder her in coming out of the cottage, out of the fictive entrapment. When she leaves the cottage, she also leaves the fiction. But, almost immediately, we see her decision to return to the cottage, and to the fiction that she is locked in - and we see her return to her waiting "role-position". The usually rambunctious, always-in-motion-Tessa is having an uncharacteristic moment of stillness and pensiveness. I characterize this as reflection - in the doubleness, and reflexivity - on the limen between her role-position in the fiction and her "real-life" situation as performer. We can see what Turner describes:

... (The) dialectic between "flow" and reflexivity characterizes performative genres: a successful performance in any of the genres *transcends the opposition* between spontaneous and self-conscious patterns of action (Ibid., my emphasis).

The cultural meeting place for this reflection and reflexivity, between the bodily state and the mental state, between flow and reflexivity, is the collaborative drama-process. The aesthetic, cultural performance makes possible the participant's states of consciousness *in-between* the fictive world and the real world. The tension we observe in the double state may be understood as the locus for reflexivity, and this locus is provided by the aesthetic process of the performance. We can guess that Tessa is operating in-between body and mentality, in-

between unconscious and conscious knowledge, in-between spontaneous and self-conscious patterns of action. We can characterize this state of mind as "deliberating about meanings". And we can speculate that the bodily, sensory representation - coupled with its simultaneous sensory reception and perception - enable the double state of mind: of *being* in the fictive, symbolic action and *being* in "the real world" simultaneously. The meanings are formed and sensed in the integration of body-action and mind-action - in the dialogical dynamics of the psychological - physiological dyad of which the aesthetic dimension is constituted.

The outcome of the dialogical, intersubjective sharing in play-drama performance is often a dramatic tension which would not exist in solitary play. For example, in *Locked In*, the force of resistance to Tessa's role-position - is the obstacle set up by Hilde's investment in the drama. This obstacle would not be as palpable, acute, and binding in solitary play - where the situation could, more easily, be neutralized or circumvented - thus diminishing its reflexive potential.

Knowledge (knowing) arises in the aesthetic process, in the interplay between flow and reflexivity - theorizes Turner. As discussed in Chapter Two, Kapferer, in his study of ritual process, analyzes *how* this may be so. He analyzes how the composition, the dramaturgy, of the aesthetic process is designed, by long ritual tradition, to seize the participants in the liminal zone, in ways that catalyze the desired reflexive outcome (Kapferer 1982: 193) - in the sense of transforming the consciousness of the participants. In the case of play-drama, it would seem that the players, in the rich field of associative randomness, work in processual, aesthetic play-structures that organize standpoints and meanings, and embody reflexivity - at the pre-conceptual level. However, this reflexivity is related to transformation of a secular, rather than a spiritual-religious, nature.

We have discussed thoroughly the internal aesthetic process. Now we can ask: Out of the players' explorative, reflexive play with form, how does the form *appear* - when characterized from an external perspective? Can such a characterization make visible other important aspects of the aesthetic practice and its meanings?

The aesthetic-reflexive process and the appearance of form

I will start with a statement that constitutes a view on aesthetic process.

Figure 10: A view on aesthetic process in play-drama

Form emanates from internal aesthetic-reflexive process.
Form *appears* as a result of internal aesthetic-reflexive process.

The aesthetic process is an internal explorative construction and cannot, of course, be separated from how it appears as composite form. This is both a finding about play-drama performance thus far and a possible view of art. - But, as a *methodological strategy*, the attempt to separate the appearance from the process can help us to view the aesthetic practice from other perspectives.

One could argue that, in child culture, the children inherit expressive "formulas" from each other (see Mouritsen 1996) - and that the form is, therefore, not a consequence of the seeking process. However, even if we assume that Tessa and Hilde are adopting the formula of "lock-in and escape", the form in which they are using it emerges from the necessity of expressing the experience they want to explore. They invent an overall formal structure that allows them to do this.

We can briefly exemplify how processual form *appears* as composite form, or structure.

Structural use of space

The formal *structure* of the drama performance in *Locked In* develops organically in the spiralling interplay between the players' sensory representation of earlier experience and their sensory and imaginative response to the representation - in new sensory representation. As an exemplification of this point we can examine the way in which the players use the performance space.

We can back up for a moment to look at *On a Boat at the Beach* (Analysis 1). There, the children divide the space into two areas at the outset: inside the boat - inside the chair-and-pillow-scenography they have constructed; and outside the boat, in the ocean - where they swim and where the crabs create a slight dramatic tension. When Allan/Crab teases Lene from the mattress *behind* the "boat", she seems to extend the ocean area to surround the central construction. Because of the nature of the players' exploration of experience, there is a limited use of the ocean space. The main action is located in the sitting space and there is little aesthetic tension between the use of inner and surrounding spaces.

Dramaturgy "tries to understand how ideas about human beings and the world are rendered in a form..."(Ibid.). In the various dramaturgical forms in written or performed texts that have been developed throughout history, there are varying norms according to the extent of their ties to the major paradigms for representation: classical, modern and postmodern. (This point will be expanded upon in the section on Dramaturgical Models in Analysis 3.) Although I use "dramaturgy" without quotation marks below, I am aware that the historical meaning of the term is related to the conscious, ideological, epistemological, and artistic ideals and values of the artists - ideals and values which cannot exist *in the same way* in children's drama.

I wish to identify and characterize the dramaturgies of performing-spectating children - the external structuring of the modalities of their performance; "how and according to what time sequence, the story materials are arranged" (Ibid.). In using the artistic term of "dramaturgy" vis á vis a playful seeking process, I am referring to both the children's choices and weighting of expressive means and to how these can merge into expressive structures. Even though they arise intuitively, the weighting and structuring of the varied expressive components play a fundamental part in seizing the performer-spectators sensorily. Grasping the dramaturgical choices can reveal the reflection over meanings in the seeking process.

As we have come to understand in the analyses thus far, in their dramatic play-culture the children are collectively exploring their own experiences and meanings in dramatic form - and in this collective search, each child's individual expressive means merge into the common dramaturgical structures of the performance. The dramaturgy can be said to emerge out the immediacy of the performer-spectators' sensory, emotional, and reflexive responses. Dramaturgical construction is meaning-construction. - We are placing in the center of this examination the *process* of its construction, the process of its "becoming" (See Kyndrup 1998: 29 -30).

Sometimes the players play "scenes from life", sometimes already existing stories or fragments of stories. In the collected research material there is most often no complete pre-text and no pre-design for how the whole drama will be composed and expressed. In social realistic play we could say that there is a strong pre-text, but this can be staged imaginatively so that there is no collective blueprint for the dramaturgy in the play ensemble. Each child enters into the play arena with a repertoire of actions and dialogue as well as expressive forms and aesthetic structures - both from first-hand play experience and experience of diverse media. We would expect this repertoire to become activated, utilized, and experimented with - played with - in the

unwinding dramaturgical process of their drama performances (see Sutton-Smith 1983, Nicholson 1995, Mouritsen 1996).

In the analyses so far, then, we have seen that the dramaturgy is the organic outcome of a chain of interactive impulses among the ensemble, rather than a product of pre-planned concept or design. The players are continually communicating meanings to themselves and to each other from inside the formative process. They intuitively steer an ongoing process of narrative and dramaturgical choices. Seemingly, these choices are based both on:

- (1) the players' earlier life experiences that have fired their imaginations, including stories and their compositional structures;
- (2) their earlier experiences of/with dramatic expressions in theatre, drama education and play-culture; and
- (3) their ongoing receptiveness to their own sensory representations within the performance process.

In comparing the dramaturgy of *Locked In* with the dramaturgy of an established aesthetic praxis in contemporary theatre performance, I am stepping outside of child-culture, in search of both an established aesthetic vocabulary with which to characterize the play-drama and a strategy for placing its aesthetic practice in a broader cultural perspective.

How are the practices alike? How do they differ?

What meanings can be revealed through this examination?

"New Performance"

In the example of the English theatre cooperative, Forced Entertainment, which I sketch below, we will see that many of the raw, aesthetic elements in the work of *devising* the piece in the workshop phase, are intentionally retained in the artistic refinement of the work. The group's performances have what I could coin as an "organic aesthetic", one that has grown out of the aesthetic process of devising, but which has been artistically honed to communicate outside of the play-circle. However, the honing process does not concern "beauty" or "aesthetically pleasing" effects. I will return later to what it *does* concern.

I have chosen two of Forced Entertainment's performances *Hidden J* and *Club of No Regrets*⁵ as filters for aesthetic characterization of play. At the time I saw these performances, I had spent one and two years respectively, analyzing children's play-drama, and recognized similar expressive elements and effects. From video-films of both theatre performances I was able to study the aesthetics more closely. In order to understand the convergences and divergences between the artists' and the children's practices I have worked systematically, going back and forth between, on the one hand: - how the children are "doing it" in play - to understand how the aesthetic process grips the players sensorily; and, on the other hand: how the adults are doing it in performance - to understand how the aesthetics grip the audience. In addition, I have read extensively about the group's process of devising their pieces (Ettchells and Lowdon 1994, Forced Entertainment 1996, Oddey 1994, Quick 1994).

In *Locked In*, we find two simultaneous dramas, the production-drama - which we could call *The Wall* parallel to, and enabling, the dramatic action of the drama *Locked In*. The production-drama, I characterize as a "reflection-drama" about what invisibility means and what its consequences are. If this were a theatre performance we could say that the central dramaturgical convention of the whole piece is: dramatic action and production action played simultaneously by the same actors.

How does this resemble Forced Entertainment's work? I will very briefly summarize characteristics of the two devised theatre performances.

A devised theatre product is work that has emerged from and been generated by a group of people working in collaboration.....an original product that directly emanates from assembling, editing, and re-shaping individuals' contradictory experiences of the world.... The process of devising is about the fragmentary experience of understanding ourselves, our culture, and the world we inhabit" (Oddey 1994: 1).

The group creates a performance from the bottom up, rather than from the top down in a faithful interpretation of an already existing dramatic text. It is unfortunately impossible to do the performances justice here. For me, they are strongly gripping, upsetting and darkly humorous simultaneously. Their fragmented narratives are characteristic of post-modern art. The meanings being expressed are not monovocal but ambiguous. The reading of these meanings is strongly contingent on the spectator's own life experience and formal experience.

⁵ *Hidden J*, Forced Entertainment. Institute for Contemporary Art, London, December 1994; as well as a video film of a performance. *Club of No Regrets*, Forced Entertainment. Hedmark Theatre Festival (Norway): *Absolutt galskap*, June 1997; as well as a video film of a workshop early in the devising process, and a video film of one performance.

For the sake of creating a frame of reference, the "story" in *Club*, which I refer to most frequently, can be reductively summarized as a conflict between two hostage takers and their hostages, a couple; first at their kitchen table and, later, in the "outside world". There is not a clear resolution to the drama. The aesthetic in both pieces is rough and unruly - and one of the major impressions is their deliberate shabbiness, which is a clear aesthetic statement. In more detail:

Acting as sensory knowledge about "temporary identities"

The performers in *Forced Entertainment* are not trained in the theatre, but have come to their expressive work through an interest in contemporary mass culture - music, science fiction, television, and cinema (Etchells 1997). They do not *act* - in the sense of portraying a *character* in the conventions of realistic theatre (see Zarrilli 1995). For instance, in *Club* they represent without emotion, until the actual experience of representing the situations in repetitive episodes, seems to *accumulate* emotion - which is *then* expressed. They seem to be representing their sensory and emotional experience of the situation rather than realistically portraying an objective situation. You see them constructing meaning through their actions, and spectating their construction of meaning. One could say that there are "role-positions", but no "characters" - in the sense of attempting to portray "true" psychological identities. As artists, they conceive of *identity* not as a whole inner quality, but as the enactment of cultural fragments. Cultural fragments become temporary identities to enact (Etchells 1997).

The role-figures do not address each other in dialogue; the "acting" is frontal, with text being sent out in the direction of the audience but seemingly directed back toward the person speaking. The role-figures' texts could be called "self-monologues".

In *Locked In*, the children also play role-positions, or role-fragments, without portraying "characters". One can often see that they also have the *double* consciousness: enacting the actions of the role-position while, simultaneously, spectating themselves and the drama, from the outside - either with a twinkle in the eye, or with bland detachment. When they seem emotionally involved, it does not seem to lie in the portrayal of the role-position, but in their *real* (*metafictional*) response to what they are doing in the fiction.

In *Forced Entertainment*, one would also use the term "bland detachment" to describe the actors' seeming relationship to their role-positions and to the drama they simultaneously enact and spectate. The audience, in turn, reacts emotionally to their *lack* of emotion. We reflect: "Perhaps the lack of emotion expresses a victimization both for the perpetrator and the perpetrated (ourselves?)."

In *Locked In*, there is another spatial structure and dynamic in play. The dramatic action centers around the witch's cottage, but the space is extended significantly in the first chase episode - across an entire room and into another room. However, the focal space for the players is the Witch's space, the cottage. The extended space is the Captor's space which surrounds it indefinitely. The players have created a significant aesthetic tension between an inner space and an extended space. When the Witch is locked into her space, the Captor circles around it in the tension of waiting for a reaction; but when the Witch escapes and chases her captor, both players break out of the constraint and tension of the inner space and the "waiting dynamic" - in a rush of emotional and physical energy - into the extended space.

Each time there is escape, the burst of energy into the use of extended space seems to be a sensory response to the tension they have built up in the previous representation in the inner space:

Build-up of tension -> release of tension -> build-up of tension -> release of tension, etc..

This structure in the use of space is an organic outcome of their aesthetic process. We see clearly in the micro-analysis that the physical pattern of spatial use arises out of the internal, aesthetic chain of impulses:

Sensory representation -> sensation-perception, emotion -> reflection: what to do next?

The performers are creating and experiencing the spatial structure aesthetically from inside it. If this were a staged drama, the spectator would experience aesthetically the contrast in the variation of the use of space - as it is expressed in the variation of movement and rhythmic patterns between Tessa's static containment and Hilde's slow circling, and then the sudden burst of their rapid running. For the spectator, this pattern appears as composite form. However, we must remember that, in play-drama, it appears in the process of sensory representation and its sensations.

The formal appearance is an organic outcome of imaginative meaning-exploration, bodily sensation and emotion. The exploration of form in this performance is related to the contingencies of the situation being expressed, as the mimed sequences in *On a Boat* were. In both cases, the form was *called for* by the necessities in the situations the players created. Only after it was established as aesthetically satisfying to express what was on the agenda, could it be played with.

With these thoughts in mind, we move from the level of open analytical description of the internal aesthetic process and its external form, to a dramaturgical characterization of its appearance as a whole performance.

Comparison with Contemporary Performance in Other Cultural Contexts

After executing the first two levels of analysis I recognized a resemblance between qualities I observed in play-drama and conventions in an avant-garde performance I had experienced. The third level of analysis was developed to explore the significance of this recognition.

The open analytical commentary and description of the internal process in the play-drama are ways of setting forth a preliminary characterization and interpretation of the performers' aesthetic practice. As a supplement to this, comparison with actual theatre performances can unearth praxes and concepts to serve as background figures from which to profile the aesthetic-dramaturgical practice more distinctly. For the purpose of defining the frame within which the play-drama will be examined, I begin here with an introductory definition of "dramaturgy" and will discuss further how the concept is conceived when applied to children's spontaneous performance.

Dramaturgy

Dramaturgy derives from the Greek *dramaturgia* which means the art of composing a drama. It has to do with *how* a drama represents the world. Its meanings have evolved throughout theatre history - first referring only to the dramatic text, and later also including the performance text. We can distinguish between the internal structure of a written text and the external structure of the performance text "which consists of forms which put into play the modalities... of performance..." (Pavis 1998: 124-125). In a written dramatic text, dramaturgy has to do with how the dramatist composes, or structures, the text in dramatic form - in actions and dialogue. In theatre performance, whether in one based on a literary text or one that is company-devised, dramaturgy has to do with the constituents of the staged drama, how they are composed and expressed through aesthetic-artistic means and how these components are weighted and structured. The dramaturgy carries artistic ideals (ideology) and values, and the concept of the artists for staging the performance and expressing its meanings. "Meaning in theatre is always a technical issue that has to do with materials, forms and structures" (Ibid.: 125). The choice of dramaturgies operates with the intention to seize an audience aesthetically.

The issue of *acting* in play-drama is a complex one. In *Locked In* a general characteristic of the acting is that the children do not pretend to be someone else: it is not clear that they are enacting *Bruna* and *Torgeir* - however much they have been inspired by *Circle*. However, they perform fictional actions and spectate them. The fiction *is* pretend, but the players seem to be playing *themselves* in an unknown situation - derivative of the situation in *The Circle*, but not an imitation. One has the feeling that they are deeply involved in the actions but in no way portraying characters or stereotypes. They are presenting the actions for themselves.⁶ *Locked In* is not a social realistic drama. It is a fanciful exploration of, and play with, aesthetic and thematic elements in *The Circle*. The children have grasped the tensions in the situations/conflicts enacted in *Circle*, and seem more motivated by the need to explore these than to directly imitate the characters and the narrative structure. They capture a general tendency in the relationship between *Bruna* and *Torgeir*, that of the shifting in the balance of power between them from one episode to the other. This is also a characteristic of *Club*.

We can compare the actor's and the child's work with role.

Whether or not a theatre production builds on a dramatist's text or ideas generated by the group, the actor's (the *Me*) first meeting with the situation to be played (the *Not-me*) - either in the material that emanates from the devising process or from a written text - will immediately produce a dialectical or dialogical relationship between her own life experience and the situation or role she meets. The field of tension that arises between the idea for the situation/role and the actor's own experiences creates images, feelings and perceptions of how the situation/role could be interpreted on the stage - to *become* a role-figure (a *Not-not-me*). However, in devised production the actors are not concerned with realistic psychological portrayal and the figure's subtext as they are in realistic theatre. But in both types of theatre, in order to *gestalt* the role-figure, there is a development from intuitive to conscious experimentation with what is to be represented - through the means of the actor's body and voice - with all their complex aesthetic and artistic possibilities in the use of space, objects, tempo, rhythm, etc.. In order for a performer to gain artistic control over the role-figure and complex interactions night after night, it is necessary that s/he become highly conscious of the expressive means s/he is employing.

The development of artistic control for repeated performances is not an issue within a play-drama - even though children derive great satisfaction and respect from co-players from expressive mastery (Mouritsen 1996). Our question here is to what extent Tessa and Hilde *have* created new role-figures. Does creating/acting a role-figure necessarily mean

⁶ See Bjørn Rasmussen 1990: 365-67 for a discussion of actor theory and drama education.

creating/acting the role of an *other*? I suggest that it also can mean that the child imagines that she is *herself*, but in a situation that she has never been in before. She pretends that she is in a new situation, and other personal qualities are called forth when she plays herself in that situation than those she experiences in her daily life. Can we say that the child is creating a role-figure even when she is playing herself in her own life situation - *pretending* to be (symbolically representing) herself? The child (*Me*) is then exploring and interpreting her own life situation through enacting it. She is meeting it as a *Not-Me*, and turning it into a *Not-Not-Me*. She is creating the role-figure of herself.

Are Tessa and Hilde playing a role-figure or playing an action? - Are they pretending or being? Children's dramatic playing is, in Norwegian, often called *rollelek* (roleplay). Sociological play theory says that children learn social roles by projecting themselves into *roles* in society other than their own. But can we say that Tessa and Hilde are playing roles other than themselves here? Can we characterize what the children are doing as a *gestalt* of "others"? We could rather say that they are *gestalting themselves* - with other qualities: braver and more exciting than their everyday selves. They create a new fiction, an existential situation. They enter into it and there they explore and interpret both the situation and themselves (their *own* qualities). Hilde acts aggressively, a rare quality for her. Tessa wills herself to physical and vocal stillness, rare qualities for her.

In social-realistic dramatic playing, we can see that the children *imitate* actions that they have seen adults execute and in doing so they can also imitate stereotypical characteristics of practicing a profession. In a play-sequence about a hairdresser competition which they have seen on television, I have also registered that one six-year old girl adopts a *particular* hairdresser's actions, turns of phrase and use of voice and body. In this case she imitates and reproduces a *person*, capturing the type exactly - with a use of expressive means that can take the adult spectator's breath away. She can imitate because of her ability to observe and register formal detail and because of her expressive technique - with aesthetic means such as voice, phrasing, breathing, body, gesture, timing, tempo, and rhythm. However, children are not actors as a profession. They express themselves not for an audience but for their own and each other's satisfaction - and the thrill of verisimilitude, of capturing what feels true for them. The children practice their technique each time they play, in order to move *themselves* and, perhaps, to become more attractive playing partners, but not to perfect the one drama performance. Flemming Mouritsen maintains that there is a strong motivation in child culture to perfect one's expressive skills in order to be accepted as a valuable part of the group (Mouritsen 1996).

spectator's emotional involvement in a linear dramaturgy through the use of montage fragments. As spectator, I experience that the form and the content are inseparable. *What* the group is saying and *how* they say it are organically connected. Their sensibility about the social and cultural life around them is expressed *as* form. The form is the content. The content is the form. Perhaps those who find this form aesthetically gripping recognize (in Norwegian: *erkjenne*), aesthetically, that the artistic *form* in which life is expressed reflects our experience of our culture. Etchells says:

By making art, we shape and re-shape the world in the same way as we all must live our lives: struggling to orient ourselves in the midst of our past and presents, assembling and re-assembling our contradictory experiences of the world. Memories, aspirations, stories, ideologies and desires are combined in *endless attempts to find new and better structures to make sense of ourselves and our world* (Oddey 1994: 88, my emphasis).

We watch them trying to make sense, in experimentation with a multitude of expressive elements and formal structures. The aesthetic *play-structure* we see in the theatre performance resembles the play-structure of playing children, who are also attempting to make sense of their world. The manifestation of the play-structure of the devising phase - the shaping and reshaping - remain, in an artistically honed form, in the dramaturgy of the performance event itself.

The difference is that the children do not hone the play-structure. We find it in its original and rawer form in play-drama because there is no intention of communicating outside the play circle.

The performance of imagination: the membrane between Being and acting

The analysis of the aesthetics of Forced Entertainment sheds light on the aesthetic practice in children's play-drama. This is so because the aesthetic that emerges from the group's devising process (*their* aesthetic practice) emerges organically from their playing dually with dramatic actions and production actions, as in play-drama performance. The artistic product strongly retains elements of what can be called "the process-aesthetic".

What characterizes the play-drama performance is its "process-aesthetic", an aesthetic organically related to production process, and to what I will call the "dramaturgy of the imagination". As children do in play-drama, Forced Entertainment seems, in the devising process, to develop their artistic, dramaturgical work on a thin membrane between their imaginations and the performance of the imagination, between the imagined world of the fiction and the reality of staging the fiction, between Being and acting.

The theatre of Forced Entertainment is a highly regarded aesthetic-artistic practice, on the cutting edge of the avant-garde. As children do in their aesthetic practice, the group starts by playing experience that grips *them* - in a way that grips them. Only then do they refine the expressions of this experience so that it can make sense, however unlinearly and unconventionally, to seize an audience outside the process - retaining the process-aesthetic in the artistic product.

The Danish dramaturg and drama-pedagogue Janek Szatkowski approaches a definition of performance dramaturgy as "an experiment with a state of mind on the margin between fiction and reality" (Szatkowski 1994: 16). This state of mind is the doubleness of consciousness that *appears* in both Forced Entertainment's art and the children's performance process, in the pragmatic intertwining of the production process with the enactment process - producing a distinctive aesthetic and reflexive value. As spectators to Forced Entertainment, meanings are not served to the audience in already polished forms. Because the devising process is visible in the artistic product, we get pulled into the meaning-and form-seeking process. We are witness to the group's reflexive process, even in the performance event. - In the performance event itself, we see the deliberations over form-and-substance that have taken place in the form-and-meaning seeking process of devising. The aesthetic deliberations themselves have been taken from the devising process and transformed into significant meaning-bearing artistic elements in the performance dramaturgy.

As is the case in the devised theatre performance, we see that the children's reflection over experience and its meanings takes place on the membrane between the imagination and the acts of performing the imagination. - In both practices, this results in the non-hierarchical use and value of the expressive elements that come into play. However, what distinguishes the play-drama practice from the theatre practice is that the children do not go the steps further to create an artistic communication with an outside audience. Otherwise, the same aesthetic, reflexive and cultural values are manifest as in the artistic practice of Forced Entertainment.

The Significance of Comparison

The tools at the three levels of analysis and the interplay among them have made the rich findings possible. At analysis levels 1 and 2 we have been able to make visible the internal aesthetic-reflexive process of the players and to interpret the meanings that have emerged in their play with form. In this work the discovery of the play-structure and the conceptualization of production actions and dramatic actions has been central. At level 2, the use of Donald

Winnicott's psychoanalytical theory about transitional phenomena in infancy and Richard Schechner's application of this theory to performance practice have been tools with which to conceptualize and make visible the reflexive zones in the aesthetic process.

What, then, has been the significance of Level 3: the comparison of the play-drama performance with performances in another cultural context? The comparative work has enhanced the understanding of the value of an aesthetic-reflexive constituent of play-drama performance - the double play-structure - as a foundation for artistic practice. This constituent, first discovered in the open (non-comparative analytical description (Level 2), is more fully explored and conceptualized by comparing the way in which the theatre positions are executed in *Locked In* (discovered at Level 1) with the way they are executed in contemporary experimental theatre practice. In the interpretive, hermeneutic circle created by the point by point comparison, the identification of similar patterns sets each of the practices in relief.

In the work of *Forced Entertainment* we find that playing with the "theatre positions" in the devising process creates the formal material and the whole concept for the work of art. It is in the play-structure of the devising process that formal materials have emerged and the thematic material has been explored. This is the raw material around which aesthetic reflection has taken place in giving artistic shape to the performance. We see the aesthetic-reflexive value of the double play-structure more clearly in play-drama because we have seen it as the *primus motor* in the artistic devising process.

We do not customarily think of dramatic playing in terms of dramaturgical structure. The vocabulary we have used prior to the comparative analysis - "play-structure" - has been filled with new meaning because of the comparative work. We see how the play-structure emerges into the chief dramaturgical column for the theatre performance. In regard to this research, Etchells maintains that the group has not previously thought of the play element in their work.⁸ In the research, the discovery of the significance of the dominant play-structure as an artistic, dramaturgical component has been a surprise. The finding of the resemblance to a respected artistic practice renders prominent the aesthetic value and the integrity of the interpretational (reflexive) play-structure in the play-drama.

Even though there are similarities between the play-drama and the performance theatre, there is a distinction as well. Because the aesthetic practice in *Locked In* emerges in the cultural context of play, its aesthetic value rests within the communicative circle of the players. It is not honed

⁸ Private correspondence with Tim Etchells - available upon request.

to communicate with spectators outside this circle, as it has been in the artistic context of Forced Entertainment. The likenesses are of an aesthetic nature, the differences are of a cultural and artistic nature. However, it is not far-fetched to imagine that from the formal and thematic material that has emerged in *Locked In* a meaningful theatre performance for children or adults could be artistically, if untraditionally, shaped.

Finding what is aesthetically distinctive about the play-drama does not, then, necessarily mean finding only what differs from the other performances. Finding differences would be expected, due to the differing cultural contexts, intentions and significance of the practices. However, the fact and nature of the resemblance is *unexpected* - an eye-opener. Its chief significance lies, perhaps, in the fact that the children's aesthetic practice becomes aligned with a post-modern artistic practice that seeks meanings rather than communicating pre-existent meanings - as is the case with classical dramaturgy.

The resemblance of the children's aesthetic practice to a dramaturgy that does not attempt to directly represent reality, or to create the illusion of reality, raises the question about how to conceptualize the *type* of dramaturgy this is. This question suggests a new level of analysis, which we will consider in regard to the next analysis.

Whatever the inner thought of Tessa and Hilde, we can call their performance a transformation into temporary identities, into *Not-not-me*'s, or *New-me*'s. And we can call it *performed reflection*.

Fragmented plot as a reflection over meanings

In Forced Entertainment's theatre pieces there are no linear stories, but rather episodic fragments which, as spectator, one can piece together and create meanings for oneself. The narrative fragments in *Club of No Regrets* are juxtaposed to the beat of a *Dramatist-Dramaturg-Director* Figure, perched above the "back-wall of an apartment", who calls out to the *actors* which episode they should play next. The few episodes are staged/repeated in new combinations; placed randomly, until the audience makes its own associations and connections. There *are* enactments of dramatic situations, as well as commentaries on these, which are full of energy, but these do not provide linear narrative direction. There is a circular dramaturgy, with repetitive elements which "bore in" and around a dramatic situation, rather than pointing forward. The episodes accumulate and make an impact without guiding the spectator to "THE point". Then it ends, with no resolution. It could go on and on, as life does.

In *Locked In*, the children repeat the same dramatic episode three times, with varying dynamics. Each episode has a resolution, in that Tessa ends up locked-in again in the cottage; but the whole sequence ends with no resolution. By this episodic repetition with no resolution, they are not making a statement about life and culture in general, as *Club of No Regrets* does. However, as an aesthetic *play-structure* read from the outside, it resembles the narrative shape of *Club*. Does the captor win over the captive? Who is the victim of whom, or of what? These are the unresolved questions raised and being reflected over in the aesthetic practice of both the play-drama and the theatre performances.

Play with scenography, props, costumes, and effects as reflections of meaning

In the theatre pieces these appear to be "hand-made" and are used, seemingly, in an off-hand manner. The mechanics of operation are intentionally visible, appearing as part of the message that this is, relatively speaking, non-illusional theatre (Quick 1997) which creates a strong sense of immediacy and of presence.

Even though the actors are playing happenings from everyday life, the set-pieces and props allude to reality rather than trying to re-present it in "real copy". In the performance *Hidden J* the actors, at the beginning of the performance, come in and construct the set, putting up the walls of what will be a building where some of the action takes place. We view some of the

action through a wide, empty window frame in the front wall of this structure; and some of the action outside it, in non-connotative space. There is a pile of clothes on one side of upstage which the actors make use of underway, a stool downstage, and a bare lightbulb on a wire that is carried about at certain points by one actor who lights up another.

In *Club of No Regrets* two of the actors are "villains" who take the two others hostage, by tying them to their chairs. But even in this highly dramatic action, the Hostage-takers conduct themselves *as if they were* emotionless Stagehands. And they *are also* Stagehands, as well as Props persons - providing props, installing or destructing scenographic elements, spraying blood out of plant sprayers, and the like - all carried out in the grotesque, expressionless style of their Hostage-taker-role-position.

As in *Locked In*, both of the theatre performances have the visible production-action running parallel to the dramatic action. The aesthetics have nothing to do with beauty, but with capturing "the feel" of the life around them - which is often far from beautiful (my interpretation). Seemingly, they use the production action, aesthetically and artistically, to give the *feel* of the socio-cultural machinery - that knocks people and the environment about. The group says clearly that they wish to express their collective experience of culture around them. The impulses (experiences) for their playing come from collecting the "news" of the social and political culture - both literal notes they find lying on the ground, lists, letters, scraps of writing, as well as material from mass culture - late night television fare, and daily bad news as it is portrayed by reductive, expressionless television journalism.

Retaining play-structures from the devising process in theatre performance

Although there is no detailed written description of Forced Entertainment's devising process, Tim Etchells, writer and director, characterizes it as "going into a room and playing". The group of five or six actors and Etchells improvise randomly from the fragments they have collected/experienced. They videotape the whole process, watch the tapes, rearrange the fragments, put them together - until it "feels right" for them. They rehearse, refine, rearrange, add, cut, and play for audiences, until a performance emerges which expresses their experience - in a way that communicates outside of the workshop process.

The form is the content:

Out of the "untidy", fragmented, sometimes monotonous form, magical moments suddenly crystallize. The group's intention is that these moments will make the audience *take notice* (Etchells 1997, Oddey 1994) - perhaps like an aesthetic exclamation mark. This wish resembles a "bent" echo of Brecht's wish to activate the spectator mentally by fracturing the

ANALYSIS 3: *CAPTURE THE WOLF, WE SHALL!*

In this section I analyze the longest and most complex performance of the three represented in the thesis. I focus in particular on a twelve-minute sequence of the forty minute drama, employing tools from the previous three analytical levels and devising sub-levels at the comparative level - as the need arises in the meeting with the aesthetic practice.

Because of the complexity of this performance, this section is organized differently than the previous two. As necessary preparation for the reader - before delving into the length and thickness of the transcription analysis - I wish to provide a synopsis of the drama's actions as well as to summarize the motifs, action-themes, and symbolic structure. In doing so, I am articulating preliminary findings prior to the reader's experience of the micro-analysis. Subsequent to the presentation of the transcription and micro-analysis I continue to deepen the analysis and interpretation.

Introduction to the Performance

Preliminary findings: An overview

What follows directly below is a synopsis of the story elements in the whole forty minute performance - a story which was played in dramatic form by two girls: Tessa, aged 3,8 years, and Hilde, aged 5,1 years. I call it *Capture the Wolf, We Shall!* This is a line from Tessa's dialogue in which she states her dramatic intention to Hilde. Although I recount the synopsis first, it is the end product of a long analytical process. It is *my* construction of the narrative threads of the drama performance, *my* interpretation of "what happens". The reader will be able to evaluate the validity of this construction through the subsequent analytical process.

Synopsis of the play-drama story

- Once upon a time there were two mothers who were taking care of their baby and newborn chickens. The first mother discovers the presence of a wolf and is intent on capturing it. Both mothers shoot at the wolf with their pistols, but although the wolf is frightened, he returns. While the second mother is taking care of the babies, the first mother shoots at the wolf again and manages to cage him.

But another wolf has frightened some baby rabbits, so the first mother goes to look for wolf tracks and to gather food for their helpless babies. After tricking the caged wolf by feeding him some fish, she begins abusing him with words and actions. She jumps on him continuously from a considerable height as he lies helpless. The second mother joins in the punishment. However, although the wolf dies, he does not die entirely - he revives and disappears. In disguise, he visits *the seven little kids* whom *the three little pigs* rescue. They cut off the wolf's limbs.

When the wolf returns, the mothers/wolf-catchers continue their torture. The wolf disappears, but returns again. Finally, it seems that the wolf is really dead, so the two wolf-catchers cut open his stomach to rescue the baby *chickens* that he has eaten. In the middle of this operation, the wolf-catchers also die. However, they are really only pretending to sleep, so they come to life again. They then take care of some baby mice.

Some time later they return to the corpse of the wolf and, finally rid of his threat, they carry him to his burial place. However, the wolf awakens and howls again, not entirely dead after all. The mothers then die because they have touched the dead wolf. However, they revive and continue taking care of the mice. The wolf does not disturb them - for the time being.

The end.

The motifs :

Two mothers struggle against a wolf who threatens helpless babies and animals. Seven little kids and three little pigs also struggle against the wolf.

The wolf dies from the punishment several times but comes to life again.

The mothers also die and come to life again.

Finally, they - perhaps - succeed in killing the wolf and rescuing his victims, at least temporarily.

The story in the performance *Capture the Wolf, We Shall!* (hereafter referred to as *Wolf*) appears to be an interpretation of the performers' impressions of "The Wolf" that they have encountered in several fairy tales. These impressions are supplemented by their own, original expansions upon the tales and the dramatic actions therein.

The action themes :

The main actions of the drama can be divided roughly into two major parts:

- The first part of the drama involves two mothers' capturing and punishing the wolf, and protecting helpless babies; as well as the wolf's repeated death and resurrection.
- The second part involves two mothers' rescuing of the victims from the wolf's stomach, as well as his and their own deaths and resurrections.
- In both parts the performers combine thematic elements from versions of *The Three Little Pigs*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, and *The Wolf and the Seven Young Kids*.¹

A preliminary overview of the symbolic structure

In the first part of the drama, at the point at which Tessa/Mother/Wolf-catcher has captured the wolf, she develops a symbolic form of punishment. The form of the punishment can be characterized as a circular chanting and hopping ritual. From a *Tripp-trapp* chair the children hop repeatedly on an invisible wolf. Before each hop they invent small ditties - incantatory, rhythmic warnings or insults to the wolf. The children have taken a non-symbolic, physical play form, hopping continually from a height, and transformed it into a symbolic expression of punishment. This form is physically, vocally, and verbally vital and rambunctious. The players are pulled into its rhythmical force and momentum and do not cease until they become physically exhausted. Tessa's thematic sidetracking - from her own punishment of the wolf to narrative and mimed episodes from the three traditional fairy tales - demands less physical energy and can be interpreted, to a certain extent, as physical rest from the strenuous symbolic form of her own, devised punishment ritual.

The structure in which the story is enacted is fragmented, discontinuous, and full of repetitions and digressions. It appears chaotic, without form and without logic. However, the analysis reveals the internal logic of the composition, for the players - in an advanced formal structure. In the transcription below, for the sake of readers' grasp of the whole action, I dwell particularly on those episodes which directly illuminate the core narrative and dramaturgical convention Tessa adopts. - This is a dramatic "monologue" form with a storytelling convention which involves rapid shifts from the one narrative position to the other - providing a built-in

¹ My thanks to students at Oslo University College and the University of Trondheim who, at a late stage in the analysis process, have pointed out elements in *Wolf* from Grimms' *The Wolf and the Seven Young Kids* with which I had not been familiar. They have also informed me that a Czech musical version of this fairy-tale is shown on Norwegian television each Christmas - important contextual information. My initial lack of knowledge about both these aspects highlights the riskiness in making definitive interpretations as well as the importance of sharing preliminary interpretations with other readers and wider audiences. One student has also pointed out similarities between Tessa's actions and those in the animated film *Coyote Roadrunners* - which has been shown on television. An analytical comparison between the two could be theoretically exciting - exploring how animation film aesthetics can be adapted in play-drama performance. I will discuss the aesthetics of popular culture in the last section of the chapter.

dramaturgical structure. Theatre-goers have become familiar with this convention in the dramatic monologues of Dario Fo.

I will discuss what the children are doing in terms of the concepts of *sjuzet* and *fabula*, which were initiated by the Formalists and have been developed in subsequent artistic practices in literature and theatre as well as in theoretical reflection.

A search for the fabula:

The *fabula* is traditionally understood as the story - the chronologically ordered series of events. According to the theatre theorist Patrice Pavis, Bertolt Brecht, in a criticism of Aristotle's theory, "considered the *fabula* not as an immediate fact but as something that must be reconstructed and *sought* by all, from dramaturg to actor" (Pavis 1997: 139, my emphasis). Brecht worked theoretically with the concept of *fabula*, which he interpreted to mean: "how the story is set out, brought forward and *shown* by the theatre, by actors, scene designers, mask-makers, costumiers, composers and choreographers. They unite their various arts for the joint operation, without of course sacrificing their independence in the process" (Ibid.: 139-142, my emphasis).³

I interpret Brecht to mean that although there is an objective series of events that take place in the dramatic text, the *fabula* in theatre is: the scenic result that shows the *meanings* that lie in the events. - It is the sum of the aesthetic and artistic ways in which the events and their meanings are set forth by the combination of all the art forms that converge in the performance. The *fabula* contains an interpretation of the events.

In the case of play-drama, in which there is no pre-designed series of events, I define *fabula* as: the way in which experiences are represented and constructed - from which a story emerges (or can be interpreted to emerge). The performers, based on their experiences with the fairy-tales, are *seeking* their own story and its meanings - their *fabula*. The analysis below will describe how the children's *fabula* about the wolf is "set out, brought forward and shown" in the acts of the performance process. From the facts of the stories and plots of the three fairy tales that are being played with, the children can be said to be seeking the *fabula* in the process of performing the drama. The *fabula* does not exist prior to seeking to discover it and to tell it to themselves. I attempt to read the performance and to give an overview of it as a chronological series of events - that expresses the players' interpretations of the way they have experienced the events (the fairy tales).

³ *Fabula*: See Brecht's *A Short Organum for the Theatre*, section 70.

A search for the sjuzet:

An understanding of the *sjuzet* - the plot, intrigue: cause and effect - of *Wolf* can only emerge by uncovering the *fabula*, and vice versa. Traditionally, the *fabula* lies behind the *sjuzet* but, in the case of spontaneous play-drama (as we discovered in the analysis of *Locked In*), we cannot discover the intrigue apart from discovering the *fabula* (i.e.: the way in which the story is told).

I return now to a chronological portrayal of the analytical process.

Preliminary analytical questions

Based on the findings in the previous analyses, I have constructed preliminary questions for this analysis and interpretation. As an aid in the analysis, I make a distinction between the dramatic actions, as an idea, and the expression of the actions in performance.

The distinction between the dramatic actions and the expression of the actions:

As a result of discoveries in Analysis 2, an operative premise for constructing further analytical questions is the distinction between: (1) the dramatic actions (in the series of events) as abstracted ideas and, (2) the way these actions are expressed aesthetically in concrete performance acts. Given a specific dramatic action - i.e. "she punishes the wolf", there are many ways in which this action can be expressed: - for instance, she shoots the imagined wolf with a rectangular block, the size of a pistol; she cages him with large rectangular pillows; or she hops on him continuously with her great weight from a chair.

I pose questions about both of these aspects. Even though all the aspects being examined are interwoven, in the analytical process each one must be questioned separately. Subsequently, I will put them together again in a meaningful whole.

What is the drama about on the surface?

- What are the individual actions? What do these actions *seem* to "say"?

How is the dramatic action expressed - e.g. acting and narrating?

- Who does what and how?

What are the production actions?

- How is the drama produced? - e.g. *directing* and *dramaturgical* decisions, production of *scenography*, *costumes*, *props*, *lighting*, *sound effects*, etc.

- Who does what and how?

How are the aesthetic structures?

- How are the expressive means composed in the run of the whole performance?

These are tools developed from insights from previous work at Analysis levels 1 and 2. The question below is at the comparative level, at Analysis level 3.

Do we discover recognizable dramaturgical conventions and structures?

What meanings does the compositional form-process carry?

- What experiences and meanings can be read in the *way* the actions are formally expressed and composed? - What does the formal process reveal about the *themes* being explored?

As in the previous analyses, I insert in the transcription micro-analytic questions and commentary through which I try to understand the movement of the performance, both formally and thematically - and to make visible the reflection inherent in the aesthetic practice. The complexity of the drama is reflected in the complexity of the commentary. Here, it is related to the identification of three primary aspects of the aesthetic process - what I read as:

- 1) the thematic threads,
- 2) the formal elements and their structural composition, and
- 3) the symbolic content - direct, metaphoric, or metonymic - of the expressive actions,

as well as and my interpretation of what they mean.

These three aspects are also inseparably interwoven. Nonetheless, the function of the micro-analysis is to temporarily separate them into their parts. In putting them back together I am making an interpretation of the whole aesthetic practice and the reflection which I see is taking place there.

As with the previous transcriptions, the one presented below is the result of an already long, analytical and interpretative process. - It represents my final assignation of theatre positions and role-positions to the children's actions. In the analysis of *Locked In*, which was a more complex drama than *On a Boat*, it became increasingly clear that an understanding of what theatre positions the players are performing is invaluable in making visible:

- 1) the unwinding dramaturgical process in the children's continual alternation between varying mental positions and aesthetic means,
- 2) the interweaving of production actions and dramatic actions,
- 3) how performance in these positions contributes in different ways to the players' aesthetic immersion in the drama performance, and
- 4) in what ways the choices of and performance in the positions are manifestations of a reflexive state of "body-mind".

I move now to the analysis, beginning at levels 1 and 2.

Assignment of Theatre Positions and Micro-analytical Commentary

Contextual information

- The space where the children are playing is the same as in the first two analyses. It is now suggestive of fairy tales and "once upon a time". In this end of the large common room there are still the two foam rubber mattresses covered in dark, warm colors - lying under the large windows which dominate the two adjacent walls. A new element has been added directly across from the room. The corner has been transformed by the teachers into "the olden days", because of a thematic focus on fairy tales. There is a scene painted on brown paper which depicts the inside of a log cabin - a fireplace constructed of thick paper, and a cradle hanging from the ceiling.
- The thematic focus on fairy tales may well have inspired the content of the drama that emerges in the playing.
- In the forplay before the drama below crystallizes, the girls play peacefully by "the fireplace" with some wooden eggs which they refer to as chickens. They lose interest and now are running on and off the mattresses.

There is child and adult activity directly beside the play space which does not interfere with their immersion in playing as it develops into a drama.

The performance: *Capture the Wolf, We Shall!*

The players	Roles:
Tessa - 3.8	Narrator Mother/Wolf-catcher Wolf Secondary characters
Hilde - 5.1	Mother/Wolf-catcher

(For the unmediated transcription see Appendix 4.)

(Part I)

9:26 a.m.

(line 1) **Tessa/Mother:** Goes over to the opposite side of the room. Tessa begins to rock a doll which lies in the cradle and sings gently. She goes over to a display bookcase on the wall beside the cradle and takes out a book. *Now I shall give something to our baby.* She lays the book in the cradle.

9.27

(5) **Hilde/Scenographer:** Builds a wall which separates the playing space from the rest of the room. She first uses two Tripp-trapp-chairs at each end of the space. *Now we have to use some pillows.* Between the chairs, she sets six large square pillows that stand on end and come up to her waist. She stands still and examines her wall.

(Hilde literally builds a separate space, which Huizinga has discussed as the collective, mental space of playing children.)

(10) **Tessa/Mother/Singer:** Rocks the baby (doll) that lies in a cradle that hangs from the ceiling. She sings a lullaby. She goes to a bookcase that hangs on the wall beside the cradle: *Now I'll give something to our baby.* She takes a book down and lays it in the cradle.

9.28

Tessa/Mother/Dramatist: Runs back to the bookcase, takes out "Little Red Riding (15) Hood", goes over to Hilde and pretend-reads for her. On the cover of the book there is a grotesque picture of the wolf with an oversized head and a very large, gaping jaw. *We have to go out.* She points at the cover. *Capture Red Riding Hood and the wolf, we shall!*

(Now the drama begins. Tessa says they shall capture Red Riding Hood and the wolf, but it is the wolf who is the victim of the ensuing drama. Tessa uses poetic phrasing in the last statement.)

Tessa/Mother/Wolf-catcher/Props person/Sound producer: She lays the book in (20) the cradle and goes to the mattress where she fetches an L-formed block. She aims and fires into the open space: *Bang, bang, bang*. The block is the same size as a small revolver and she holds it with both hands as police do on crime-series on television.

Tessa/Wolf: *Ahhhhhh. Ouuuuuuuuu*. She walks toward the cradle.

(This is the start of the rotation among role-positions.)

(25) **Tessa/Wolf catcher:** Lays the gun in the cradle.

Tessa/Wolf: She wanders aimlessly around the space, seemingly punch-drunk. (*Is she an injured wolf, or is she pausing for ideas?*)

Hilde/Mother: Takes the book out of the cradle and lays it on the floor.

Tessa/Mother: Takes two wooden eggs out of the cradle, cuddles them lovingly, lays them on the mattress. *Poor little chicken and poor little baby egg!*

9.29

(30) She takes the eggs from the mattress and lays them on the table beside the wall Hilde has built. She returns to the baby in the cradle and rocks it. *Poor little baby*. She looks at the camera, but goes immediately back to her playing. The eggs roll off the table onto the floor. She runs toward them: *Now I'm going crazy!*

(35) **Hilde/Mother/Wolf-catcher/Sound producer:** Walks over to the eggs. *Let's hope they cracked, the eggs*. She picks them up. *They cracked. Crrraaack. Chicken*.

Tessa/Mother/Singer: *Hallo. Hallo. Now we've got alot of babies here*. She picks up the eggs, draws them to her mouth as if they were small birds: *Poor (40) things*. She lays them in the cradle.

(- Are they "poor things" because they are in potential danger from the wolf?)

- Now they have baby chickens. In Norwegian the word for chickens is *kyllinger*. For a young child the sound is difficult to distinguish from *killinger*, which is part of the word for

young goats - *geitekillinger*. From the fact that they now have baby chickens (*kyllinger*), Tessa may associate to the fairy-tale *The Wolf and the Seven Young Goats* (*killinger*). This seems confirmed later in the enactment.)

Hilde/Mother: Picks up the baby (doll) from the cradle.

9.30

Tessa/Mother/Singer: *Now we'll have a party! Now we'll have a party! Now we'll have a party! Now we'll have a party!* She goes to the book which is lying on the floor beside the cradle and places it back in the bookcase. She looks at the (45) picture of the wolf on the cover: *Why do you come back the whole time, Wolf?*

(In all three of the traditional fairy-tales, the characters celebrate after they have been victorious over the wolf. But the wolf returns immediately, as he does in *The Three Little Pigs* and *The Seven Young Goats* (*kids*). The question in l. 45 is the key to the full arch of the dramatic action.)

Hilde/Mother/Dramatist-Director: *Take your gun, Tessa.* She is walking around with the baby under her arm. *It's there.* She points at the cradle.

Tessa/Mother/Wolf-catcher: Takes the gun from the cradle, goes over to the bookcase and shoots at the picture of the wolf.

(The picture is an icon of the wolf.)

(50) **Hilde/Mother/Wolf-catcher/Sound producer:** *I'll take the gun here.* She takes a rectangular block from a large bookcase which partially divides the room. She aims at the bookcover: *Bang, bang.* She lays the block back on the shelf.

Tessa/Wolf: She sways around in the space. *Ehhhh. Ehhhh.* Her tongue is (55) hanging out of her mouth. She falls onto the mattress.

Tessa/Mother/Composer-Singer/Lyricist: She gets up from the mattress, walks around and sings: *Lovely baby, you shall slumber now.*

Hilde/Mother/Spectator: She walks around holding the baby, takes a scarf around it and follows after Tessa.

(She does not express emotion toward the baby.)

9.31

(60) **Tessa/Mother/Wolf-catcher/Singer:** *Ha, ha, ha.* (The melody from the film or cassette of Disney's *Three Little Pigs*) She climbs up on the Tripp-trapp chair closest to the mattress. *Hello, you dumb old wolf. Hello, you dumb old wolf. Hello, you dumb old wolf.* She directs the song, with its skipping rhythm, to her right - down behind the wall of pillows that Hilde has built, where the imagines (65) wolf is held captive. *Hello!*

Tessa/Wolf: *Auuu.*

Tessa/Mother/Wolf-catcher: She fans her left hand toward the wolf.

Tessa/Wolf: She turns on the chair, lifts her head and breathes heavily like an animal, dog-like.

(70) **Tessa/Wolf-catcher:** Climbs down from the chair: *I'll throw some food to you, I will.* She fetches a block from the bookshelf and throws it into the cage made of pillows. *Hello, wolf! Here's some food. Hee, hee, hee. I fooled the wolf because it was only fish!* She crosses her arms and sneers knowingly.

Hilde/Mother/Spectator: She sits and takes care of the baby in the corner beside (75) the large bookcase. She has a scarf which she lays on her lap and wraps the baby in it. She is following Tessa's enactment.

(Tessa is continually in motion, rhythmic and dynamic.)

Tessa/Baby rabbit: She climbs up on the chair again, stands there and pipes a high tone: *Heeeeeeeee.*

(80) **Tessa/Mother/(Singer):** *Poor little baby rabbit. I must go out and see.* She climbs down from the chair. *No, no, no* - in an angry voice. *Now I see the wolves' tracks. I'm going.* She goes determinedly out into the other part of the common room, outside the play-space that Hilde has established with the pillows. She run-hops over to the bench by the table there, leans over the bench (85) and mimes that she is scooping together something into her hands. *(Food?) Picking, picking.* She walks back to the play-area, while she hums "Jingle Bells" and ends the phrase with, *Now you shall get foo-ood.* She goes to the cradle, leans over and pours the food from her hands carefully. She turns away from

the cradle and brushes the palms of her hands against each other, as if brushing (90) off crumbs. She goes to the mattress and lies down on her stomach.

(At this point I do not interpret this position on the mattress as the wolf's. However, later in the performance it becomes so.)

At last it's okay that.....she stops. All right, then

(I cannot hear what she says)...

to help. She thunders: All right, you can't fool me!

(That the wolf can't fool *her* is an important theme in the drama. Her goal seems to be to outsmart the wolf.)

She rises and goes over to the wolf-cage.

(95) *Tessa/Sound producer: Knock, knock.* She knocks on a pillow.

Tessa/Wolf: *AUUUUUUU.*

Tessa/Wolf-catcher: She pulls her hand away from the cage as if the wolf is going to bite it.

(100) **Tessa/Wolf?:** She sticks out her tongue and blows out. She goes over to the mattress and lies down.

(- Is she imagining that she is the wolf here?)

- A central feature of the dramaturgical composition thus far is that Tessa, in the role-position of the Wolf-catcher, has shot or related in other ways to the wolf; thereafter, she often switches to the role-position of the Wolf and gives his response.)

Tessa/Dramatist-Narrator: Rises and goes over to the Tripp-trapp chair which is a meter from the mattress. She climbs up. *Now then, the hopping shall begin.*

(This is a major turning point in the overall dramaturgical structure.)

Tessa/Mama/Wolf-catcher/Choreographer-dancer: Hops from the highest step (105) of the chair onto the mattress, a space which *represents* the invisible wolf, then returns to the chair.

(The role positions of Mother and Wolf-catcher seem to be encompassed within the same rolefigure: A Mother who is a Wolf-catcher. I assign the theatre positions of *Choreographer-dancer* here, and the reader will see that they should be assigned throughout the whole circular hopping ritual sequence. This aspect will be interpreted at length below.)

The wolf is frightened. She hops on the wolf again, rises, and makes the circle back to the chair.

Hilde/Mother: Lays the baby in the cradle and makes it comfortable. She is standing with her back to Tessa. *The wolf was frightened, that wolf, yes indeed.* (110) She turns and walks over to the hopping-chair, determinedly - with her hands on her hips.

(Hilde has not appeared to spectate Tessa's performance, however it is clear that she has done so, even with her back turned.)

9.34

Tessa/Wolf-catcher: *So - we hop, one, two, three.* Hops on the wolf again.

Hilde/Wolf-catcher: *Upon the wolf I shall hop!* She hops.

(She is using poetic phrasing.)

- Now Hilde begins to participate more actively in the wolf-drama, perhaps because Tessa has found a physical action, *an aesthetic form*, in which Hilde, as spectator, has become sensorily-aesthetically involved.)

Tessa/metafictional : To the camera: *We're playing wolves.*

(A telling metafictional commentary: - her interpretation of the focus of their drama? We will see that she intertextualizes The Wolves from "The Three Little Pigs", "Red Riding Hood", and "The Seven Young Goats", actualizing them as The Wolf.)

(115) **Tessa/Mother-Narrator:** She goes up on the chair, and rolls out an imaginary parchment scroll, in the manner of a herald in days of old. *The wolf has stolen gold from our children - gold we have bought.*

(Here she begins a pattern of switching back and forth between role-positions of the *Narrator* - where she is outside the action and narrating or commenting upon it, and *Mother/Wolf-catcher* - where she is inside the action. This expands upon the complexity of the dual perspectives she has initiated above, as both *Wolf-catcher* and *Wolf*.)

- As *Narrator*, she is telling from the same perspective as the *Mother/Wolf-catcher*. In lines 116-117 she motivates their intrigue with the wolf.

- She seems to be performing for the camera - an unavoidable disturbance. Methodologically, it is a major point that this is so. Perhaps the performance would have had another aesthetic character had this not been the case. During the next stages of the drama, she alternates

between being totally immersed in the fiction, and being aware of the photographer. She slips in and out of self-forgetfulness, but gradually seems immersed in the invented story.)

Tessa/Wolf-catcher: Makes a face at the wolf and hops down upon him.

(120) **Hilde/Wolf-catcher:** Climbs up on the chair. *Oh no and hop and hop.* She hops on the wolf.

Tessa/Wolf-catcher: *Wolf, watch out now. One, two, three, ha ha ha.* She hops upon him and comes immediately around to the chair again. *And so the wolf comes, I see the wolf with eyes and noses. One two three. He's not watching (125) out. Here I come.* She hops upon him.

("With eyes and noses" is a recycling of an element from Red Riding Hood's meeting with the Wolf in Grandmother's bed.

- The hopping punishment of the wolf is an original feature, not present in the fairy tales. However, the wolf does hop down the chimney.

- Hopping from a height is a non-symbolic play-form that has been transformed into a symbolic instrument of punishment.

- As a sensory representation of the imagination, we can recognize an aesthetic structure familiar from ritual choral-dance structure - for instance in American Indian dance rituals: A choral chanting - in small rhythmic chants, is followed by a circular choreography - in the hopping movement from the chair to the mattress, back to the chair (the hopping instrument). This is a rhythmic, repetitive dramatic action.

- The dramatic idea of hopping on the wolf gains intensity because of, and in, the bodily sensation of the repetitive, vehement physical and vocal actions.)

Hilde/Wolf-catcher: Climbs up. *Here I come. He's not watching out.* She hops upon him.

Tessa/Wolf-catcher/Singer: *He can't get away.* She climbs up on the chair. *Ha ha ha. Who's afraid of the big bad wolf - ha ha ha ha ha!* She hops upon him.

(130) In the space between the mattress and the chair, on the way back to the chair:

Tessa/Narrator: *And then a poor person came...She climbs onto the chair... Eyes, nose, mouth...She hops.*

Hilde/Wolf-catcher/Singer: *Who's afraid of the big bad wolf, tra la la la la.* She hops upon him.

(The refrain of "ha, ha, ha" and "tralalala", lines 129 and 133, is taken directly from Disney's "The Three Little Pigs".)

(In the three frames below a complete drama is narrated and partially enacted.)

9.35

(135) Tessa is standing in the middle of the space between the mattress and the chair.

Tessa/Narrator: *Then someone knocks.*

Tessa/Wolf: She knocks on the floor.

Tessa/Narrator: *And it was the poor wolf. And so he dressed in a disguise and they ask who it is and then the wolf hopped on them, but then it was only a person. So then the wolf became very frightened. And then the person became (140) very frightened.*

(In line 138 does "they" refer to the kids? In line 139-40, first the wolf becomes very frightened, and then the person becomes very frightened. - Tessa seems to be correcting herself, remembering that the wolf is disguised as a person.)

Tessa/Young Goat: *Capture the wolf! Capture the wolf!*

Tessa/Narrator: *She walks over to the chair. Then they became terribly scared, frightened, when he saw. And then the three pigs came, but they were not scared, you know. But the wolf was scared.*

(145) **Tessa/Wolf-catcher:** She climbs onto the chair and hops onto the wolf, then goes back to the chair and climbs up.

Tessa/Narrator: *"Help me!", said the wolf. "Crocodiles, crocodiles!"*

(There are complex mental shifts taking place in her moving from one perspective to the other and from one set of fairy-tale figures to the others, while she also continues her own form of punishment.

- What follows from l. 135 seems to be Tessa's interpretation of "The Wolf and the Seven Young Goats" in which the wolf disguises himself as a person. In l. 136, she enacts the knocking but otherwise what follows is verbal storytelling.

- In line 137, she refers to the wolf as "the poor wolf" which *could* indicate a certain

identification with his perspective. But it could be solely a figure of speech that does not represent a valuation.

- In line 138, she tells that the wolf "hopped on them," an image which may be the source of her hopping ritual, an enactment of "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth".
- In lines 135-147 is an example of how the aesthetic form of her language and narrative storytelling seizes her senses and imagination.
- Line 123: "Then the pigs came" - She seems to be introducing the pigs into the story of the seven kids, perhaps because they are the heroes of the three wolf fairy-tales - in that they avoid getting eaten.
- She tells that, "They were not scared". That the pigs who come to the rescue are *not* afraid and the wolf *is* afraid is an original interpretation. This could also be seen as a form of identification with the pigs' bravery.
- Line 147: Crocodiles in "Peter Pan" may seem to Tessa to be even more powerful and threatening than the wolf - at least a match for the wolf.)

(The drama is sidetracked for a minute by an interruption. The teacher, who does not realize that their wild hopping is part of a drama, has suggested that the players go back to their peaceful playing with the chickens at the fireplace. They go back but quickly lose interest.)

9.37

Hilde/Narrator: Eagerly returns to the chair, climbs up: *The wolf got angry.*
(This appears to be Hilde's first use of the Narrator position, employed to get the action moving again. In actuality, she is also *Dramatist* and *Director*.)

Tessa/Wolf-catcher: *Come on now, just jump on the wolf. He'll be sorry.*

(150) **Hilde/Wolf-catcher:** Hops on the wolf.

Tessa/Narrator: *Now the wolf was dead.*

Tessa/Wolf-catcher: *Now he's sorry.* Climbs up on the chair.

Tessa/Narrator/Wolf-catcher: *And I became so angry that I hopped on the wolf.* She hops on the wolf and lies down on the mattress. She rises.

(155) **Tessa/Narrator:** *And then it got killed. And the three pigs were so happy. Then the wolf woke up, and the wolf was so angry.*

(- Line 151: She seems to pick up the narrative thread from before the interruption. Although

the wolf is pronounced dead, in l. 152 she again hops on him despite this; and in l. 155 she pronounces him dead once more.

- In lines 151 and 152 the perspectives of the Narrator and Wolf-catcher are the same. It is my interpretation that line 151 belongs to the Narrator perspective - a comment on the action, and that line 152 belongs to the Wolf-catcher perspective - from inside the action. This interpretation is grounded in the differing verb tenses: - In line 151, "was dead" is in the past tense, a telling after the fact; whereas in the dramatic action he "is sorry". However, in the next sentences she is the Wolf-catcher-as-Narrator, commenting on the dramatic action in the role-position of Wolf-catcher. There is an ambiguous shift in perspective in these movements - the "in-between" state of mind which I return to later in the text.

- The *theme* of the wolf's *dying but not being dead* is continuous - and appears to be a central theme she is exploring. In lines 152-53, the dead wolf is a sorry wolf. How does she understand dying? Has an adult explained that death is a kind of sleep? Death and resurrection are themes in the Christian myth but I have unfortunately not confirmed that she is familiar with it. It may be that the wolf's presence in all three fairy tales is enough to give her the idea that the wolf dies in one and returns in the next one.

Hilde/Dramatist-Narrator: *Then he died.*

(Hilde does not seem to want him alive again.)

Tessa/Narrator: *And the wolf was so angry that he really died.* She rises from the mattress and wanders around in the space.

(Tessa complies with Hilde.)

9.38

(160) **Tessa/Wolf-catcher:** *He's really dead, to be sure.*

Tessa/Narrator: *And then the three pigs were so happy, so happy that they shrieked. And the wolf didn't wake up. And then they cut off its head and its arms...* She walks around as she narrates, goes to the window stageright, shakes her arms when she tells about cutting off the arms...*and its legs.*

(165) *Now the fairy tale is finished.* She turns away from the window. *And the three pigs were so glad, so glad, so glad. "Ha, ha ha", said the wolf.* She hops around while she says this.

(He is still alive?)

(When she shakes her arms, line 164, she seems to be sensing and representing the wolf's body.

- In the above episode, the wolf dies, and then he *really* dies - and he doesn't *wake up* - so they can cut him up.

- Line 164: The pigs are glad that the wolf is dead, and then the wolf says, "Ha, ha, ha", i.e. not dead.

- Line 165: The Narrator's telling of the fairy tales "The Little Pigs and The Seven Young Goats" is finished, but the Wolf-catchers' alternative drama is not finished.)

(In the frame below, the performers remain mostly in their own punishment drama, but the Narrator is still present.)

Hilde/Wolf-catcher: Hops on the wolf.

Tessa/Wolf-catcher: Climbs up on the chair. *Now we'll take them!*

(Is she imagining several wolves?)

(170) **Tessa/Narrator:** *The wolf was sorry and then the wolf really died.*

(If the wolf "really" died, the play with the aesthetic form they have produced in the hopping ritual would have to end. This would end the playing. So he dies, and really dies, but is not dead. The aesthetic enjoyment can continue. The form and the content are interdependent: The symbolic form is enjoyable and is an impetus for continuing to develop the dramatic ideas and actions. And the reverse.)

Tessa/Wolf-catcher: Hops on the wolf.

Tessa/Wolf: *Ahhhhhhhh.* She lies still a brief moment.

(If he really died (line 170), this must be a death groan.)

Tessa/Wolf-catcher: *At last, at last....*

Tessa/Dramatist: She rises from lying position, dries her perspiring (175) forehead, goes over to the window above the mattress stageright, and returns to the chair.

(Reflection time: What should happen next?)

Tessa/Narrator: *The wolf is a person.*

(In all three traditional fairy-tales, the wolf disguises himself, an aspect she also addresses in lines 138-39. She could have said, "The wolf is pretending to be a person".)

Hilde/metafictional: She speaks impatiently: *Move over.* Tessa moves.

Hilde/Wolf-catcher: Climbs up and hops on the wolf.

(180)**Tessa/Wolf-catcher:** She climbs onto the chair. *Oh my goodness, Wolf. Soon I can't take anymore, Wolf. I'm going to hop on you.* Hops. Rises and goes over to the book with the wolf's picture on the cover, which is lying on the floor by the bookshelf.

Tessa/Wolf: *Auuuuuu.*

(185)**Tessa/Wolf-catcher/Singer:** She hops on the cover of the book, on the wolf's picture. *Now I'm hopping on you, Wolf!* She sings: *Who's afraid of the big bad wolf? - Ha ha ha ha ha. - Now, isn't this going to be our evening meal?*

(The picture of the wolf on the cover of the book is an icon of the wolf - which she attempts to destroy. At the beginning of the drama they shoot at him there, and now Tessa hops on him there.

- In line 188 she *reverses* the fairy tale action by stating that *they* are going to eat the wolf.)

Hilde: Lifts her sweater up to her neck, and then pulls it down again. She (190) is warm.

Tessa/Wolf-catcher: *It's gone, to be sure. I think it's disappeared.* She climbs up on the chair and hops.

(She hops on him even though he's disappeared. The hopping movement has become automatic, and separated from its meaning context.)

(In the next frame she returns to "The Seven Young Goats".)

9:39

Tessa/Narrator: Stands up beside the mattress. *Then they cut up the wolf's stomach, and they (the chickens) hopped out and said: "Stones, worms, in (195) the stomach of the wolf."* She throws a large pillow on the mattress/on the wolf. *And the wolf was so angry and said, "Ha, ha ha".*

(- Even *within* the narrator-position Tessa is also switching to the perspectives of the rescued chickens and the wolf.

- In line 196 there is a dash of song from "The Three Little Pigs", but the sentiments of the pigs are put in the mouth of the wolf - an interesting reversal or inversion. There is admittedly no adult logic in the situation of the wolf being cut up, presumably dead, *and* his being angry. But Tessa *needs* an angry wolf, as opposed to a poor wolf, to keep the drama going. This seems to be the source of *her* logic, and the logic of the drama's development.)

Tessa/metafictional: Huff, I can't take anymore.

(They are both perspiring and red in the face, showing obvious signs of physical tiredness.)

9.40

Tessa/Narrator: She is standing beside the mattress. *Aha! It was the wolf. You don't give up!*

(200) **Tessa/Wolf:** She makes a knocking-sound on the floor.

Tessa/A Little Pig?/Sound designer: *What is it that is knocking?* She mimes that she is shoving a door open and makes the *creaking sound* of a doorhinge that needs oil. *Is it the wolf? Just go away at once!* She shoves the imaginary door shut with much force. *Dong!*

(From line 200, I interpret Tessa to be representing the third pig and not a kid - because of the display of resistance - which the kids did not manage.

- She is both the wolf knocking and the pig opening the door and slamming it in his face.

- This short episode again demonstrates a complex formal ability and rapid perspective shift - reflecting and making choices about what should happen next.)

Tessa/metafictional: *Wolves are dumb, Hilde. I hate wolves.*

(In the next frame she returns to her own tale of punishment.)

(205) **Tessa/Wolf-catcher:** *Uff. What a wolf.* She pushes the chair forward, about a meter, so that it is touching the edge of the mattress. She climbs up on the chair. *Now I'm going to hop on you, then you'll get ugly ugly.* She hops.

Hilde/metafictional: Climbs up on the chair. *I'm sweating.*

Hilde/Wolf-catcher: She hops.

Tessa/metafictional: *I'm really sweating.*

Both/metafictional: They take off their sweaters. They laugh.

(They are overtired but cannot stop the momentum.)

(210) **Tessa/Wolf-catcher:** She brushes back her hair which stands a little on end because of perspiration. *Now the wolf will get spiky hair.* She hops.

(She has spiky hair, and projects it onto the wolf.)

9.41

Hilde/Wolf-catcher: *Now the wolf will get spiky hair.*

Both/metafictional: They giggle.

Hilde/Wolf-catcher: Hilde hops and does a sommersault.

Both/metafictional: They laugh alot.

Both Wolf-catchers: They hop and make sommersaults.

Tessa/Wolf-catcher: *...And a spiky tongue. Dá da - da dá da* (teasing tone), *the (215) wolf got a spiky tongue!*

(Perhaps her tongue is dry.)

9.42

Tessa/Wolf: She lies on the mattress with her tongue sticking out, hands grabbing her head. AAAAAA.

Metafictional: They both laugh.

Tessa/Wolf-catcher Climbs up on the chair, hops and does a sommersault. She perfects the sommersault, by bending over in the position to roll over before she (220)takes off from the chair. *Now the wolf is doing a sommersault.*

Tessa/Wolf: Rolls over onto the mattress. *Ahhhhhh.*

Tessa/Wolf-catcher: Stands up and says to the wolf: *That's not how to do a sommersault.* She sits on the chair. *Why don't you hop soon, wolf? The wolf is a fart-turd.*

(Line 224 is as abusive as her language becomes.)

(9:44 - 9.48 a.m.: Three minutes of recording time are lost because the photographer is interrupted. This creates a hole in the material which cannot be filled. However, the material is too valuable to exclude from the study.)

9.48

(225) **Tessa/Wolf-catcher:** Is up on the chair and hops down.

Tessa: Lies on the mattress on her back with her feet against the chair. She pulls the chair down on the mattress with great effort and grunts so that it is lying over her. She removes herself, stands up and walks away, then returns.

9:50

Tessa/Director-Scenographer: *Now we'll pretend that the chair is going to be the (230) wolf....*

(Lines 226-28 can be considered reflection time for the dramatist function: Where shall the story go from here? In line 229-30 the dramatist has come to a partial conclusion that something is going to change, but the direction of the drama has not yet been decided with Hilde.

- The prop transformation is a dramaturgical turning point which is seemingly motivated by physical exhaustion. - The wolf is now symbolically represented by the chair and, in this concrete form, new possibilities for action present themselves.)

(Part II)

9.50 a.m.

(230) **Tessa/Director/Scenographer:** *Now we'll pretend that the chair is going to be the wolf.*

(In the beginning of the performance she shot at an invisible wolf, later she shot at his picture on the cover of the book, subsequently they both hopped on an invisible wolf. Now Tessa has transformed the chair, the very hopping weapon, to the wolf, a wily prop-creation. Now the wolf can be related to in concrete form.)

Hilde: She comes and sits on the edge of the chair.

Tessa/Dramatist/Director: *What is the wolf doing now? Just go away, Hilde, and I'll order things.*

Hilde/metafictional: *Goes and sits on a small baby carriage in the middle of the floor.*

(235) **Tessa/Wolf-catcher:** *Wolf, don't do that.*

Tessa/metafictional: *Now I can't take anymore of this playing.*

Hilde/metafictional: Goes back to the chair and climbs in between the back slats and the seat slats.

Tessa/Wolf-catcher: *Our eggs, our eggs.* She goes and fetches the eggs that are in the fire place.

(240) **Tessa/Director/Dramatist:** *We lay the eggs here, and this is the wolf's stomach. And you saw them and you took them out. The eggs are lying here.* She places the eggs on the other side of the prone chair from where Hilde is sitting.

Tessa/Wolf-catcher: She takes the eggs up again, carefully, and cuddles them.

(245) *At last we've captured the wolf.*

(An understatement.)

Hilde/Director: *How shall we get them out? You can't take them out just like that. We have to have a knife.*

Tessa/Co-director: *Have already taken them out.* She sighs in frustration. *Okay....* She rolls her eyes.

(Tessa has her own ideas about what has happened, but takes Hilde's ideas. For Tessa it is not as important to enact the rescue of the chickens as it is for Hilde. Then it has to be done as she imagines it.)

(250) **Tessa/Propsperson:** Takes the eggs with her into the playroom next door, to fetch a knife.

Hilde/Propsperson follows her after thirty seconds.

9.53

They return with each their small green plastic knife.

Hilde/Director: *You have to lay them in there - she points between the slats of (255) the chair.*

Tessa/Propsperson: Lays the eggs there.

The Wolf-catchers: They carve with the knives, scraping the eggs.

Hilde/Wolf-catcher: *Now there's more in here.* She continues to carve.

9.54

Tessa/Dramatist: *And then we both died.*

(260) **Tessa/Wolf-catcher:** She dies. She lies on her back on the mattress behind the wolf, with her arms spread out over her head.

Hilde/Wolf-catcher: She dies. Lies on the mattress exactly like Tessa.

Tessa/Dramatist: *And then we woke up when we heard someone scream.*

Tessa/Baby chicken: *Eeeeeeee. Eeeeeeee. Eeeeeeee.*

(265) **Tessa/Wolf-catcher:** *Oh, no. Oh, no. Oh, no.* She rises and stands over the wolf, staring down. She picks up the eggs.

Tessa/Dramatist: *And they are dead. And we died too.*

Tessa/Wolf-catcher: She lies down on her stomach with the eggs in front of her.

Hilde/Dramatist: *And then we began to carve.*

(270) **Tessa/Dramatist:** *It was only pretend. We were only sleeping. But the wolf thought we were dead. We lay completely still.*

Tessa/Director: *Hilde, Hilde. You have to sleep-*

Hilde: Is lying completely still.

Tessa/Director: *You have to wake up.*

(275) **The Eggs:** Roll from the mattress onto the floor.

Tessa/Wolf-catcher: *Oh, no!*

Hilde/Wolf-catcher: *We have to carve up the stomach.*

(Hilde insists upon this storyline, whilst Tessa is more fascinated by the theme of their dying.)

Tessa/Wolf-catcher: Climbs into the stomach of the wolf.

Hilde/Wolf-catcher: Stands beside the wolf, leans over and begins to carve.

(280) **Tessa/Wolf-catcher:** She watches.

Hilde/Wolf-catcher: *We found them!*

9.57

Tessa/Wolf-catcher: *Hurrah! Now we'll have a party. Now we've captured the wolf!*

Tessa/Dramatist: *Now we really died.*

(This theme is more important than the celebration.)

(285) **Hilde/Wolf-catcher:** Goes back to the wolf.

(She isn't interested in dying at this point.)

Both/Wolf-catchers/Singers: They begin to sing. *Ha, ha, ha...* They dance and sing around in the room. *Now we've captured the wolf!*

Tessa/Wolf-catcher?: Lies down on the mattress.

(Is she back to the theme of dying?)

Hilde/Wolf-catcher: Sits down and packs the eggs in a scarf on her lap.

(290) **Tessa/Mother/Singer:** Rises and goes to the large bookcase dividing the room. She sits down with her back to the wall and with her left hand she mimes that she takes something from the shelf and places it in the folded rim of her t-shirt with her right hand. She hums rhythmically as she repeats the miming movement. *One, two, three, four.* She rolls up her t-shirt and rises. *There are (295) even more mice.*

Tessa/Scenographer: She sets up the large pillows again, in a square form.

9.59

Hilde/Mother: Stands beside the bookcase and also takes imaginary mice into her shirt.

Both/Mothers: They sit together beside the mouse house that is constructed with the pillows. They lay the imaginary mice down in the house. They fetch many (300) small objects from the bookcase and throw them into the the mouse house.
10.00

Hilde/Wolf-catcher: Goes over to the wolf. *You dumb wolf, you're still lying here.*

Tessa/Wolf-catcher: Goes over to the wolf.

Both/Wolf-catchers: They lift the wolf from each their end, carry him two (305) meters into the open space, and lay him down with great seriousness. (This can be interpreted as a funeral ceremony.)

Tessa/Wolf-catcher: *It's completely dead.*

Hilde/Wolf-catcher: *At last, at last.*

Tessa/Wolf: *Au, au, au.*

(A death groan?)

Hilde/Wolf-catcher: Sits on the wolf. *Now you're dead.*

(310) **Hilde/Dramatist:** *We died because we touched the wolf.*

Hilde/Wolf-catcher: She goes to the mattress and lies down.

(Now *she* initiates the death theme.)

Tessa: Goes to the mattress and lies down.

Tessa/Wolf/Dramatist: *But I woke up.*

(Planning for the wolf.)

Tessa/Wolf: She casts herself back and forth on the mattress. *AAAAAAAAAAAA.*

(It *cannot* be vanquished.)

(315) **Both/Mothers:** They go back to the mice and play there for six minutes.

(Life goes on even when the wolf is still afoot?)

10.07

Tessalmetafictional: I can't take any more. She leaves the play space.

Hilde: Follows Tessa.

THE END

At Analysis Level 2, directly below, I summarize findings about the aesthetic practice, with special attention to the first part of the drama.

Open Analytical Description

Aesthetic fragmentation and intertextual reflection

At the core of the first part of the drama we find narrative elements from the three fairy-tales interwoven with the players' novel, dramatic situation - the hopping ritual. What would seem at first glance to be chaotic, illogical jumps among the three fairy-tales - e.g.: the wolf's disappearance from the players' invented punishment, to his appearances in the other tales, and back again - gains associative logic if we consider the movement of Tessa's imagination. She is continually moving from her invented acts of punishment to a narration of what *could* happen next. For example, after the wolf's disappearance from *her* drama, she moves into a narration about cutting open the wolf's stomach - *searching for* what happens next in the resolution of *The Seven Young Goats*. This is similar to the resolution in *Little Red Riding Hood*. - Just as quickly as the wolf disappears from her own story, he reappears in the story of *The Seven Young Goats*; and just as quickly again, he reappears in *her* punishment story.

The drama is both a comic and serious aesthetic transformation of the inherited material. Even in the fun the drama retains its fearful strains of the ever-returning threat. The first part of the drama can be characterized as an "intertextual performance" - an ongoing dialogue between inherited historical-cultural, fairy-tale material and the form of punishment the children invent. The form of punishment they invent has its origins in a play-structure from non-symbolic playing: the repeated actions of climbing onto a chair and jumping onto a mattress. This everyday play-structure has been imbued with symbolic meaning. It is an example of what Schechner calls "restored behaviour", the adaptation and reconstruction of strips of behaviour, "independent of the causal systems... that brought them into existence", as the material for symbolic behaviour (Schechner 1985: 34).

Rather than judging the shifts from fairy tale to fairy tale, as well as their integration in certain episodes, as incomprehensible and childish, one can clearly see their imaginative and

performative complexity and explorative value. Tessa is "mixing and matching", editing and integrating narrative threads of the three fairy tales into her own, *fourth*, story. There is a complex reflection process taking place, many rapid mental choices in all the shifts of perspectives and the moving from tale to tale.

In Tessa's exploration in dramatic form of the wolf's capture and demise we find, in theatre terms, an untraditional dramaturgical structure. She is juggling the telling of four tales, moving back and forth among them: Her own version of outsmarting the wolf is told through enactment, whereas the visits to the seven young goats and the pigs and the tale of the stomach operation - found in both *Red Riding Hood* and *The Wolf and the Seven Young Goats* - is told in both narrative and mimed forms.

In the analysis of *Wolf* so far, we can identify the main action as the Mothers/Wolf-catchers' and the fairy tale figures' struggle against the Wolf.

The players' intertextual exploration and the aesthetic structure that emerges from it can be analyzed in more depth by moving to dramaturgical comparison. What more can we learn about the aesthetic practice and its reflexive value by comparing it with the aesthetic practice in contemporary performance? We can now move to dramaturgical comparison at Analysis level 3.

Comparison with Contemporary Performance in Other Cultural Contexts

In play-drama, we have found that the dramaturgies are the outcome of aesthetic communication within a cultural process among the Producer - Performer - Spectators. From the dramaturgical process in *Wolf*, both the *sjuzet* and the *fabula* emanate - and can be read. We can discover more about the formal "method" that the children use to develop these by examining the forms in a contemporary theatre performance and its intertextual praxis.

Intertextual construction in avant-garde theatre praxis

Tessa's aesthetic practice resembles to some extent the work of the Wooster Group, the New York-based contemporary theatre group, in their performance of *House/Lights* ^{3a}. I experienced it after I had executed preliminary analyses of *Wolf*. In *House/Lights* the group performs an intertextual dialogue between Gertrude Stein's opera libretto, *Dr. Faustus Lights the Lights* and an American exploitation film from 1964, *Olga's House of Shame*. The performance plays symbolically with Faust's enlightenment project (*Lights*) and the B-movie's exploration of sensory slavery (*House - of shame*). The performance is a free-wheeling intertext between these two positions.

Aesthetically/dramaturgically, the Group's work "slices, dices and rearranges pre-existent texts"... "faces off against conventional narrative", pursues an "interest in process as product", ..."collage rather than narrative" and "integration of disparate materials". It has been characterized as "deconstructive rumination" (Rosten 1998: 16). These characteristics can be applied to the aesthetic practice in *Wolf*.

Kate Valk, a performer in the group, says that they "let the style arise from the material", finding a way "to hear (the text) in the space" in which they are working (Ibid.: 18). I quote extensively from an interview with Valk because it characterizes well the intertextual, processual performance of *Wolf*. Valk is describing what I characterize as a "play-structure" of the workshop rehearsal, in which the aesthetic devising process provides the inventions for the artistic product. She says that when Wooster Group,

pick a text we want to do the text; we don't go about saying we're going to deconstruct it. We're doing the best we can to get the text on its feet, but what we deal with is the reality of the time and space and the people performing - if we don't have anyone to play a particular role, we ask, *What will be fun?* Maybe to make that character an intrusion on the television?!.../So when we go to problem-solve, we think of *the most fun way* to get around not being able to present the text in its entirety (Ibid., my emphasis).

/.../We played around alot with starting both texts at the same time, meaning the film and the Stein, and running them simultaneously to see how they overlapped and what came forward and what receded. Then we got more into really defining the physical movement in the space. (Ibid.. 19)

I cannot give a detailed description of *House/Lights*. The group works with advanced media - television monitors and sound technology; sophisticated, minimalistic scenography, musical scoring, and tightly choreographed movement and movement patterns. This performance is inspired by such varied aesthetic sources as the work of the Marx Brothers, the Yiddish Art Theatre, and the Cantonese Opera. Needless to say, *Wolf* does not resemble *House/Lights* technologically, audio-visually or thematically, but the interwoven texture of several texts

^{3a} Performances at Kanonhallen, Copenhagen, October 1997 and Performance Garage, New York City, February 1999

combined with the wild, physical exhilaration of the performances feels the same for the outside spectator. Out of the two texts, the group creates a *third* performance text, in an unconventional dramaturgy.

In the comparison with the aesthetics of The Wooster Group, I have attempted to capture aspects of the free-wheeling, postmodern experimentation with dramaturgical conventions. I will now focus the analysis on a more finite structuring convention in *Wolf* as a way of coming behind the form and into the meanings they contain.

Comparison with Theatre Conventions

The comparison with a specific theatre convention was chosen because, during early video viewings of *Wolf*, I recognized a similarity to the Epic Form of "storytelling theatre" - or monologue-theatre: the use of the *narrator* position and rotation among several role-positions. I wished to study how this formal convention is used in *Wolf* in the exploration of thematic content, and to what extent it can reveal the meanings that are being interpreted.

Performance conventions

Performance conventions are part of the dramaturgical map of a performance. They:

offer rich research possibilities from a number of perspectives. Analyzing *the means by which* both audience and artists agree willingly to suspend the disbelief which automatically accompanies theatrical performance can provide rich insights into both *audience expectations* and the *confines within which the artists work*" (Wood 1991: 172. My emphasis).

A theatre convention can be defined as a contract between the performance and the spectator about the framing techniques to be employed, a guideline for understanding *how* the performance tells the fiction so that its meanings can be expressed in a manner that grips the spectator. One easily identifiable theatre convention is the use of the lifted or parted stage curtain to define the boundaries between what is real and what is fiction. This convention was invented in the official Roman theatre and was renewed in some theatre forms in the seventeenth century. Its use has been common up to this century, but supplanted by other conventions (Ibid.). The convention of the curtain in particular artistic traditions reflects a tradition's epistemological ideal for representing reality. It is part of an artistic practice that wishes to mask over the production seams - for instance, in order to maintain illusion of the fictive world while changing the stage set to illude another location.

There is no concern with such an ideal in play-drama, and in contemporary theatre the use of this convention is becoming rarer, even in traditional bourgeois theatre dramaturgy. I have seen it used in Forced Entertainment's *Pleasure*^{3b} in a way that I interpret as *playing with* the theatre convention. In *Pleasure* its use in an otherwise non-illusionistic form, becomes a metafictional, self-referential commentary on the convention itself - a mocking of its use. It does mask what is taking place behind the curtain, but it wants us to know this, not to hide *the fact* that it is taking place. It *tells* the audience that it is playing with the convention.

What kinds of "conventions" - aesthetic confines and communicative contracts - do performing - spectating children develop in order to be able to collectively explore and express their imaginations? The conventions seem to be a matter of producing and agreeing upon constraints that allow this, and that allow the players themselves to become sensorily immersed in their own performance. The mime-convention in *On a Boat at the Beach* is one such successful constraint that creates a clear focus in the ensemble communication.

In children's performance, to what extent can we consider aesthetic structures that arise spontaneously as performance conventions? To examine this, we can look at a convention in postmodern theatre production that we have characterized as an aesthetic play-structure in *Locked In*. We found in *Forced Entertainment's* work (Analysis 2), the artistic use of the visible production actions. In their work, the aesthetic structure of the two parallel layers - production actions and dramatic actions - amounts to a new convention that breaks with audience expectation for how a performance will communicate a drama. Traditionally, production actions are hidden. Although in *Locked In* we find this structure, we cannot consider this to be a convention in the same way. Rather, the complex structure is a chance necessity, a natural outgrowth of the spontaneous nature of play-drama production. The players have no choice but to produce the means of the performance while enacting the drama. Whereas, in the work of Forced Entertainment, I interpret the visible production actions as a conscious break with traditional illusionistic, aesthetic principles - as a non-illusionistic, distancing convention which relates radically to traditions in the first third of this century - for instance, to Erwin Piscator's and Bertolt Brecht's conventions for making the means of theatrical production visible. The artistic intention in showing the productional seams of the fictional universe was meant to reduce the degree of what was considered emotionally passifying illusion (Piscator 1966, Brecht 1964/78, Pavis 1997). Forced Entertainment takes this break a giant step further.

^{3b} Performance at Henie Onstad kunstsenter, Bærum, May 1999

In play-drama, the double play-structure is perhaps the one certain, common constituent of the aesthetic practice in all play-dramas. However, rather than functioning as an external communicative convention, it functions as the internal, foundational structure, a constraint out of which the drama *can* be spontaneously staged.

In children's performance we would not expect to find conventions of external, illusional artifice to help *them* to suspend their own disbelief in regard to the fiction. In entering the play-frame they have already committed themselves imaginatively and emotionally to the fiction. In their establishing and maintaining the production means for enacting the dramatic actions they are interested only in finding play-forms that keep them sensorily and emotionally immersed. Tim Etchell's of Forced Entertainment says that in the devising process, while creating conventions and dramaturgy that can communicate with an audience, it has, first, to "feel right" *for the players*. As opposed to a normative dramaturgy based on linear and logical communication with the audience, the source of the dramaturgical conventions is the players' sense that what they have devised spontaneously rings true for them.

Within the context of play-drama, in which there is no concern with an outside spectator, the answer to the question of "verisimilitude for whom?" is: the performer - spectators. The performing-spectating children accept as a necessity that they build up the physical space and invent props and sound effects parallel to enacting the drama. We *can* call this a performance convention, but one that is employed not for the sake of establishing a contract with an outside spectator, but for enabling the enactment of the drama. We can better call it an overarching *aesthetic constraint* in play performance, one that the players recognize and accept and that frees them to experiment. It feels right - it rings true for the players within the play-context. The extent of the children's aesthetic immersion in the fictive world may be dependent upon how thoroughly the internal structuring constraints allow the enactment of the imagination.

Forced Entertainment - by retaining a play-structure from the devising process as a major performance convention, in a contract with the audience about how they are going to tell their fiction, are implicitly praising the force of play conventions, *play-structure*, as a significant source of its dramaturgy. They are allowing us to see the process behind the product and this is, seemingly, a part of their artistic values.

In *Wolf*, I will be examining a compositional and structural "convention" - which emerges by chance necessity and, certainly, without epistemological/ideological intentions in regard to audience reception. *How* does this convention contribute to the reflexive outcomes of the play-drama - to keeping the players sensorily immersed in the exploration and interpretation of

their experiences? How does an understanding of this convention inform us about the meanings that the children are exploring?

I explore *how* Tessa's practice of shifting from narrator to role-figure to new role-figure can be understood as a convention that develops into the overriding aesthetic structure of the first part of the drama. In future long-term research, we could examine if, within children's play-culture, such narrative conventions are passed on to contemporaries and then handed down to younger players in a play community from year to year, similar to what we find in theatre practice.⁴

"Storytelling-theatre" conventions

As pointed out earlier, within the structure of the punishment enactment we have found a parallel to the "popular" storytelling-theatre convention employed by Dario Fo in his dramatic monologues. I was present in the kindergarten when Tessa experienced a theatre form that resembles Fo's. - But had she not had this experience, we cannot know whether the drive to explore the themes she is fascinated by would have produced it spontaneously, by chance necessity; or if, having experienced the artistic model, she imaginatively adopts it for her own aesthetic purposes. I will discuss *how* she employs this convention to explore and interpret her own experiences and themes. We can examine the cultural-historical background for this convention.

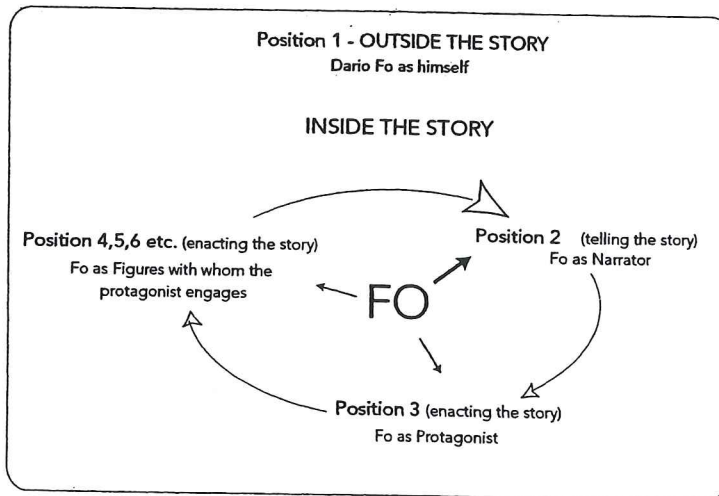
According to Stuart Hall in his introduction to *The Tricks of the Trade* (Fo 1987), the convention employed in Fo's monologues is a derivative of Italian oral traditions in folk culture at least as far back as the middle ages. When introduced in institutional theatre at the end of the nineteen-sixties, this represented a radically new convention vis à vis the accepted illusionistic, aesthetic norm. The stories in this oral tradition "refer mostly to known cultural material" (Holm, in Fo 1984: 7). - As did storytellers from the middle ages, Tessa and Hilde are using inherited cultural material - that of fairy tales. The fictional person addressing the audience is the wandering player (*giullari*), "minstrel", street-performer - a figure who has something in common with Shakespeare's wise Fool - a wise Fool acting in public squares, with a repertoire of storytelling, singing, dancing and acrobatics (Hood, in Fo 1987/1991: 6). It is Tessa who, in the first part of the drama, finds the "street performer" aesthetic, in an exaggerated and taunting form, whilst Hilde seems content to imitate her.

⁴ Does the repertoire of formal conventions in a particular kindergarten, within a group of players, expand and accumulate? - Because my study is limited to a half-year, I will not find answers to this question, but future research could study a group intermittently over two or three years.

How are Fo's monologues constructed? According to the Danish theatre theorist Bent Holm in his introduction to Fo's *Gjøglerspil*, the monologues are "satirical, folk-grotesque stories, with rapid hops between shifting persons and situations" (Fo 1984: 7, my translations from the Danish). Alone on the stage, Fo can create a whole fictive universe, functioning as storyteller/narrator - addressing the audience directly, as well as portraying innumerable characters in innumerable settings. Figures are established simply by cueing the audience with the disciplined use of abbreviated, symbolic bodily-gestural and vocal variation (including dialect), rhythm and timing.

Fo begins the performance as Himself with a prologue, *discorsi*, to set a topical frame around the fictional drama to come (Mitchell 1984: 14). This position or standpoint, a meta-fictional one, outside the fiction - or alongside the fiction - is maintained throughout the performance in interludes and asides. From here, Fo moves into the fictional frame, to the position and point of view of the Narrator. Holding himself to a minimum of gestural effects, in the ensuing drama he switches alternately between the Narrator position and the positions of other role-figures. The *giullare* could shift among up to fifteen roles if necessary.

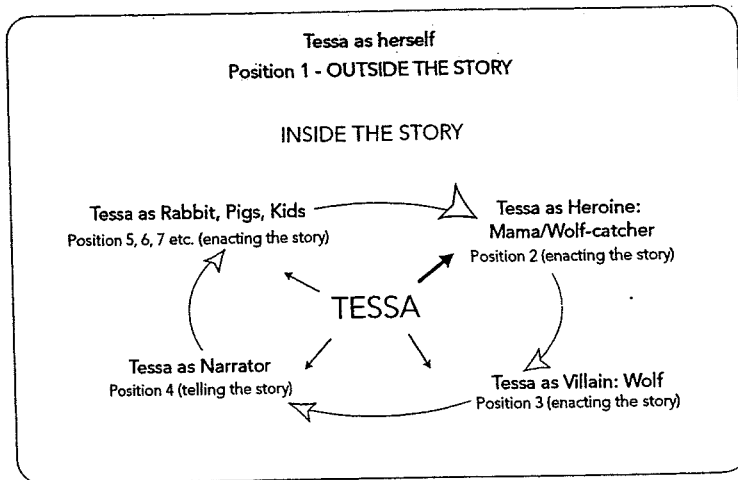
Figure 11: Dario Fo's rotation among role positions



Fo's prologue and aside positions are outside the fiction, in a meta-position. The Narrator/*giullare* role-position is inside the fictional frame, but outside the dramatic action. The Narrator is representing Fo's own point of view and, furthermore, the Narrator's perspective is aligned with the perspective of the Protagonist. - We see that there is an alliance among the perspectives of the actor, the narrator and the protagonist.

As pointed out, the rotation among role-positions is precisely the dramatic convention that Tessa develops in the first part of *Wolf*. It begins already in the shooting episode where she moves from the Mother/Wolf-catcher role-position to the Wolf-position, but is subsequently expanded with the addition of the Narrator position and other minor role-positions.

Figure 12: Tessa's rotation among role positions ^{5a}



There is an ambiguity of meaning in the unstable borders between the different positions and their perspectives. We can start with Tessa's metafictional perspective, as Herself, which manifests itself several times. She frames and comments upon the fiction several times, in Position 1. - An example is found in line 204 when Tessa *seems* to speak as herself in a metafictional communication to Hilde: "*Wolves are the so dumb, Hilde! I hate wolves!*" However, this line could *also* be understood as dialogue *within* the drama, belonging to the perspectives of Narrator and Mother/Wolf-catcher. Here we see the *ambiguity* created by lack of stable borders among the role-positions (which are mental perspectives), in the same manner as the unstable borders between the execution of theatre positions in the first analysis (*On a Boat at the Beach*). - Tessa is commenting upon her own, non-fictive feelings for the wolf. She is expressing verbally her own motivation for the drama, a motivation that has already been clearly expressed through her actions. But she is also, undoubtedly, expressing the feelings of the Mother/Wolf-catcher.

^{5a} After completing this analysis, I have discovered that Flemming Mouritsen has created a Figure in which the narrator position is seen as a mediator, or level of awareness, between the reality outside the fiction and the reality of the fiction (Mouritsen 1996: 101).

When she speaks as the Narrator (role-position 2), we see that she is representing her own point of view, as does Fo's storyteller. And, also resembling Fo's tradition, she enacts this point of view in the Figure of the Protagonist - Mother/Wolf-catcher (role-position 3). When, as Wolf-catcher, she has attacked the Wolf, she immediately switches to the Wolf's perspective and, abbreviatedly, represents his suffering response - vocally and bodily (role-position 4).

We have, then, a dramatic monologue which is metafictionally framed as "fictive performance" (play), and in which a Narrator and several role-positions are enacted by the same player. The dramatic narrative is structured by the enactment of the various role-positions and their "inherent standpoints" (see Kapferer 1986). What these inherent standpoints are will be explored in the continuing analysis.

Before further dramaturgical analysis, I will first summarize several other foundational aspects in the drama performance that have to do with the workings of the players' minds.

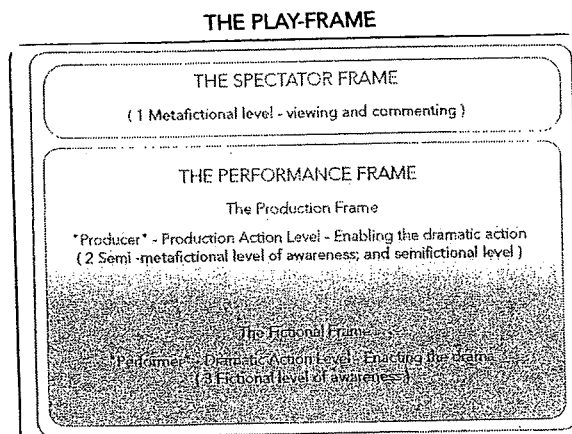
Compound levels of awareness

In order to understand the dramaturgical development of the comical, but serious, struggle against the wolf and the meanings that emerge there, we must keep in mind that the spontaneous structuring process reflects the (almost) simultaneous presence of three levels of awareness and operations. (I will qualify the use of "simultaneous" further into the discussion):

- 1) Awareness, reflection, and operations at the fictional (enactment) level - as *performers* (actor, singer, dancer, narrator), actualizing the imagination in the dramatic situation;
- 2) Awareness, reflection, and operations at the metafictional level - as *spectator* to their own drama performance, personal feelings and operations related to the performance frame - "along with" or "behind" the unfolding drama;
- 3) Awareness, reflection, and operations *between* the fictional level and the metafictional level - as *producers* of the performance. - At the production level, within the performance frame - as *dramatist, director, scenographer, props person*, the players are reflecting, making decisions and providing materials so that the drama can be enacted.

This mental and operational "tripleness" appears to be inherent in all the play-dramas I have analyzed - to a greater or lesser extent (see Figure below):

Figure 13: Simultaneous presence of three levels of awareness



- *Spectator* : Metafictional level of awareness

A reflexive state of mind alongside or behind the fictional frame. Wanting to play, expressing thoughts and feelings about *what* is being represented (played). Aesthetic perception/reception of the sensory representations from the outside, even though the Spectator is *also* the Performer of the actions.

- *Performer of dramatic action* : Fictional level of awareness.

A reflexive state of mind inside the dramatic actions: narrating and enacting the drama. Having thoughts and feelings belonging to the role-positions inside the drama. Aesthetic reflection related to the direction of the drama and the actions of the role-figures.

- *Producer* : Semi-metafictional level *and* semi-fictional level of awareness.

A reflexive state of mind inside the performance frame, but outside the fictional frame. Aesthetic reflection is related to supporting the dramatic actions - making decisions about how to develop the dramatic action, and *how to stage it*. Production actions, both mental and physical, enable the drama enactment.

I provide another example of the fact that it sometimes is not clear where the borders between these positions lie: At the beginning of the drama, Tessa/Mother states her intention to capture and be rid of the Wolf. This intention could be operating on all three levels simultaneously:

- On Level 1, on the metafictional level outside the fiction - Tessa, as Herself, wants to be rid of the wolf.

- On Level 2, on the production level inside the fictive-frame - Tessa-the -"onstage-dramatist/dramaturg ", sets up the wolf as an antagonist with strong resistance; as "onstage-

director-scenographer" she chooses the chair as a hopping instrument with which to enact the punishment.

- On Level 3, in her dramatic actions in the role-position of Mother/Wolf-catcher, her repetitive hopping *expresses* the intention of getting rid of the wolf.

Simultaneity, or "split-second distance" between levels of awareness?

Within the "performance frame" the children are making decisions, reflecting over choices and directions for the drama as well as enacting it. Within the "spectator frame" they are watching and commenting on themselves.

In regard to my example of the *dramatist-dramaturg* function as taking place at the production level of awareness, it can perhaps seem problematic to separate this awareness level from the level of awareness in the enactment of the drama. It is true that in chronological time it is difficult to *see* that the *dramatist-dramaturg* function is separate from the "actor's" expression of the dramatic actions. - The *actor* is also the *dramatist*. However, I am attempting to separate the *idea* of an action from the *expression* of that action. - The *dramatist's* ideas *are* expressed in performance, through the performer's role actions. However, what is being discussed here are levels of awareness - and these *are* separate, even while they are happening *almost* simultaneously. The players are continually making *dramatist* choices about what action will come next - and what the appropriate dialog should be in the development of the drama; and a split-second later they are, as *actors*, expressing the action in the fictional frame. Because the *dramatist's choice of action* is taking place at only a split second's distance from the *expressed action*, it is difficult to conceptualize them as separate from each other. But I do this in order to make visible the complexity and rapidity of sensing and thought and action which are taking place.

It may seem less problematic to separate production actions related to *scenography* or *props* from dramatic actions, because they are visually staggered in time. An example of this comes at the very end of the hopping ritual with the transformation of the chair from a hopping instrument to the wolf himself. After stopping the momentum of the hopping (dramatic action level) because of exhaustion (metafictional level), Tessa-as-*dramatist* (production action level) seems to have decided that some new event should take place. She is lying on her back on the mattress. When she pulls the chair down on top of herself, she may get an association to the wolf - that the chair could *be* the wolf (it is heavy and has jutting edges). There are *time lapses* here between the *dramatist's* impulse to change the direction of the action - from circling around the punishment of the wolf to something else - to the *scenographer's* idea and scenographic

transformation of the chair. We can *see* these production functions because they happen separately-in-time from the dramatic action.

The wolf's resistance and "multiple-lives syndrome" as a necessity at all three levels of awareness

Tessa, both as herself, as *dramatist*, and as role-figure wants the wolf to die but, simultaneously, she needs him to remain alive - to be death-resistant. At the metafictional level, this latter characteristic of the wolf is a necessity for the endurance of the back-and-forth movement of play. Without the resistant wolf, no play. At the level of dramatic actions, this characteristic is what causes dramatic tension, making the drama aesthetically and reflexively engaging.

It is worth noting that in the children's devised punishment ritual, the wolf does not instigate new evil deeds. Rather, the inherited fairy-tale evil is implicit in the new drama, and the wolf's dramatic force lies in his almost passive resistance. The wolf-catchers are struggling against the presence of the wolf's mythical quality of evil, rather than against his current evil deeds.

I will now move from Tessa's, internal structuring of the role-perspectives, in order to view externally the whole dramaturgical structure of the dramatic actions, *as if it were* a theatre performance. In light of the children's complex levels of awareness and reflection, and the necessity to keep the wolf alive, what overarching dramaturgical composition do we find? In the analysis of the structures that emerge, we succeed in coming closer to understanding the experience and the meanings the children are interpreting.

Comparison with Dramaturgical Models

Dario Fo calls his theatre "epic theatre", but to what extent can we say that the overall structure of the first part of *Wolf* resembles a dramaturgical model for Epic Form? This question has led to the wish to compare the compositional structure of *Wolf* with the theoretical models that have been constructed for understanding dramaturgical composition in the theatre. I will apply dramaturgical models, including that of Epic Form, in a close examination of the spontaneous structures that have emerged in *Wolf* and of the aesthetic reflection contained in the structures.

The models have been constructed for understanding the composition of dramatic texts and theatre performances and their varying ways of communicating with an audience. Playing children are, of course, not aware of all the dramaturgical conventions and models for the

théâtre and they do not pre-conceive dramaturgical principles for their playing. Theirs is not an intentional, pre-planned dramaturgy. Nonetheless, for research purposes, the models provide filters, or lenses, and a set of concepts for identifying and characterizing the aesthetic composition and meaning-bearing structures in the play-dramas and how the players keep themselves sensorily immersed in the performance. However, even if we were to find a close resemblance between the organizing structures of *Wolf* and the models, the question remains as to whether or not we would find epistemological ideals and values in the children's practice similar to those in adult praxis.

Through an understanding of the epistemological values inherent in the dramaturgical constructions that have emerged historically in the theatre - we may perhaps develop a better understanding about the relationship between the children's spontaneous aesthetic forms (immediately visible) and structures (not immediately visible) and the nature of their aesthetic reflection.

According to the Danish dramaturg Janek Szatkowski, there are at least four dramaturgical models (Szatkowski 1993, see Figure below) - constructed from historical knowledge of written and performed drama. The last line of the model summarizes, to a certain extent, its unique epistemological values and ideals. The discussion will elaborate upon *how*, in *Wolf*, meaning seems to arise, not to arise, or to be problematized.

Figure 14: Dramaturgical models

DRAMATIC FORM	EPIC FORM	SIMULTANEOUS FORM	METAFIC-TIONAL FORM
THE STORY is	THE STORY is	THE STORY is	THE STORY is
continuous	mounted	fragmented	montage with fragments and progressive story elements
progressive	in fragments	continuous	
(psycho)logically motivated	(polito)logically motivated	a-logically motivated	ironico-logically motivated
MEANING arises	MEANING arises	MEANING does not arise	MEANING is problematized
<i>(deletion of part of the model)</i>			
Szatkowski 1993: 130, partial model, my translation from the Danish.			

In Szatkowski's view, in contemporary theatre praxis these four models are often combined, although formal characteristics of the one model dominate characteristics of the other models.

The models cannot possibly capture all the unique dramaturgical characteristics found in all dramatic texts and performances. They are generalizations about the theatre's conventions and the breaking of conventions for aesthetic impact throughout history. The generalizations reflect both dramatic texts, performance texts that are based on these, and performance texts that have been devised by professional artists. The dramaturgical composition is (pre-)designed to play with, or on, *outside* spectators - who have, in most cases, a minimal impact on the unfolding aesthetic process.^{5b} In the spectator's relative distance from the production-process, another kind of spectator-receptiveness is at work than that of performing-spectating children.

In spite of the differences between adult theatre practice and children's play-drama practice, the dramaturgical models, methodologically, provide an overview of a set of possibilities for dramaturgical construction and meaning production as well as their aesthetic vocabulary. Knowledge of these provides filters that can enhance our ability to *see* the ways children structure their drama so that meanings arise, do not arise, or are problematized; and to profile the *distinctive* aesthetic characteristics of the play-drama.

I have taken the liberty of presenting only the top half of Szatkowski's models as, in my judgment, the omitted points can be understood only in relation to reception by an outside spectator. Whereas, the points included above can be understood in relation to the children's own internal reception, and their reflection over form and meaning as performer - spectators. In the analysis I will be considering the aesthetic impact on the performer - spectators of their continual movement between the theatre positions and of their developing dramaturgical structures . - The players carry out actions and they *respond* both as performers and as spectators to these - and in this back-and-forth movement, the choice of expressive means and their structuring develops.

Before applying the models it is necessary to understand the ideals and values for which they are exponents. Therefore, I will give a brief summary of the theories of representation. The summary of these brings us closer to understanding meaning-seeking formal process that we have found in the play-drama performances.

^{5b} This is not the case in regard to Augusto Boal's participatory theatre forms, nor in regard to Keith Johnstone's Theatre Sport.

Theories of representation

Theories of representation in the theatre, into which the dramaturgical models can be placed, are inextricably linked to the epoch in which they have arisen - its concept of reality and its relative belief or disbelief in the existence of an objective truth about reality, as well as its belief or disbelief in the ability to represent this truth in an artistic form that can communicate "it". Representing reality means representing it truthfully - or representing its truth. In the theatre, this means objectifying the truth of reality in dramaturgical form. In *Poetics*, Aristotle adheres to the belief that there *is* an objective reality and that it can be represented truthfully in dramatic art. His representational paradigm for classical tragedy in ancient Greece was dominant in official theatre (as opposed to unofficial folk-culture: see Nygaard 1992) until mid-18th century modernity. Since that time a modernist paradigm has evolved which claims that reality can only be perceived subjectively and, therefore, that an artistic objectification of the truth of reality is but a subjective representation of a subjectively perceived truth of reality. In other words, there is no one objective reality-truth to be represented and the dramaturgical structure must communicate this. This paradigm questions the conventional norms for viewing both reality and its aesthetic representations. Further, in a postmodern, *perspectivistic* paradigm of this century, we find a development of the modernist idea: if we can only objectify subjectively, we can mount many versions of many reality-truths, representing them from differing perspectives (See Kyndrup 1998: 42 - 61).

In studying children's spontaneous forms of representation, we can substitute the concept of "reality" with the concept of "the objective world outside of their *Me*." How do they perceive their experience of the objective world, the *Not-me*, and how do they represent it in a *Not-not-me*? As a first step, we are examining how the various representational forms emerge spontaneously for children - who are theoretically unaware of them. At a later stage we can examine the values inherent in the spontaneous representational forms.

Below, in using the models to make visible the aesthetic structures in *Wolf*, I give largely simplified overviews of the values and epistemological ideals encompassed in each Form, activating them further in the comparative process. We would not expect a play-drama performance to adhere to any one dramaturgical model, but by studying the extent to which it resembles or differs from each model, we can become more aware of how the children use dramatic forms and aesthetic structures to seek the meaning of their experiences - or to represent and reflect over their experiences (bits of realities).

In analyzing the play-drama through the filters of existing theory, there is the danger of trying to fit the object of study into the parameters of the theory, rather than holding oneself to discovering what qualities in the new material the theory can uncover. I will try to do the latter.

What characterizes the dramaturgies in *Capture the Wolf*, beside the use of techniques of the epic-drama monologue? What dramaturgical structures have emerged out of all the elements we have made visible in the analysis above? What more can a close reading of these structures reveal about the meanings that are being explored and interpreted by the players?

"Dramatic Form"

Dramatic Form finds its home within the first of three representational paradigms, that of Classical mimesis/representation with its classical epistemology - a belief in one reality-truth and in telling important stories for the enculturation of the spectators. As analyzed in Aristotle's *Poetics*, Dramatic Form is the dramaturgical model for ancient tragedy, in which the foundational premise is unity of action, place and time. In tragedy, the drama is told from the perspective of the protagonist who lives through a conflict and loses. Through the composition of the aesthetic means of the performance, the intention is that the spectators will be pulled emotionally into an identification with the protagonist and her/his desire for a given outcome, to experience *catharsis* through recognition - as they live through, with the protagonist, the continuous and progressive dramaturgical curve of the drama: exposition, rising suspense, crisis, complication, catastrophe, dénouement (Pavis 1997: 138). Through the aesthetic experience of this dramaturgy the spectator is to be spiritually cleansed, in coming to a recognition about his own existence, about man's place in a pre-determined universe. Even though *Wolf* does not have tragic overtones, it can be helpful to study how its structure resembles or differs from the structure of Dramatic Form.

In the comparison of the play-structure in terms of Dramatic Form, structural characteristics come to light that correspond with patterns in the subsequent dramaturgical models. Therefore, as I consider the other models, I will take these characteristics with me.

The performance of *Wolf* has comic overtones. Tessa and Hilde, the protagonists, see themselves as the heroines in the struggle against the wolf-antagonist. In the beginning episodes, before the punishment episodes, Tessa has laid out *expository* information for Hilde about the grounds for the conflict: Protecting the innocent babies from the evil wolf. The wolf's imagined presence creates the *conflict* and the *crisis*. In a *pre-climax* phase he is shot at and then caged, actions that create dramatic tension and suspense which build toward the wished for *climax* - catastrophe for the wolf-antagonist and not for the protagonists. The

tension points lie in their own implicit questions underway:- How soon will they defeat him? How will they defeat him? What will happen *if* they defeat him?

There is a paradoxical dynamic in play-drama performance: If the wished-for result of the struggle with the wolf is accomplished - if the wolf is defeated, the play-drama will end. Therefore, the dramatic tension in the pre-climax phase seems to grow out of the performers' real (metafictional) undecidedness about the outcome of the impending climax . - Should the wolf be conquered or not? This question lies at the center of the aesthetic process and presents a dilemma: a definitive climax, the destruction of the wolf, would end the playing; the wolf would be overcome and the conflict would be resolved. Therefore, Tessa finds an alternative to a definitive climax. The wolf is overcome, but where one could expect a traditional one-time climax and resolution, Tessa instead returns the action to a new pre-climax phase. At each point where Tessa *could* enact the final resolution after the death-climax, she instead catapults to an alternative dramatic action and a narrative in another fictional universe - in another story.

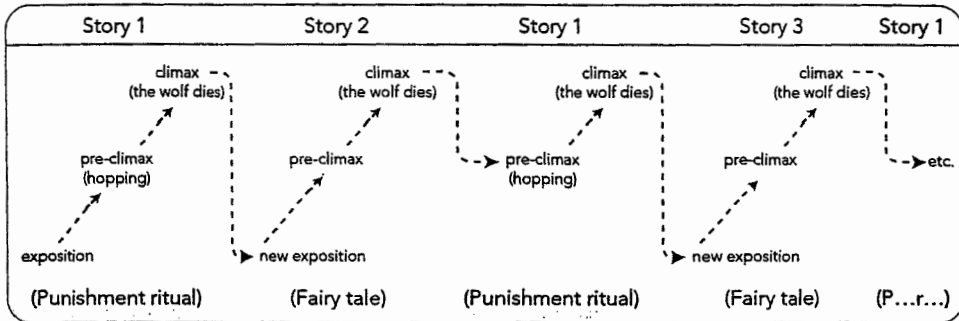
Tessa's performance choices create a horizon of stories and climaxes. She substitutes a definitive resolution with a series of pre-climaxes and climaxes that all reverse themselves, so that there is no resolution of the conflict: the wolf dies and resurrects several times. For example, as we have seen, the wolf dies from their punishment, but then disappears, only to reappear in *The Seven Young Goats* in a pre-climatic phase. Here his limbs are cut off by the pigs, in a climax, after which he again returns to Tessa's and Hilde's hopping punishment - once more to a pre-climatic phase of the drama.

Reversible drama

This aesthetic practice can be regarded as bearing the dramaturgical principle of "reversible drama".⁶ The wolf is central in all the stories but, in each new story, the outcome of the dramatic action against him is reversed so that the playing can continue and the tension of suspense can again be built up. This occurs several times.

⁶Sutton-Smith and Magee refer to play as "reversible play" - in Sutton-Smith and Magee 1989.

Figure 15: Reversible drama



Between the climax in Story 1 (The Mother/Wolf-catchers' world) and the new exposition in Story 2 (introducing the fairy tale world), there is no resolution of Story 1. There is a rupture consisting of a reversal - which erases the climax, so that Story 2 is constructed as if the climax of Story 1 had never occurred. The same is true of the juncture between Story 2 and the return to Story 1, and between Story 1 and Story 3 (new fairy tale episode), and so on - until the end of the punishment episode. In Part I of the drama, the devised drama of Story 1 is a frame around the other stories. The drama starts and ends with Story 1 and the Mother/Wolf-catchers' (temporary) victory over the wolf.

The Figure shows the drama's composition in linear *time*, but the *direction* of the dramatic actions themselves reverse from the one story to the next.

We can try to imagine a theatre performance in which the scenographic set is designed for rapid shifts among three different stories in three different environmental settings. This is what seems to be occurring in Tessa's imagination. In the midst of enacting her invented version of vanquishing the wolf, she leaves it temporarily in order to visit the fairy tale versions of vanquishing the wolf. Only after many trips between her own punishment ritual and the punishments in the fairy tales, and only after continual resistance to resolving her own project with killing the wolf, is the struggle finally resolved - at least until the very end of Part II of the drama. - In the first part of the drama, the resolution finally arrives not because of any logic within the dramatic action itself, but because of conditions in the metafictional frame - because the players are, in reality, exhausted from the effort expended in the dramatic action. It becomes a physical necessity that the intrigue, the *sjuzet*, change direction.

This structure is not true to Dramatic Form. The reversible drama is a result of reflection. Tessa is executing a thematic comparison through dramatic enactment.

Reflexivity: intertextuality and thematic comparison in dramatic structure

As we have seen, in addition to rotating from one role-position to another within her punishment ritual, Tessa also rotates from one dramatic situation to another in the different fairy-tale worlds - from her own punishment of the wolf, to dramatic events in the wolf's meeting with the three little pigs and the seven young kids. There is no unity of action. As she reverses the outcome of the climax, Tessa is, in fact, enacting a thematic comparison between her own version of punishment and what happens in the fairy tales. We can project Tessa's mental landscape onto an imagined stage space, in which she rotates both mentally and physically between her own tale of punishment and the three fairy-tales:

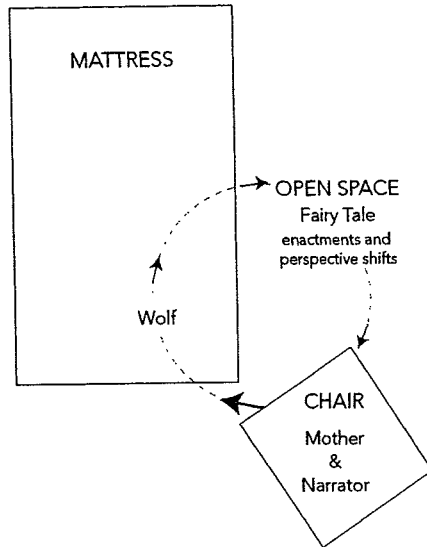
Figure 16: A play-structure - Mental and physical rotation between four fairy tale worlds



A dramaturgical rotation-structure holds the different perspectives

Before the punishment drama reaches its definitive climax, the dramaturgical direction is circular. Not yet four years of age, Tessa is simultaneously juggling multiple perspectives in four narratives, with no apparent problem. What is particularly interesting in this material is that she, in the expressive form of the hopping ritual, moves *physically* in a circular pattern as she also circulates *mentally* among the perspectives of the differing role-figures and fairy-tales:

Figure 17: Movement in physical space: Movement among perspectives



On the chair-step, she takes the role-positions of both Narrator and Wolf-catcher; in the air and landing on the mattress she is the Wolf-catcher; lying on the mattress - she is the Wolf; and in the circle on the way back to the chair, she often returns to the perspective of the Wolf-catcher; but several times (as "onstage-dramatist") she moves the drama into fairy-tale territory with the device of the Narrator's voice.

In the whole punishment sequence we find circular forms that result in a circular play-structure, or dramaturgic composition:

- a circular physical movement from chair to mattress, around through the open space between them, and back to the chair - cobbled with:
- a circular mental and enactment movement from story to story which contains:
- a circular mental and enactment movement from perspective to perspective - from Narrator to Wolf-catcher to Wolf, Pigs, Kids, etc..

The complex shifts that are manifested in the role rotation and story rotation could, in all probability, not be held in the mind over such a long period of time without the circular, physical *form* and the circular *play-structure* it produces. The ability to mentally hold these perspectives and fictive universes is made possible by the pattern of the physical form. The pattern of the physical form makes the dramaturgical structure possible. The perspectives and meanings are held afloat in the physical movement and the patterns it creates.

The circular forms and structure carry the mental shifts and the meanings that Tessa is interpreting.

Hilde does not appear to reflect in dramatic form in as complex a manner as Tessa. Hilde enters into concrete dramatic actions and pursues them without digression. First she performs in Tessa's devised hopping ritual without moving in the circular structure to the other tales. These are solo performances that it would be difficult for her to participate in. She takes care of the babies instead. In the second part of the drama, what seems most important for her is the resolution to the climax of the wolf's death in the hopping ritual: the enactment of the release of the victims from the wolf's stomach, as well as the actual moment of the wolf's burial. For her, the latter action is a seemingly clear resolution to the climax of the wolf's death, as modelled on the resolution in *Red Riding Hood*. She is not as actively exploring and reflecting over the more existential aspects of the Wolf theme but, rather, holding to the unities of Dramatic Form. Even though she does not rotate with Tessa to the fairy tale worlds, she contributes strongly to the fun of the repetitive hopping ritual and as supporting spectator to Tessa's complex performance. The enjoyment of their cultural exchange sustains the drama performance so that it can develop as it does. Hilde is there, taking care of the babies, ready to step in.

On the other hand, in Tessa's drama there is no unity of action, time or place. The *point of no return* - the point of no choice - is reached several times but reverses itself again and again, with either no resolution or an ambiguous resolution. However, although there is no unified fictional universe in the horizontal plurality of narratives, we find, nonetheless, that *within* each of the fictional universes there *is* a build-up of conflict to a climax. So that within each story segment we find a progressive element that *is* true to Dramatic Form. However, because the wolf resurrects in the other fictional fragments, there is no final resolution. The fictional universes lie in fragments alongside of one another, commenting ambiguously upon each other.

Do we find a corresponding model in theatre dramaturgy? And if so, what can this tell us about the meanings being sought in *Wolf*? I will move now to the three other dramaturgical models to investigate to what extent their characteristics can further the understanding of the aesthetic and reflexive structure in *Wolf* and how it seizes the players sensorily.

"Epic Form"

We have already seen that the rotation structure in *Wolf* has strong resemblances to the structural convention of Fo's monologue form. We have, thus, already begun the analysis of Epic Form. It belongs in the second representational paradigm, the Modernistic - in that it is, to a certain extent, discontinuous and fragmented, working on the principle of *montage* rather than that of linearity and unity of action, place and time. However, it also has a classical epistemology, in that it wishes to tell important stories for raising the awareness of the spectators. Rather than telling "a coherent story, it brings together autonomous episodes that the spectator is invited to *compare* with the real processes to which they correspond." The drama is not "made up of episodes connected by relationships of temporality and causality, but a broken-up structure"(Pavis 1998: 140, my emphasis). Up to several perspectives, places and times are mounted in fragments, but are brought together in the climax and resolution. In epic theatre we also find the storyteller's/narrator's point of view tying fragments of the drama together.

Brecht's development of Epic Form in modern theatre is built on conventions that began to appear in the official theatre institutions of the 18th century. Brecht's epistemological project with epic dramaturgy was to force the spectators out of a spontaneous empathic relation to the characters and the situation being portrayed and into an intellectual distance. In this distance they are meant to recognize that they can change what can be experienced as pre-determined, inescapable social-political structures.

Fo's use of the montage principle in the monologues is one of framing, and it is without the distancing intention of Brecht. Fo explains the montage technique he employs as a performer in *The Tiger* in terms of film clipping: in the continual shifts from narrator position to the position of the role-figures, he imagines the scene either through a camera's objective or wide-angle lenses: he pans from the imagined use of the objective lens on the narrator's descriptions of the tiger, to the wide-angle lens on the tiger's actions, and - immediately before the shift back to the panorama shot produced by the narrator's objective - a shot on the frozen image of the tiger's last position; then back to the objective on the narrator's view; then back to the frozen image - which is then animated in a wide-angle view (Fo 1992: 231, 234-235).

Tessa is using the same montage technique in *Wolf*. She also has the film-clip images built into her imagination.

In regard to Brecht's montage of stories, in *Wolf's* punishment episodes we have found several stories told or enacted, one after the other - horizontally interwoven into a narrative pattern.

Tessa travels back and forth between, or in and out of, the stories. Hilde performs in the punishment ritual but otherwise spectates Tessa's performance of the shifts. The universe of the invented punishment ritual is composed of the Mother/Wolf-catchers' actions. The other universes are composites of the fairy-tale conflict between the seven kids, the three little pigs and the wolf, with echoes of *Red Riding Hood*. One can, at first glance, interpret the structure as Epic: the dominant feature of several stories which are laid out horizontally and which reappear to form a dramatic pattern; as well as the feature of a narrative voice within both parts. However, whereas in Brecht's dramaturgy the narrative voice joins the stories into a coherent whole, in *Wolf* the narrative voice often remains within each fictive universe without joining them. There is, seemingly, no coherence.

There is never a clear convergence of all the fictions in a combined climax and resolution. However, there are, at several points, brief meetings of several narrative threads, when characters from two fairy tales appear together in the same drama: in line 144 when the Pigs come to the rescue of the Goats, and in line 145, in the same invented episode, when Tessa hops on the wolf. However, it is not clear here if she is representing the pigs' action rather than the Mother/Wolf-catcher's. Again in line 153, in another episode uniting Kids and Pigs, I identify the hopping on the wolf to be executed by the Narrator-cum-Wolf-catcher, in which case there is a clearer convergence of the story of the hopping punishment with two of the fairy tales.

This interweaving is not, as it first appeared to be, absurd. On the contrary, it shows an advanced logic: Let all the characters from all the fairy tales gang up on The Wolf at once. Unite and conquer.

It is clear that the children's project is not, consciously, to represent a logical unit of clear meaning - as Brecht strived for in his educative epic project. As discussed earlier, the children's project can be characterized as having fun and as interpreting experience, as it has made a sensory impression upon them. And my task is to try to understand *how* the dramaturgical structure is created by the players for both these purposes. Whether or not we can say for sure what they are imagining, it seems clear that Tessa, in her choices and enactments, is actively reflecting over the material.

We can now examine "the seat of montage". For the outside viewer, there at first seems to be no logical reason for jumping to another story, nor any logical connection between the events in the stories, even though the wolf is in all of them. However, we must attempt to understand the connection between the fragments for the *doer*. What is going on in the mind of Tessa-

dramatist-dramaturg-director-actor? What meanings are being sought or constructed in her mounting of the fragments? In theatre contexts in which the spectator is on one side of the dividing line between stage and spectator space and the performer on the other, the aesthetic principle of *montage* is designed and reworked by the theatre artists to affect the perceptions of the spectator. The "seat of montage" is with the spectators. Whereas, in drama performance which is created and performed spontaneously by and for performer-spectators - as in play-drama and in the workshop-stage of experimental theatre rehearsal⁷ - the "seat of montage is with the doers" (Grotowski, in Schechner 1997: 84).

Thus far, we have seen progressive elements of the Dramatic Form being broken into story fragments with the narrator convention employed within each fragment, and with characters from the fragments appearing in each other's stories. This resembles Epic Form only to a limited extent. Moreover, the discovery of this construction does not interpret satisfactorily what meanings the children are using the forms and structures to explore.

As discussed above, both the Dramatic and Epic models reflect the belief that it is possible to perceive one reality, but their poetics and dramaturgies for representing it are radically different - both in regard to the intentions of a performance and in regard to the ways in which it is composed and expressed in order to reach the audience sensorily, emotionally and intellectually. Neither the Dramatic nor the Epic Form is ever fully realized in *Wolf*. Because they are not realized we can ask about the "insight-value" of the dramaturgical structures employed thus far, but the questions sound exaggerated: Do the performing-spectating children reach recognition (*erkjennelse*) about their own existence in a predetermined world of adult hegemony and fairy tale outcomes? Do they reach *catharsis*? Do they come to recognize that the social-political structures are not pre-determined and inescapable - that they can be changed? Is it these types of questions we are asking when we use such terms as *catharsis* and recognition/insight about the cognitive outcome of children's dramatic playing? What we find, rather, is that their performance is reflexive and shows a high level of investment in transforming the themes of the fairy tales.

In the theatre, in both Dramatic and Epic Forms there is a split between aesthetic form and thematic substance. The pre-conception of how reality is, is the pre-text for the dramaturgical form, rather than allowing the substance and the stage form to emerge hand-in-hand, in a common seeking process about reality. In my definition of *fabula*, I refer to Brecht's theory about epic theatre: in the rehearsal process all the artists shall seek together to find the story of

⁷ See Guss 1998: 9-10

reality they wish to tell. However, there is little evidence that this was the case in his practice. On the other hand, this is precisely what we find in children's aesthetic practice. They are seeking the *fabula* and utilizing or inventing formal components and structures that help in the search. There seems to be no split between form and thematic substance. They go hand-in-hand. When we turn to Simultaneous and Metafictional Forms, we find the same dynamic.

"Simultaneous Form"

In Simultaneous and Metafictional Forms in the theatre we find an aesthetic play with the conventions of Dramatic and Epic Forms, but a rejection of the epistemological values which ground them. There is no belief in one version of a true, coherent reality which can be represented aesthetically. Rather, there is a belief only in bits of reality that are objectively incoherent, as well as the belief that one can represent bits of reality but with no objective coherence between them. The spectators, based on their own experiences, can subjectively seek coherence and meanings. These Forms belong within the third representational paradigm, the Perspectivistic (see Kyndrup 1998: 59). They are modernistic in epistemology, but paramodern in their experimentation with fragmented form and incoherent performance text, qualities that reflect their reality-views. In their aesthetic, which is called "non-mimetic representation" or "anti-representation", there is no split between form and thematic substance.

Let us examine first what the model for Simultaneous Form can tell us about the aesthetic-reflexive value of *Wolf*. Szatkowski characterizes Simultaneous Form as being "fragmented, continuous, a-logically motivated". This postmodern dramaturgy, created by the historical avant-garde, also reflects a modernist philosophical questioning of the existence of one, overarching reality. It is opposed to the idea of the unity of action in Dramatic Form and it is "anti-representative", anti-coherent, in regard to its splitting of the action-focus. - The performances do not intend to communicate a cohesive version of reality. Up to several seemingly unrelated actions can be enacted simultaneously in the same stage sequence. Fictional levels are superimposed upon one another and reflect one another. Because the spectators are given no guide as to what they shall focus upon, in order to create sense and meaning they are forced back upon their own Experience and associations. The fact that no clear meanings emerge on the stage creates a contemplative state of mind in the spectator. Between the simultaneous actions, associational space is created in which the spectators can create their own meanings.

An understanding of this model can help us to characterize the aesthetic practice and its reflective value in the first part of *Wolf*: In Tessa's monologue form she is continually moving from one fictional level to another and constructing stories within stories. There are several

fictional universes in Tessa's imagination and in her actions. However, these cannot possibly be performed simultaneously, as they can be in technologically advanced theatre - for instance in Wooster Group's use of video monitors. However, the very leaps from the one to the other and back, indicate Tessa's state of "mental simultaneity" - as if she had video monitors inside her head. This is also a contemplative state, a reflective state, as receiver of and spectator to her own representations. All the stories are present for her simultaneously even when she is not enacting them, as we see when she intertwines and intertextualizes them in the same sequence - for instance, when she calls in the three little pigs to rescue the seven little kids. The interweaving of characters from the various fictions in the same dramatic action is a simultaneous activation of, and play with, the several fictional layers.

We can compare this with Hilde's play. Hilde participates in the invented drama of punishment and initiates the operation resolution, but she seldom actualizes the other fictional levels. She plays with the direct action rather than seeking meaning in complex structures. However, as we have noted above, she has invaluable functions as collaborator and spectator in the whole performance event.

The idea of simultaneity in the theatre not only refers to the visual simultaneity on stage, but also conjures up how this kind of dramaturgy works in its reception, in the mind of the spectator. Therefore, even though we often find in play-drama several players playing parallel to one another, each with her own fictional universe, this does not produce the same receptive-reflective quality in the players' minds as Simultaneous Form does in the spectators' minds in the theatre. Whereas the existence of several fictions in the mind of one performer-spectator does produce this quality.

Simultaneous Form as a visual form is not found in play-drama because one player cannot perform more than one fictional level at a time. However, if we take one step further the idea of several fictional layers existing simultaneously in the mind, we arrive at Metafictional Form.

"Metafictional Form"

Metafictional Form is also a postmodern dramaturgy, opposed to attempts to represent a coherent reality. Two aspects predominate: One aspect is the co-existence of at least two fictional levels. Situations with progressive story elements, as in Dramatic Form, can be mounted in unrelated fragments, non-simultaneously, and never become resolved in the conclusion of the drama. Another aspect is that of the self-awareness of the performance, its self-referentiality. In these two aspects, Metafictional Form problematizes meaning and can be

interpreted as a reflection of our experience of postmodern life and its questioning of absolute values and meaning.

As discussed earlier, what we call the metafictional level in play-drama is the level at which the players are themselves, outside production actions and dramatic actions. We can call this the *Me*-level. On this level the players remind themselves that what they are doing is in the play-world and not in the real world outside of playing. On this level, they comment on aspects of the performance.

Several fictional layers

In the analysis of *Wolf* thus far we have established that there are several fictional levels and that the dramaturgy and the meanings it carries cannot be fully understood in terms of Dramatic, Epic and Simultaneous Forms. We have seen how Tessa has set up for herself an active, meditative space among the different stories and that she sometimes intertextualizes them. Even though they are not enacted simultaneously, the different fictions co-exist and reflect each other - without giving the outside spectator any absolute answers about how they are related or what the meanings are. It could be interpreted that there are no absolute answers for the performer-spectator-Tessa either, that she is seeking meaning. - It would seem that the floating associative space between the story fragments results in a dramatic tension that keeps Tessa in a deep aesthetic immersion. It is perhaps because there are no clear answers that she is held in the interpretive sensing and form-making search. She has created open spaces in which meanings can *become*.

In theatre performance, the existence of several fictional layers which are not clearly related forces the spectator to sort out the relationship in order to understand the meanings that *might* lie in the connections between them (see Szatkowski 1998). The dramaturgy plays with the spectator expectation of being automatically able to follow the logic of a performance. When s/he cannot, the result is confusion and an imbalance leading to reflection - both about the means for telling the drama and about the meanings contained in what is told. It places the *spectator* in a metafictional state of mind, behind or alongside of the fictional world - in the reality of her own world where she wonders about meanings.

The Danish dramaturg Niels Lehmann describes this dynamic as pieces of a puzzle that need to be connected in order to construct meaning (Lehmann 1995). It is a mind game. The same can be said of the layers in *Wolf*, the fairy tales superimposed on the invented wolf punishment. Tessa attempts to construct meaning for herself through her layering strategy. She is trying to

fit pieces of the puzzle of *The Wolf* together so that the different stories about him will make sense for her.

Acting or being?

Lehmann provides an example in which the spectator cannot be sure from whose position the drama is being told: Whose story is it? Is the actor acting a role-figure in a fiction or presenting her autobiography (Lehmann 1998: 10)? One cannot be sure if the actor is portraying or being. This is an interesting question in regard to what is happening in play-drama, as discussed under *Acting* in Analysis 2. In *Wolf*, is Tessa portraying or being? There is never any indication that she is enacting her own life, but because she is also the *dramatist*, she seems to make the perspective of the protagonist represent her own perspective. It would seem that as the Mother/Wolf-catcher she is *being herself* - enacting from her own emotional and ethical core - even though this is not her autobiography. This is how she might have acted if it were. Whereas, when enacting the Wolf-figure, Tessa seems to be *illustrating* a role-figure at a distance from herself. We find examples of this in the abbreviated, stylized way she represents his suffering response. Again, as we found in Analysis 2, we do not find portrayal in the interpretive psychological sense.

Ironic distance

Playing with conventions is a characteristic of Metafictional Form which is a signal of the performers' "ironic distance" to the material (see Lehmann 1995). Both Tessa and Hilde play with the theme of the wolf with what could be characterized as ironic distance. This irony is manifested in the way Tessa, for instance, gives "full expression to contradictory or complementary impulses, attitudes, etc., especially as a means of indicating detachment from a subject, theme, or emotion" (Webster's Encyclopedia 1994). As Tessa succeeds at something that she knows she could not do in everyday life, her playful attitude and exaggerated expressions, as well as the endurance of the struggle, suggest a "turn-it-completely on its head" irony. She seems completely involved and detached simultaneously. Although Tessa is aesthetically and emotionally involved in actualizing the images and in sustaining the fun of expressing her imagination about the wolf, her modes of expression do not seem to contain deep traumatic emotion related to firsthand, fearful experience.

The idea of both involvement and detachment indicates a double mentality - inside the fiction and outside the fiction, in a metafictional spectator-state of mind. This seems to fulfill Brecht's modernist paradigm for acting, amidst the postmodern, metafictional layering. - It is difficult for the outside spectator to define clear borders between the children's private perspectives and their role-position's perspective - as there may well be for the players themselves. In the

immediacy of their performance, the dramatic *impulses* come directly from their private perspectives, but the players play with these perspectives. Tessa seems to be watching herself perform, at an ironic distance, in the same vein as the acting in Forced Entertainment's *Club of No Regrets* and Wooster Group's *House/Lights*, although the former has a darker tone than the latter. The performance of *Wolf* is poking fun, but serious fun. Even though we discern an ironic, metafictional distance, the players want to put an end to the wolf in all earnestness, but they want to have fun while doing so.

In *Wolf*, the metafictional reality often determines the direction that the dramatic action takes. As we have seen (line 196), a fairly stable turning point (*peripeteia*) comes when the players are too exhausted in their real, physiological world, in the metafictional sphere, to sustain the hopping ritual. The wolf dies because of a metafictional necessity, rather than because of a wish for resolution and end to the drama. Perhaps this is the reason that there is no sustained celebration of the climax of the wolf's death. It is a dramatically understated moment. In the theatre, having the dramatic action change directions because of the actors' real physiological state would be an interesting metafictional communication-strategy.

Themes

We have confirmed that the drama changes direction because of the metafictional sphere, even though Tessa is not finished exploring the meanings of the Wolf. What more can we understand about the meanings of the drama by insight into the metafictional dimension in theatre? By understanding the formal movement between the several fictional levels, the theme of the drama no longer appears to be a one-dimensional struggle against the wolf. Tessa seems, rather, to try to understand "The Wolf" as a mythic and symbolic figure: What does he do in the fairy tales and how is he dealt with there? She is exploring and interpreting her accumulative impression of The Wolf, across all the fairy tales: How is The Wolf? What is the extent of his omnipotence? How many lives does he have? - What is his survival quotient? Tessa seems to try to understand what actually happens in *The Three Little Pigs* and *The Seven Young Goats*.

Not least, the theme of what it means to die and to be dead is of importance for Tessa. We could understand this as an additional fictional level about death and dying. Tessa has the wolf die, disappear, resurrect, and return in repeated cycles - either a representation of her recognition that he always will return or the need to keep him and the drama alive - or both. In the second part of the drama, she devises an action in which she and Hilde pretend to die in order to trick the (dead) wolf, but they are "really" only sleeping. Then, at the end of their

drama, Hilde initiates the theme, saying that they die because they have touched the dead wolf. But they again resurrect - this time without explanation.

Hilde has been pulled into this level of reflection, although she otherwise seems more interested in direct action - hopping the wolf to death and rescuing the victims from his stomach. Whereas Tessa, in the spaces between the actions, seems to be posing questions more persistently about the experience she is actualizing. It is through an understanding of the simultaneous existence of the several mental layers that she creates for herself and their working in the metafictional sphere in the ambiguous spaces between them, that we can best grasp the meanings she explores.

In *Wolf*, the impulse from the book *Little Red Riding Hood* sets the dramatic actions in motion, but it is the actions during the performance that trigger and bring into being the other fairy tale levels and their themes. Whereas, in *House/Lights* the two fictional levels - Stein's libretto and the B-movie - are the thematic entrance points to the formal devising process.

Self-referentiality in formal play

As pointed out earlier, in *Wolf* there is a clear metafictional level which is not part of the fictional layers that we have described. Tessa and Hilde comment on or react to the role-figures and their performance actions. They remind themselves or each other that "this is play".⁸ We hear Tessa reassuring both Hilde and the photographer about this fact as she, as Witch, hauls Hilde/Witch-captor to the ground.

In play-drama the players' metafictional *Me*-interjections show a clear awareness of the margin between the non-play-world (the objective reality) and the play-world (the fictional reality). The same can be said to apply to the metafictional strategy in theatre performance. In theatre, the intention seems to be to remind the *spectator* that the performance is aware of the margin between the objective world and the staged world; that "this is play, this is not trying to guide you to *The Truth of The Reality*". Again, we see that the distinctions between the dramaturgy in play-drama and theatre performance is a matter of cultural context and intention.

In *Wolf*, an example of irrepressible metafictional communication is the players' laughter at their own and each other's role-figures' actions. We can imagine how such self-referential behaviour from a stage actor would snap theatre spectators out of an immersion in the performance, cause a break in their emotional involvement in the dramatic action, and activate

⁸ *On a Boat at the Beach* is one of the few dramas of the twenty-three that were collected in which I do not find extensive metafictional communication. This may be so because the theme being explored is not complex and the dramatic interaction between the players is so effective.

an awareness of their *own* interpretive process - placing them in a metafictional relation to the fiction(s).

In *Club*, we have found the play-structure composed of two levels of actions, the production actions and the dramatic actions. Performing production actions as an integral part of the dramatic action is a radical departure from the convention of masking over the seams of production. The way in which the performance plays with this convention is a clear metafictional strategy - in its self-referentiality. Playing with conventions and spectator expectations reminds the spectator that the theatre fiction is aware of itself as a fiction, thus drawing attention to itself as a theatre reality, and not as a representation of The Reality. In the comparison with *Hidden J and Club*, we find the performances' direct references to themselves as performance - in their having the actors, as part of the performance, perform the functions of onstage-dramatist, dramaturg, director, scenographer and stage-hand. The production actions break with the spectator's expectation of an undisturbed immersion in the progression of the dramatic action, and into a playful relationship with *how* it is being performed. This playfulness is present even in the representation of the dark themes and tones of Forced Entertainment.

In the performance structure of *Club* we find that the production action level has been transformed into a part of the fiction. The performers of these actions are turned into role-figures. For instance, what were most likely *dramatist-dramaturg* and *director* functions during the devising process have been artistically honed to become (what can be interpreted as) an officious godlike role-figure who sits perched above and behind the back wall of the "kitchen" setpiece, calling out which sequence the performers shall enact next. This role-figure is in a position of power, calling the shots with no opening for disobedience. The other performers dance to her tune. She whips up the violence repeatedly as if she were holding marionette strings. If we were to stage *Wolf* with the intention of preserving the levels of complexity of Tessa's mind, a Tessa-dramatist-dramaturg-figure could be placed at the metafictional rand of the dramatic action, calling the shots. This role-figure would create a stage image to match the metafictional level of her mind as she enacts the complex performance of *Wolf*.

The fact that the hostage-takers in *Club*, as part of their *gestalt*, also perform production actions, as *props persons* and *stagehands*, also turns the production actions into part of the fiction. Again, the *spectator* is pulled out of her immersion in the fictional sphere and forced into metafictional reflection. - As the children are while they perform and spectate their own drama.

The children express their meta-perspective on their drama as they are creating it. Their dramaturgical form comments on play as play, on the fiction as fiction, and on themselves as players. "The story is: montage - with fragments and progressive story elements, ironically- logically motivated. Meaning is problematized" (Szatkowski, see models). Does meaning emerge for the players? We will never know if the process has given answers to their questions, but we see the reflection over experience in the complex forms they play with, on the way to becoming Experience.

Perspectivist representation: combining the dramaturgical models

Wolf is staged from various perspectives. Tessa places the wolf in various situations and through her staging, she can reflect over how she will deal with him. Also in theatre, one could describe the perspectivist strategy mentioned earlier as approaching the experience one is staging from various perspectives. What allows these perspectives to be staged formally so that they can be perceived by the spectator is the combination of differing structuring conventions.

All the dramaturgical models are combined in *Wolf*. The performance has progressive elements, as in Dramatic Form; but each progressive sequence is fragmented from the others, as in Epic Form. However, there is no narrative voice holding the fragments together in a logical relationship. We find instead evidence of a simultaneous mental presence of all the stories that are incorporated in a performance structure with metafictional characteristics. The several fictional layers are played with and the players display their awareness of the boundaries between the fictional world and the objective world. The experience and meanings the children are exploring become visible in the study of Tessa's mental simultaneity and the principle of reversible drama - a reversible play-structure. It is because the performance is tossing many situations and points of view into the air simultaneously, playing with them, that we recognize the aesthetic practice as one of meaning-seeking.

The very ambiguities in the crossovers between the stories, executed without transitional joints, are witness to the reflexive qualities of the performance. I have attempted to identify where the transitions and reflexivity occur. The children's aesthetic process is in the liminal state of mind - a mind on the threshold between earlier experience and the immediate experience of the evolving fiction and its dramatic forms. As the children actualize the operations of the imagination in the dramatic medium, it seems that their minds - especially Tessa's - turn constantly back on themselves, the definition of reflexivity.

If this were a theatre performance, we would characterize it as one with "eclectic aesthetics" or "unworried aesthetics" (Lehmann 1995), one with a random dramaturgy resembling characteristics in DADA: - unpredictability, nonsense, random samplings, collage, disorder, noise, irregularity. This kind of dramaturgy which is so full of life-force, does not tell the spectator what to think, it gives possibilities to think about, which is what the players' own dramaturgy affords them. But *Wolf* is, of course, not a protest against élitist institutional art. It *could* be characterized as a protest against the solutions in the inherited cultural material, as well as against the cultural norm which demands quiet children.

Elements from three dramaturgical models developed in the theatre over twenty centuries are present at the end of the twentieth century in these two children's spontaneous drama performance. It is impossible to say to what extent the dramaturgical elements and structures have been internalized from the children's aesthetic experiences with theatre and drama processes. Dramatic Form is common both in children's literature, theatre and mass culture. Several times, one of the children's teachers has presented a fairy tale in kindergarten in excellent Fo-like Epic Form. I doubt that the children have experienced Simultaneous and Metafictional Forms in theatre for children.

Nonetheless, elements of the three Forms in *Wolf* have emerged as a spontaneous part of the playful seeking process. Together they allow the players to interpret their experiences in the richest possible way. However, from the vantage point of a spectator with the expectation of the classical representation paradigm and cohesive drama, we would first see chaos. From the modernist vantage point we would see anti-representation. Whereas, from the perspectivistic vantage point, we see meaning-seeking in the combined structures of three of the representational forms. - Not as the result of the performers' knowledge about representational paradigms, but from the need to make forms in which to make sense and have fun.

In theatre, significant aesthetic play with conventions can only be based upon the artists' insight into the values and ideals the conventions represent - artistically - existentially - social-politically. Although the emergence of Metafictional Form in the professional devising process can be the result of the chance movement of play-structures, the dramaturgical play in the performance itself is self-aware - aware of the conventions it is playing with. In play-drama we would not expect this awareness, although in Tessa's case, it appears that she *is* playing with the narrator convention that she has experienced in the theatre. - We have seen that in certain sequences she seems to be playing for the camera, playing that she is playing a dramatic monologue. Her theatre experience has provided formal raw material in the same way that her fairy tale experience has provided thematic raw material.

With the application of the dramaturgical models we have discovered in play-drama a resemblance to the perspectivist paradigm for representation found in contemporary experimental theatre. We have found an aesthetic-reflexive practice for the *becoming* of meaning.

Summary and Reflections

The value of the analytical tools

Understanding the aesthetic structures in play-drama through the filters of theatre conventions and dramaturgical models has made visible the ways in which the children symbolically transform life experiences and interpret their meanings. A core of findings has emerged which I reflect over below.

Experience and its representation

What is the possibility of capturing the truth of reality and representing it in dramatic form? If these two ideals were possible to realize for young children, it would be through perceptions and apperceptions in the spontaneous process of performing, rather than through intending it or conceiving of it first, and performing it thereafter. The impulse to play, and the impulse to play significant experiences that lie in the sensory memory, is not synonymous with the conscious will to capture the truth of reality and to represent it. However, it would seem that there is such a close proximity between what is present in the imagination and the ways in which the players access it dramatically, that what we find in the play-drama, in dramatic form, is a mental and physical circling around significant moments of their experience that dig into the core of meanings in these experiences. The search for dramatic form is part of the search for and capturing of the meanings of experience. As the *fabula* and *sjuzet* do not exist prior to the performance, neither do the meanings of the experience, nor the form in which it can be represented. They emerge. They become.

Play-drama dramaturgy and meaning construction

What we call play-drama dramaturgy, rather than being the result of pre-design is the result of:

- the performers' submittal to the impulses from experiential bits that are stored in their sensory memory and
- their submittal to impulses that arise in the acts of playing with and dramatizing them - their perception of their own production actions and dramatic actions and of the movement within the play-structures that emerge.

We cannot separate the forms the players are using from the meanings they are exploring. We cannot separate *what* the players are telling from *how* they are telling it. To ask: "What is the drama's story?" is the same as asking: "How are the drama's narrative and dramaturgical elements and forms?" These together tell us both the *fabula* and the *szujet*. The narrative in the play-drama, *what* is being sought and told, cannot be read in the verbal content alone. The children's play with dramatic form in itself tells the story and the plot. We read these in the dramaturgical process; in the continuous, reciprocal interaction between the players' mental images, or ideas, and verbal and bodily enactments. The narrative is developed in the dynamic relationship between imagination and formal actualization of the imagination - i.e. in the ways the children build the environment, and use their bodies and voices, language, objects, space, and time. Playing with the formal content gives impulses for thematic content, to as great an extent as playing with the thematic content gives impulses for formal content. These two sides of the performance spiral in and out of each other. The meanings of performance can best be understood by studying this reciprocal process.

Embodied thought: clear points of aesthetic reflection

There is no pre-existing text in the minds of the children of what the performance text will encompass, but we find clear points of reflection in the dramaturgical process. I have shown how the narrative threads in dramatic playing are woven out of the impulses triggered in the aesthetic medium.

In the dramaturgical process, both production actions and dramatic actions trigger sensory responses and associations which, in turn, move the drama in unplanned directions. Narrative turning points are the result of these sensory "trigger-points". In the chain of production actions and dramatic actions, the trigger-points can be understood as points of reflection. Actions in which the performers deliberate are "embodied thought" about both the formal content *and* the thematic content. Many of the children's actions seem to be asking questions about the meanings they are performing.

The play plays the players, but the players choose the balls

We are accustomed to say that, "Children play". However, in light of the findings above, we could perhaps turn this sentence on its head, to say, "The play plays the children". In accordance with Gadamer's insight, play plays the players: The players lose themselves to the back-and-forth movement of play-structure (Gadamer 1960/1996: 101-110). In this drama we have seen that the wolf is the chief component of the play and that it is the wolf who is playing the children - in the same way that the continual back-and-forth movement of a rubber ball

plays the players. Because his existence in the imagination is the impulse to the play-movement of the drama, without the mental image of the wolf and the wolf's endurance the play would stop. In this core image we find one of the primary motive powers in the performance: The need to keep the wolf, and the play with him, alive - ornery, dangerous, and full of tension. The dramaturgical process and its product, the unconventional narrative and performative structure, are results of this strong need.

The wolf's survival, in addition to being a necessity for the continuing formal play, becomes the central meaning of the performance as well, with the play-movement between the themes of death and rebirth as the wolf's constant play companions. Tessa's final performance statement seems to be that the wolf survives, even when she, after forty minutes of intensity, no longer finds the impulses or focus to continue her struggle with him.

However, the children are not only played, they play as well. Even though the players willingly give themselves over to being played by the wolf, this by no means a passive surrender. We see clearly that the aesthetic practice is constituted by deliberations and active choices in, and in relation to, the construction of dramatic forms. The players contribute to being played by the wolf with their choices of play materials: both thematic *and* expressive elements. - In the process of meaning-seeking, inspired by sensory memory of experience, they let themselves be played by what they choose to let themselves be played by. And, in the heat of the movement, they construct gripping structures in which to do let this happen.

We find a fusion of both Gadamer's observation of the players' surrender to being played and our observation of their active contributions to *what* is playing them and *how* they are being played by it.

Play-structure as a proto-artistic characteristic

It is in the understanding of the dramaturgy of play-structure that we can grasp the experience and meanings being represented in the players' aesthetic practice.

In play-drama performance, the performers are not knowledgeable about, and therefore have no desire to reject, existing artistic-epistemological values, ideals and conventions. Nonetheless, the chance aesthetic outcome of their play with dramatic forms is a resemblance to modern and postmodern dramaturgy. The resemblances between the "play-structure aesthetics" in play-drama and popular theatre and avant-garde theatre performance is evidence of the importance of play-structure in experimental artistic process. It is in play-structures that we evidently find the source of rejuvenation of theatre arts. In the immediacy of the playing mentality and the play-structures that are created from it, we find the artists' ability to grasp the pulse of the epoch and

to represent it with immediacy. In this sense, we *could* say that the play-drama that we find in the devising process of theatre *is* proto-artistic practice.

How can these aesthetic and reflexive findings be understood in a cultural perspective?

The cultural dimension: a collective search for individual meanings

Children's collective play-drama performance takes place in a public, cultural arena in which the experience of the performer-spectators is shared and reflected upon in aesthetic form.

- The expressive forms the children develop objectify each player's subjective imaginative life, in a way that can allow for joint, cultural reflection in a sensorily satisfying way. The collective objectivification *is* culture (Turner 1982, Kapferer 1986). It is in this insight that the *cultural* reflexive value of the performance can be grasped.

The anthropologist Bruce Kapferer makes the point that although there is a shared objective experience in the cultural performance of ritual, there are not necessarily shared subjective meanings for the participants (1986). In *Wolf* we can see that even though Tessa and Hilde perform in the same drama their interests diverge. Tessa instigates the drama, develops the punishment ritual in which Hilde performs, but Hilde does not perform in the shifts to the other fairy tales. She spectates these but remains almost entirely within the punishment ritual and stomach operation. On the other hand, in the drama's second part, the cutting open of the wolf's stomach to liberate the chickens, it is Hilde who insists on a thorough enactment and who carries this through to completion. Tessa performs these actions with Hilde but, within the segment, she has her own project: she implants episodes of their *own* dying and reviving. These seem to have greater significance for *her*. Hilde, in turn, performs in these. Thus we see that although they share in a common cultural performance, they dwell upon different thematic threads, threads that apparently have more meaning for the one than for the other.

- We can understand the dramaturgical and narrative development as a collective search for individual meanings. The players perform together and keep each other sensorily immersed, but each with her own volition to explore her own meanings. With impulses from life experience, the children perform representative actions in the fictive world - a speech action or a bodily action. Thereafter, in a new action, each one seems to search for the meaning for herself of the previous action - collectively supporting each other. In this search for the action's possible meanings, and as a perpetual motive force, each action gives birth to a new action, a new expressive means, a new contribution to the collaborative drama.

- Without the stimulation of the *shared* formal process, combining performance and spectation, it is doubtful if the energy and focus they invest could be sustained over such a long period of time (circa forty minutes). In the cultural arena the players' presence for each other can be understood as a spur to keep the dramatic fiction riding. The spectating-performing ensemble members provide aesthetic impulses and points of dramatic tension for each other that sustain the collective performance. The play narrative, its form and its meanings, emerges in a collective dramaturgical process. We find an evolving aesthetic which emerges out of a spontaneous need to find collective expressive forms in which both players can engage themselves, as active performers *and* spectators.

A fusion between a folk-cultural aesthetic and a radical-*élitist* aesthetic

In the comparisons with *Locked In* and *Wolf*, we find such a high degree of similarity both with the folk-cultural aesthetics of the modernist Fo and the metafictional aesthetics of the avant-garde, that one wishes to make a bridge between these two practices theoretically, in order to better understand the nature of the aesthetic-reflexive practice in *Wolf*. To what extent are the aesthetic forms of folk-culture and *élitist* avant-garde *fused* in the perspectivistic performances which I have employed to make the aesthetic dimension in play-drama visible?

As Brecht conceived Epic Form, even in the fragmented stories there is a striving toward a true representation of the socio-political reality, a representation of cause and effect in which THE meaning emerges in a clear resolution and *dénouement*. In *Wolf* there seems to be a clear resolution for Hilde, but not for Tessa. - For her, the peaceful *dénouement* of tending mice can be understood as only a temporary acceptance of the reality of the wolf as a constant threat. One must always be prepared for struggle.

Even though we find a play-structure that resembles Fo's storytelling convention, it is combined with other play-structures in such a way that a clear meaning is not reached. Tessa's ambiguous meanings can be read in the play-structures that create simultaneous mental landscapes, and several layers of fiction - *among* which meanings are problematized.

In the theatre, the Metafictional Form turns established theatre conventions on their heads. In *this* sense there is in the *élitist* avant-garde a resemblance to, and magnification of, the folk-cultural aesthetics that turn the idea of an intractable established order on its head (i.e. Brecht's and Fo's work). However, in the avant-garde performances that we have examined, we find a dramaturgical form which more closely echoes the ambiguous, inverted meanings being expressed than the dramaturgy in Epic Form does. In the contemporary avant-garde, we

recognize a radical critique of the classical epistemology of Brecht's and Fo's popular theatre - in a postmodern development of their modernist, critical dramaturgy.

The children's play-structures in *Wolf* are a consequence of a radical (fundamental) search on the borders between meaning and form, as are the practices of the comparative avant-garde performances. In the emergence of the play-structures there is no attempt to emulate form for form's sake, but rather an attempt to mount the experience/meanings in a satisfying form. When a form coheres that is aesthetically satisfying, it is so because it is experienced intuitively as successfully carrying the interpretation of experience.

The aesthetic forms of popular culture introduced by Brecht's and Fo's social-political protest entered into the theatrical mainstream because of the entertainment factor in their art. In the aesthetics of the élitist avant-garde, one apprehends strands of a more contemporary popular-culture (i.e. media technology, ironic use of violence) than that of Brecht's and Fo's, but the entertainment factor is largely dependent upon the degree of audience familiarity of the audience with the current forms of popular culture, as well as with the avant-garde's dizzying play with these and with theatre conventions. An audience member cannot enter satisfyingly into the play of the performance without this familiarity, in the same way that one cannot enter entirely into the play of a performance in a foreign language.

In the analyses thus far, we have examined the theory of the aesthetics of avant-garde theatre performance, but have only touched upon the theory of the aesthetics of folk-culture. Therefore, the impulse arises to examine how this theory can provide aesthetic concepts with which to profile play-drama practice.

Comparison with the Theory of Folk-cultural Aesthetics ⁹

In characterizing the expressive forms in *Wolf* in the light of the aesthetics of folk-culture, or popular culture, I activate the theories of the contemporary Danish theatre theorist Bent Holm, and Mikhail Bakhtin, the Russian philosopher and cultural and literary theorist (1895 - 1975). I do this for two purposes: First, I wish to search further for an understanding of the concept of "aesthetics" that can encompass the form-making process in play-drama performance. - In this way I problematize and break through the boundaries of the classical definition of

⁹ This section was first presented as a paper at the research symposium *Plads til Lek, (Space for Play)* September 1998, Odense University, Center for Cultural Studies. Published in *Tidsskrift for børne- & ungdomskultur* nr. 41, Odense University.

aesthetics - a definition which does not readily encompass the nature of the cultural-aesthetic practice of playing children. Secondly, I wish to examine further the relationship between the aesthetic-reflexive practice and its cultural value.

In addition to the popular storytelling convention of shifting from role-position to role-position, there are other major aspects which characterize the children's aesthetic form: its boisterousness, humour, and outright fun - physical, verbal, and vocal; as well as its irreverence toward inherited pedagogical "truth" of the fairy tales and the forms in which it has been handed down. I will discuss these aspects in relation to Bakhtin's theory about Carnival aesthetics and "the popular culture of laughter", the tradition within which Dario Fo's aesthetic practice has developed.

What are the aesthetic-cultural *roots* of Fo's artform? How can we *characterize* the aesthetics of Fo's popular tradition? In the application of theory about the popular aesthetic, the analytical commentaries in the transcription above will serve as reference points.

The popular aesthetic

Holm, in his introduction to Fo's *Gjøglerspil* has pointed out that in "much of popular storytelling or, for example, in children's way of telling stories, the stories are disconnected, full of impulsive insertions and multiple associations. This way of recounting appeals to an immediate receptiveness" (Fo 1984: 8, my translation). "Receptiveness" is a key-word in the aesthetic dimension. One could say that this *way* of telling - of structuring randomly - creates its own aesthetic which appeals to an immediate (sensory) receptiveness of the performing-spectating children as well. Holm continues: "What one can call the mythology in Fo's theatre is in reality a constant aspect: a *structure* (in spite of the apparent wild growth) which has a kinship with the fairy tale and popular ritual celebration, as for example carnival" (Ibid.). It is the resemblance of play-drama aesthetics with the carnival aesthetic that I examine below.

Carnival forms

Mikhail Bakhtin, in his introduction to *Rabelais and His World*, discusses the immense importance and scope of "the folk culture of humour" in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Bakhtin's study focuses primarily on the novels of François Rabelais who wrote in the first half of the 16th century. In Bakhtin's study of the *carnival spirit* in Rabelais' novels, he points out that Carnival "was vividly felt as an escape from the usual official way of life" (Bakhtin 1965/1984: 8). I will relate his theory to the way in which the children treat the inherited fairy tale material and how their aesthetic practice in itself reflects upon it; as well as relating it to the way in which the performance behaviour can be understood as an escape from the usual official

way of life. With numerous quotes from Bakhtin I attempt first to conjure up the spirit of carnival in his vivid language:

"...A boundless world of humorous *forms and manifestations* opposed the official and serious tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal culture. In spite of the variety, folk festivities of the carnival type, the comic rites and cults, the clowns and fools, giants, dwarfs, and jugglers, the vast and manifold literature of parody - all these forms have one style in common: *they belong to one culture of folk carnival humour*" (Ibid.: 4).

!...!"As opposed to the *official feast*, carnival celebrated *temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order*; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions" (Ibid.: 10, my emphasis).

To what extent can the same be said of the children's practice in *Capture the Wolf*? With the Danish child-cultural theorist Flemming Mouritsen, one could well call much of the children's play "Project Laughter", especially the punishment ritual. Bakhtin's interpretation of the carnival spirit and practice sets forth a possible theoretical paradigm for cultural-aesthetic analysis of children's contemporary, dramatic play culture which I will apply to *Wolf*. It can enhance the interpretation of its dramaturgical composition and the meanings that can be read therein. In the carnival aesthetic,

We find here a characteristic logic, *the peculiar logic of the "inside out"...*, of the "turnabout", of a continual shifting from top to bottom, from front to rear, of numerous parodies and travesties, humiliations, profanations, comic crownings and uncrownings. *A second life....* Folk humour *denies*, but it *revives and renews* at the same time... (Ibid.: 11, my emphasis).

*!...!*the laughter is ambivalent: it is gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding. It asserts and denies, it buries and revives (Ibid.: 12, my emphasis).

*!...!*The very tone of this laughter shows that that *two opposite principles* can be put together *even in form* (Ibid.: 142, my emphasis).

"The peculiar logic of the inside out" is an image of an aesthetic form. It is the image of a form which *contains* a logic, an inverse form for an inverse logic. The form "...asserts and denies, it buries and revives...". The form contains the logic of contradictory principles. We have seen that this general aesthetic characteristic is found in *Wolf*, leading to its ambiguity.

Holm, in his book on Dario Fo's theatre and its roots in folk culture (Holm 1980), explains that the carnival rite in Italy represents the necessity of the peasant society to renew itself. The carnival celebration is repeated as an annual purification in the month of February, before the fast. The rite takes place in uproarious forms where the peasants celebrate, eat, drink and dance continually. In his delineation of a carnival rite (or drama), Holm names, among others, several episodes which resemble what we find in *Wolf*, although not in the same order: a funeral procession with a death complaint against the central figure, *Carnival* - who represents and symbolizes society's negative aspects; a parodic surgical operation on *Carnival* - with a

medical scene which kills the doctors; a process with the final judgment of *Carnival*; and his elimination of by explosion, burning, sawing, handling or expulsion. This elimination represents the elimination of the negative in society.

One can conceive of The Wolf as a cultural Carnival-figure, one which symbolically represents the negative aspects in the children's lives - aspects one doesn't have control over, the continual, subliminal threat that one can be overpowered. - Demons are hiding in every dark corner. In *Wolf*, the wolf is killed countless times but resurrects and returns, before he is finally (temporarily) conquered. In *Wolf* a compound myth of The Wolf and his indomitability emerges - crisscrossing the vast body of oral and written tales about him. We could call the performance "The Wolf Revisited in Carnival Spirit".

We can see parallels with the Carnival rite in the themes of the episodes in *Wolf* as well. The wolf is killed, resurrects, disappears, reappears. Even after his burial, he howls. Especially interesting is the fact that while Tessa and Hilde operate on the wolf, *they* die - as the doctors do in the parodic operation on *Carnival*. But, contrary to the carnival rite, the children come to life again. They enact their own deaths, but then magically reverse this fate.

The aesthetic of "grotesque realism":

Bakhtin discusses at length the aesthetic of the folk culture of humour as the *grotesque*, an aesthetic that veers from the classical concept of aesthetics. According to Bakhtin,

... The images of *the material bodily principle* in the work of Rabelais...are the heritage...of the culture of folk humour...of that peculiar *aesthetic concept* which is characteristic of this folk culture and which differs sharply from the *aesthetic concept of the following ages*. We shall call it *conditionally* the concept of grotesque realism (Ibid: 18, my emphasis).

!.../The grotesque images preserve their peculiar nature, entirely different from *ready-made, completed* being of products aligned with classic aesthetics. They remain *ambivalent and contradictory*; they are *ugly, monstrous, hideous* from the point of view of "classic aesthetics", that is the aesthetics of the ready-made and completed (Ibid.: 25, my emphasis).

An attempt to classify children's play practice as *aesthetic* practice has risked the sceptical reactions of those who would apply the concept only in the classic sense. Play-drama can often appear not as "beauty" and clear "truth" but rather as relatively unformed, unrefined, ambivalent, and contradictory. That is why this project assiduously attempts to define the aesthetic concept for the specific purpose of interpreting *children's* cultural production. Bakhtin's definition of the folk aesthetic seems relevant for understanding the aesthetic practice of drama in children's culture. - To what extent?

As cited above, Bakhtin maintains that what characterizes the aesthetic of grotesque realism is the *material bodily principle* - "...all that is bodily becomes *grandiose, exaggerated, immeasurable*" (Ibid.: 19). The twelve minute punishment sequence in the transcription above has aspects of grotesque realism in that the bodily material principle rules the performance - although not as scatologically as in Bakhtin's examples from adult culture. In the punishment event, the grandiose and immeasurable exaggeration of repetitive, vehement bodily movement patterns can be seen as a characteristic that particularly distinguishes its aesthetic. The pleasure the children derive from the sensations of this expressive form propels the development of the drama. They want to sustain the bodily, material pleasure and are propelled to develop the narrative - until the form and the content become inseparable.

What they are saying and how they are saying it become a unity.

- Bakhtin maintains that, "...The essential principle of grotesque realism is *degradation*, it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body" (Ibid.). The dramaturgy in *Wolf* receives its dynamic energy from the children's *being in the sensation of* their physical/vocal bodies, in the exaggeration of the humiliating acts of the circular, repetitive, rhythmic climbing, hopping and verbal taunting. The children create this exaggerated form with the intention of degrading the wolf and his threat and power to endanger; and of turning the wolf's legendary power on its head. *One* enactment of punishment is not enough to accomplish this task. The children can *imagine* the bodily degradation of the wolf, his body being repeatedly battered by their own bodily weight. Only the immeasurable exaggeration of the degradation, its aesthetic, is sensorily satisfying enough as a *form* for humiliating and disempowering The Wolf.

- Another aspect of the grotesque is "*irrepressible linguistic vitality*". (Ibid.: 28, my emphasis). Bakhtin was especially interested in the language in folk culture - which mocks and insults the deity and which was part of the ancient, comic ritual culture. We find similar aspects in the children's drama as their physiological excitement increases. We could call their verbal language "bodied language". It seems to *embody* the physiological excitement of the abusive physical acts.

Bakhtin says, "...It is characteristic for the familiar speech of the marketplace to use *abusive language, insulting words or expressions* which...had in most cases the character of magic and incantations" (Ibid.: 16, my emphasis). I have noted that each time the Wolf-catchers stand on the chair, the small warnings to the wolf have the ring of incantations, many of them said with rhythmic, musical, poetic or lyrical phrasing (i.e. lines 113, 120, 122 and 207, 210, 214 in the transcription). /.../"In this new form, abuse contributed to the creation of the free carnival

atmosphere, to the *second, droll* aspect of the world", says Bakhtin (Ibid.: 17, my emphasis). If the first reality is repressive and threatening, the second reality creates a liberating and amusing variation. In the second reality, in the reversible drama of *Wolf*, we find qualities that abuse the first reality in an irrepressible linguistic vitality - to the best of the children's vocabulary. In all their humour, the short, rhythmic incantations before each hop are also oppressively condescending. An original turn can be noted in lines 207 - 215, in Tessa's irreverent wishing "spiky hair" on the wolf, as well as a "spiky tongue". We also hear her crass judgment of the wolf as a "fart-turd" in line 225.

The irreverent form echoes the irreverent content, and vice versa. The irreverent form is part of the message; the irreverent message is part of the form.

- In Bakhtin's words the aesthetic of the drama can also be characterized as *incomplete form*, in the sense that it has an *ambiguous* or ambivalent nature. By "incomplete form" Bakhtin seems to indicate form that has not been aesthetically polished to the ruling bourgeois taste (i.e. Dramatic Form), such that its formal meanings are not completed to absolute clarity, they are double and contradictory. The ambiguity of the form lies in contradictory actions which continually contain unanswered questions, a form which contains a "... *multiplicity of meaning, its complex relation to the object. Frank mockery and praise, uncrowning and exaltation... are here combined*" (Ibid.: 142, my emphasis).

Tessa has, indeed, a complex relationship to the object of experience that she is performing. *How* are the meanings that emerge in Tessa's and Hilde's form ambiguous? Because of the complex relationship to the object, we sit with many questions: - How do Tessa and Hilde see the wolf? Who is he and how is he? To what extent does Tessa, in her shifting among role positions, identify with the wolf - or does she not at all? Is the wolf dead or is he not? Does the drama express dominance over the wolf or not? - Is the wolf indomitable or not? Is there renewal for the children's culture in their symbolic control over the wolf?, and in their own dying and re-awakening?

As a cultural expression, is there perpetual renewal of play culture precisely in enacting this second life, this other reality? The answer to the last question would seem to be in the affirmative, judging from the continuing invention of play-dramas between these two players.

A liberating aesthetic:

Although the limited analysis of the grotesque aesthetic in *Wolf* greatly simplifies Bakhtin's complex theory, the findings correspond on many points with his theory of the medieval and

Renaissance spirit and the aesthetic of carnival as it is manifested in Rabelais. This spirit, as it is expressed aesthetically, "*liberates* the world from all that is dark and terrifying; it takes away all fears and is therefore completely gay and bright. *All that was frightening in ordinary life is turned into amusing or ludicrous monstrosities*" (Ibid.: 47, my emphasis). Tessa and Hilde turn the frightening wolf into an amusing and ludicrous monster. Play culture and its aesthetic performance *liberates* from the common reality.

Popular festive images became a *powerful means of grasping reality*, they served as a basis for an *authentic and deep realism*. Popular imagery did not reflect the naturalistic, fleeting, meaningless, and scattered aspect of reality but the *very process of becoming, its meaning and direction*" (Ibid.: 212, my emphasis).

What reality are the children grasping in their performance? The aesthetic form they develop can be said to be grappling with the reality portrayed in fairy tales and activated in relation to their own lives and receptive sensibilities. The American literary critic Jack Zipes refers to one researcher who has "tried to establish important connections between children's ways of fantasizing and the symbols in the tales" (Zipes 1987: xxv) - a cobbling of the workings of children's imaginations and the workings of popular imagination. This idea is a parallel to Holm's observation above that the ways of popular storytelling (actualizing the imagination) resemble children's ways of both inventing and telling their stories.

As we receive them today, the fairy tales are already imaginative, symbolic composites of popular images of reality. In the cultural-pedagogical project of the period in which they were written down, the specific versions of the oral tales - from which the Grimms' literary versions are derived - have been edited and culturally modified to tone down the most scurrilous aspects (Ibid.: Introduction). Tessa and Hilde, then, are exploring and interpreting an imaginative reality that has already been triply mediated - first, by the popular imagination over long spans of time; secondly, by scholars at a certain point in history (Jacob Grimm - 1785-1863, and Wilhelm Carl Grimm - 1786-1859); and thirdly, by contemporary, commercial versions of the tales.

***Wolf* as socio-political critique and transcendence**

The death and resurrection of the wolf is a recurrent theme in *Wolf*. In the history of Carnival, the themes of death and renewal have been, and are, of a socio-political nature. A Carnival celebration can begin by instating a symbolically foolish figure at the top of the hierarchy. Although the resulting empowerment to the people is fictional and temporary - lasting only for the duration of the Carnival celebration - the process can be said to have a renewing effect, in that it is allowed to release stored, aggressive tension against the ruling system. This, in turn - and paradoxically - liberates energy for the return to obedience and daily oppressive structures.

The opposition manifested during Carnival, revolutionary as it may appear, has actually a fruitful purpose in the eyes of the rulers. Being allowed to play, uncensored, gives the feeling of freedom, whereas the actual outcome at play's end is a return to the unchanged world. The *second reality* in children's play culture can have the same mollifying function - unless, that is, the adults are appreciative of the strengths in this culture and encourage their spillover into the *first reality* of adult-ruled daily life. This could be accomplished in cultural meetings between children and adults, in drama and theatre practices.

- In their fictional universe, we cannot know whether or not children at this age are consciously intending to turn "the established order" on its head, but it would seem so. Mouritsen discusses how children's transformation of inherited rhymes and jingles can be considered a rebellious practice, a protest (Mouritsen 1976). Play by its very nature gives license to mock. - And, I would add, the enjoyment of the protest is enhanced by appreciation of their own aesthetic cleverness at turning the rhymes.

What seems evident in *Wolf* is that the actions turn the children's own position of powerlessness, as children in the adult world, on its head. It is they who hold the reigns here. The dramatic forms and the narrative themes give them a temporary position of omnipotent power - an alternative experience to their daily position in a social hierarchy defined by adults. In their symbolically enacted omnipotent power, they actualize a new life experience as an alternative to their daily experience as children (see Mouritsen 1996: 57-59). Their play behaviour would not be accepted in an adult environment that values docile children.

- As well as being a rebellious statement about the inherited fairy tale, *Wolf* can be viewed as a symbolic transcendence of inherited fairy tale culture. The performers have found a treatment of the "inherited" Wolf that differs from solutions they have learned in fairy tales. They are creating an alternative order to the fairy tales. In their alternative solution to outsmarting the wolf, they actualize a critique of the way the fairy tale figures try to outsmart the wolf. The Wolf-catchers "can do it better". As *their* strategy against him, they perform an ambiguous ritual of play: they kill the wolf by playing him to death. Their playing is a cunning weapon with which to win temporary victory over ominous threats.

- In this regard, *Wolf* is also a transcendence of the adult pedagogical project. For instance, the story of the three pigs in the fairy tale is a pedagogical and moral tale, a genre that evolved in the mid-eighteenth century. The *little* pigs can be seen as representing youth who attempt to establish an independent adult life. The wolf is a threat to their autonomy and the attempt to outsmart him is, consequently, a test of their cunning and success as young adults. The most

sensible and hardworking pig succeeds. Tessa and Hilde perform an alternative version to outsmarting the wolf which they, perhaps, experience as being as brilliant as the victorious little pig's success. But they choose to *play* the wolf to death rather than to *work* at building a fortress against him, as did the hardworking pig.

However, although the tone of the performance is victorious, and the Wolf-catchers continually comment upon their victory, the wolf is never fully eliminated, as he is in each fairy tale. Therefore, it seems to be the reality of the composite message of the *multiple* fairy tales that the children, especially Tessa, are grappling with. They know at least three tales where the wolf is the villain and this seems to be symbolically transformed into his perpetual indominability. He is a *continuous* threat, reappearing in tale after tale. In this sense, Tessa does not completely transcend the experience she is grappling with in her daily life.

Ambiguity and reflection

Prior to the turning point from hopping to operating on the wolf's stomach, Tessa has no more energy to play physically hard and, therefore, turns the thematic direction of the drama. The Wolf-catchers claim that the wolf is dead while they operate on his stomach, but Tessa keeps him whining - still a potential threat.

Although Hilde, after the burial, seems to perceive the victory over the wolf as an unambiguous success, Tessa may be insisting - with the wolf's awakening (line 314) - that the success is only temporary, that the Wolf cannot be permanently eliminated as a threat. The wolf's tenacity in the first part of the drama, as well as being a necessity for sustained dramatic tension and for the play's endurance in the punishment ritual, seems also at this end point in the drama to be an expression of Tessa's insight and admittance that the Wolf *is* a perpetual threat that can never be fully eliminated. She is symbolically praising his force. Or: does she (as the wolf) roll and howl in an automatic continuation of the *form*, not considering the logical finality of his death? - Or: is it a death roll and rattle - a grotesque mimicking of death (Bakhtin 1984: 353)?

This ambiguity of expression is in keeping with the actual outcome of Carnival as delineated above. In Carnival tradition, the feisty and humourous symbolic opposition to, and deposing of, the ruling force is also only a temporary reversal.

Beyond the formal contrast of meanings presented by these interjections [the combination of abuse and praise], beyond their *subjective interplay*, there stands the *objective ambivalence of being*. This objective convergence of contrasting elements is *not clearly realized, but is somehow dimly felt* by the participants in the festival (Ibid.: 248, my emphasis).

In *Wolf*, even in the players' most contradictory and ambiguous expressions there is reflection manifest in the formal process, "not clearly realized" cognitive thought, but "dimly felt" aesthetic actualization. Tessa is continuously in dialogue with the wolf, a dialogue which seems unresolved and therefore incomplete, in its indivisible form-and-content.

Polyphonic drama: dialogical consciousness and production of new meaning

I have shown above how Bakhtin's insight into the aesthetic of carnival culture can help to profile the folk-aesthetic in *Wolf*. Bakhtin's theory of the novel can also provide vocabulary for describing how meaning is produced in the performance. For Bakhtin, in the ideal novel meaning is never fixed, but is always in movement, in time, in the generative process of becoming (Bakhtin in Morris 1994: 37). I will present three of Bakhtin's concepts which can give insight into how Tessa's "monologue" form produces meaning(s):

- In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* Bakhtin introduces the term "polyphony", the co-existence of multiple voices in the novel, in which the author's and heroes' discourses interact on equal terms (Ibid.: 249). The voices are not merely flattened to represent the author's views.

Bakhtin clarifies the distinction between dialogical and dialectical thought. He maintains that in Dostoevsky's novels *the interaction of consciousnesses* is inherent even in the inner thought of a character. Inner thought is internally *dialogic* and incomplete. "It lives a tense life on the borders of someone else's thought, someone else's consciousness" (Ibid.: 32). Bakhtin is in opposition to a dialectical form of thinking in the novel - "which always moves towards the higher unity of synthesis, in favour of *dialogic open-endedness, the impossibility of closure.*" (Morris 1994: 15 - my emphasis). In Dostoevsky's work Bakhtin hears "not only individual voices, but precisely and predominantly the dialogic relationship among voices, their dialogic interaction" (Bakhtin quoted in Morris: 15).

In *Wolf*, we are witness to Tessa's dialogic consciousness as it is actualized in the polyphonic dramatic form. Her circulation from role-position to role-position exemplifies Bakhtin's insight about the dialogic relationship among the voices, with the impossibility of closure. The Wolf-catcher voice lives on the "tense border" of the Wolf voice. - In the discourse of the performance the two voices "interact on equal terms" in such a way that resolution seems impossible. Resolution is always in the state of becoming.

In this regard, Tessa's "monologue" form seems to fulfill the pre-requisites for a dialogical and polyphonic construction. Tessa's representation of the different role-positions bares witness to a real dialogue between, and reflection over, the two main voices; and not merely a projection of her *dramatist* wishes onto the voices of those she represents. Tessa is the *dramatist*-storyteller, not just the narrator and player of someone else's story. It is *her* points of view that are reflected. Even as she represents the wolf, it is *her* choice of how the wolf should respond: he is passive and suffering, but at the same time he manages to sneak away from death's grip and to resurrect. The wolf's dying *and* surviving response is therefore the one she *wishes* him to represent, to the bitter end. Surely, Tessa wishes the wolf permanently dead. But she does not allow this outcome because it does not reflect the reality she is grappling with and attempting to grasp. Would we dare to communicate such a pessimistic world view to young children?

- Bakhtin also introduces the term "heteroglossia" in relation to the dialogical novel, a term which refers to the diversity of speech styles in a language which, in the characters' mouths, produces a clash of world views. This creates a centrifugal force in which multiple and independent views of the world become manifest - a force which stands in opposition to a centripetal, "monologic, unitary perception of truth" - monoglossia (Morris 1996: 15).

In regard to Bakhtin's use of the concept "monologic", as opposed to "dialogic", we can say that both Dario Fo's and Tessa's "monologues" (one-person storytelling performances) are not monologic in principle, but rather dialogic, polyphonic, and heteroglossic - in the sense that they actualize conflicting, dialogical, multivoiced, and clashing perspectives. The "authorial" (*dramatist*) voice does not present one point of view, or truth, but many voices and points of view that are in conflicting dialogue with each other. Reflection and reflexivity are inherent in this model - on the borderlines *between* the different consciousnesses that are in dramatic dialogue.

Wolf performs dialogical and struggling oppositions rather than completed syntheses. Tessa's form is radically reflective in that it problematizes meaning. Pam Morris, in her introduction to Bakhtin, interprets him to mean that "the *conflictual* model of dialogic relations (is) productive of all new meaning" (Ibid., my emphasis). Bakhtin maintains that, "understanding that remains purely passive, purely receptive, contributes nothing new to the word" (Ibid.: 281). The production of meaning in *Wolf* is an active, dialogical process which is unending - not necessarily contributing to the *word*, but to the language of dramatic forms and to the meanings they give form to and explore.

If this is a part of the folk-cultural aesthetic and epistemology of turning the *status quo* on its head, it is also a part of the avant-garde aesthetic and epistemology of problematizing meaning. However, to continue on the folk-cultural aesthetic-reflexive track, I move to a consideration of *Wolf* in terms of ritual performance, a genre which, like Carnival, is an integral part of the folk-culture in which it is performed.

Ritual theory: Cultural-aesthetic transformation of experience and meaning

In ritual theory we recognize the characteristics of folk-cultural aesthetics. We recognize religious ritual as folk culture. Through the filter of ritual theory the aesthetic process in *Wolf* can be better understood as reflexive and transformational folk-cultural practice.

In his anthropological approach, Bruce Kapferer separates the *text* [pre-text or script] for the ritual from its *enactment*. He defines the script as the plan for the performance - what is to be done, the ordering of the rite. There are already transformational aspects (shifts of consciousness) implied in the text - related to reversals in the relationships between the demons, dieties, and human beings. Kapferer defines the enactment as *how* the text is expressed - the doing of the scripted text. In theatre terms, we would call this the performance text. There are transformational aspects in the performance text, the enactment, as well - reversals in how the individual patient and the community see and understand themselves and the reality in which they live. In his research, Kapferer directs his attention to the levels at which these receptive shifts occur *in performance*; he identifies the aesthetic sites where transformations can occur (Kapferer 1986: 194). He focusses on how the composition of the performance engages the participants in one, common experience, and how the medium of presentation enables their reflection on that experience in two aspects of the performance: 1) the structuring of standpoint, and 2) the structuring of context.

Performance as the *unity* of text and enactment is realized in a variety of forms, aesthetic and otherwise, which carry with them, *as a potential of their structure*, their own possibilities for the realization of meaning and experience (Ibid.: 202, my emphasis).

Kapferer documents how the structure of a ritual performance accomplishes the transformation from *particular* meaning and experience to *universal* meaning and experience, pointing out how the different performance modes guide the reflective standpoints at different levels of the contextual location of the participants within the performance. As an example of transformational structure of context and meaning Kapferer shows how, through the structuring of the event, the audience moves from contextual separation from the patient to contextual unity with the patient: This is accomplished through the structuring of expressive modes. For instance, in moving from music and dance to comic drama, the participants move

from separation in subjective experience of the music to shared objectified experience in dramatized, objectified standpoints of the portrayed characters (i.e. demons and dieties). The wolf can be said to represent a demon.¹¹

Tessa provides an expressive mode that allows a shift from her and Hilde's separate contexts to a common context - a shift from Tessa's solitary involvement with hopping on the wolf and Hilde's solitary involvement with taking care of the baby, to their common involvement in the punishment ritual. The expressive mode of Tessa's rhythmic ritual song-and-dance seizes Hilde sensorily so that she is moved to join in a common comic drama. The hopping ritual *recontextualizes* Hilde, from separation as spectator to participant in the common punishment enactment. However, unlike the exorcism ritual's proscribed separation of drumming and dance from the comic drama, we see in the play-drama that these modes are conjoined. As we have seen, the comic drama of the punishment is enacted *as* a repetitive, rhythmic, incantational dance. The players become entranced in their frolicsome struggle together against the demon-wolf.

In the transition from the punishment ritual to cutting open the wolf's stomach, Tessa and Hilde have moved from an enactment of struggle to an enactment of empowerment. This is a transformation of experience and meaning. Kapferer defines the demonic as the individual's solitude (isolation) and fear (Ibid.: 195-96), and we see in Tessa and Hilde's common comic dance-ritual, that they have accomplished a temporary transformation of their fears of the ever-returning demon-wolf. During the subsequent operation-drama, in their dying enactments, they reverse (transform) their empowerment to disempowerment; but, again, reverse this experience by once more coming to life. They continually structure and restructure standpoints.

Kapferer posits that to reflect demands *disengaging* from immediate experience, in the treatment of experience as an object (Ibid.: 198). Music and dance do not allow disengagement. They "mold all subjective experience to their form...the participants share the same vivid and continuous present, constituted by the *time-structure* of the music and dance" (Ibid., my emphasis). Drama, on the other hand, is a dialogic mode which, in the exorcism, puts an end to the separate subjective experiences of isolation in the music and dance. Drama is intersubjective (p. 199) and the spectators of the drama are enjoined to adopt perspectives

¹¹ Research into modern Greek folklore shows that the devil often appears in animal form (Stuart 1991: 104 -105).

outside their own subjective experience. Drama objectifies for the spectator: It organizes its meaning at a distance, outside the spectator's subjective perspective.

If we follow this line of thinking in analyzing the reflexive potential of the different phases of *Capture the Wolf*, it would mean that even though the overall punishment ritual is a symbolic dramatization of the struggle against the wolf, the *physical* hopping movement itself entrances the performers as does music and dance, and is thereby not reflexive practice. Whereas we could say that in Tessa's dramatic monologue, in her rotating *mentally* from standpoint to standpoint, she is structuring meaning in a way that disengages her from the entrancement and, thereby, the aesthetic practice becomes reflexive. Therefore we see that *within* the drama mode of *Wolf*, there exists symbolization in the form of dramatic dance that does not allow the distance for reflexivity, *as well as* symbolization in shifting dialogical dramatic roles that does allow the distance for reflexivity. Kapferer's model does not account for this double character of dramatic symbolization.

However, in spite of this, Kapferer's analytical model is highly useful for aesthetic understanding and artistic structuring of performance and of drama processes that aim at *universalizing* meaning and experience. It has been useful for my research purposes because it makes one aware of the reflective *standpoints*, or positions, in the self-governed, playful experimentation with aesthetic form. It makes us aware, as well, of the shifts in the *nature* of the reflection in the different frames (contexts) within the performance (i.e.: in the production frame outside the fiction and in the enactment frame inside the fiction).

By no means, then, do we find a complete parallel between *Wolf's* performance structure and the exorcism's ritual structure, nor in the cultural outcomes. - Tessa is both the *dramatist* and *ritual specialist* in large parts of the performance, and we cannot say that her aesthetic and cultural intention is to universalize her particular subjective experience. We see that within the aesthetic framework that Tessa has designed, Hilde finds a level of meaning for *herself* and pursues it. However, despite the lack of parallels, the application of Kapferer's analytical optics has uncovered the relationship between the performance modes, their composition into structures, and the players' reflexive processes. - Tessa, in her drama, is weaving together the modes of song-dance, storytelling, and enactment and thus appears to accomplish transformations and re-transformations of meaning and experience. Within the structure that is composed we have seen the sites of reflection and workings of reflexivity. In the predominantly musical, comic drama of *Wolf* we see the players' "realization of contradiction" and liberation in laughter - which is loosed in enacting the absurd, the impossible, the inappropriate, the inconsistent. Tessa and Hilde do "share in a universally typified and

comprehended world" (see Kapferer: 200-201), in spite of each one's *particular* points of fascination and explorations of meaning in that world of experience.

ANALYSIS 4: JOINT ANALYSIS OF THE THREE PLAY-DRAMA PERFORMANCES & REFLECTIONS

Application of Points in Performance Theory

I wish to reflect over the findings from the previous analyses by analyzing them within the parameters of performance theory, thus producing new findings. Richard Schechner posits six points of contact between theatrical and anthropological thought (see Chapter Two). These points can be applied here in order to unify the aspects of aesthetic, reflexive and cultural value in the performances. This is a fifth analytical level. By concluding the analytical process with the application of performance theory, I am zooming in on the cultural aspect of play-drama performance: - play-drama as cultural production, as cultural-aesthetic performance, as child culture - and as a horizontally equal member of the cultural-historical Drama Family.

Anthropology is the study of the development of culture. How is the aesthetic-reflexive play-culture developed? I repeat the six points of contact:

- 1) Transformation of Being and or/consciousness
- 2) Intensity of performance
- 3) Audience-performer interactions
- 4) The whole performance sequence - training, workshop, rehearsal, warm-ups or preparations immediately before performing, the performance itself, cooling down, and aftermath
- 5) Transmission of performer knowledge
- 6) How performances are generated and evaluated

To a certain extent, these points have been addressed in the previous analyses, but the discussion here magnifies their cultural importance. The first point is chiefly a theoretical reflection, whereas the subsequent points draw on the descriptions of the play-dramas.

Transformation of Being and/or consciousness: sensory knowing

I wish to discuss this point of contact in relation to Victor Turner's and Bruce Kapferer's considerations of *where* and *how* in the performance process cultural reflexivity takes place. This is a question of where and how subjective and objective meaning interpenetrate so that both individual and cultural meaning, or sense, is made. The discussion about the

relationship, in collective play-drama, between subjective and intersubjective aesthetic objectification, individual and cultural reflexivity, and the production and transformation of experience and meaning summarizes the findings in a way that sheds light on the cultural value of the aesthetic practice for the individual players and for the cultural group.

We have seen that the aesthetic practice is an intersubjective meeting place for cultural sharing of individual experience.

Victor Turner theorizes that in ritual "knowledge", both conscious *and* unconscious thinking, arises in the interplay between bodily and mental process - *between* the unconscious and conscious, *between* spontaneity and reflexivity, *between* flow and reflexivity, *between* subjectivity and objectivity (Turner 1982: 100-101, my emphases). In the analyses above I have attempted to examine as concretely as possible *how* and *where* reflexivity occurs in the interactive play-drama medium. I wish to repeat a quote from Turner (see Chapter Two). In considering reflexivity in the process of ritual performance, he observes :

.... *To be reflexive is to be at once one's own subject and direct object.* The poet, whom Plato rejected from his "Republic", subjectivizes the object, or, better, makes *intersubjectivity* the characteristically postmodern human mode (Turner 1982: 100-101, my emphasis).

As I understand Turner, the poet engages intersubjectively with her experience, tries out her voice in relation to experience, or in relation to other identities and other members of the culture. We can see that the children take slices of their subjective experiences (i.e. a day at the beach, a theatre performance, and the fairy tales) and interpret them anew in the cultural meeting place which the performance provides. We can consider children's play-drama as an "unrefined" poetic practice. We can say that the players are both the subjects and the objects: they objectify the subject (themselves); they subjectify the object (they enact *their* interpretation of experience). Each of them engages intersubjectively with her own experience, as well as with the other's experience. Through shared actualization in the drama process, they arrive at some temporary, shared experience. Although we cannot know what the children are thinking, we can interpret the actualizations, and speculate about the possible meaning-production that is taking place, as I have done.

As presented in Chapter Two, Turner refers to cultural performance as *aesthetic* expression, where a group's cultural experiences are interpreted, and meanings can be shared. In comparing aesthetic-reflexive practice in ritual performance and play-drama below, we must again be reminded of a major distinction between them. - The elements in the composition of the ritual are pre-structured by the representative of the highest cultural authority, the ritual specialist, for their intended cultural-aesthetic effect: the transmission and perception of

intended meaning. In play performance, on the other hand, the elements are spontaneously "thrown into the cultural arena", the composition and structures emerge *ad hoc* and change continuously. There are no pre-existent or intended meanings. - The shared meanings emerge out of the children's joint sensory representations and sensory perceptions. However, the meanings in children's culture are pliable and become subject to revision as the children gather more experience and Experience, or enter the intersubjective dramatic space with other players with other experiences.

In the aesthetic dimension of play-drama the children "can get in contact with something that they didn't know before and could only *discover by the act*" of producing and enacting their own drama (The American poet Jory Graham, in Schiff 1997).

In the drama process, then, the performers objectify their experiences in intersubjective production actions and dramatic actions. Collective drama performance objectifies - in the sense that it is "out there" in the cultural space - in concrete, performed cultural form, where meanings can be experienced in common (Turner 1982: 30-31) - although not necessarily in a like manner (Kapferer 1982: 190). In the cultural meeting place of collective drama, each individual contributes "subjective" experience to the objectified action. We can *observe* the children's reflection in the cultural arena, in the process of their transforming subjective experience into objectified, symbolic and dramatic form.

As we have discussed in both Chapter Two and Chapter Four, Kapferer's study shows the reflective efficacy of ritual in a dramaturgical dialectic between the participants' subjective immersion (affective and conative proximity) and reflective distance, states of mind that vary in relation to the varied performance modes and their interdependent structures. He maintains that reflection takes place in the drama mode because it clearly structures the perspectives being portrayed - enabling reflective distance. Turner's theory supports this view. However, he posits that subjective reflection cannot take place in culturally structured ritual because it limits playful freedom and *directs* the subject toward the cultural values inherent in the form. Kapferer documents *how* the structure of a ritual performance accomplishes the transformation from the subjective Particular to the cultural Universal meaning and experience - pointing out how the different performance modes guide the reflective standpoints at different levels of the contextual locations of the participants, i.e. the patient and the community members at large, respectively.¹² Prior to the ritual, the community members at large are united in the common context of what we could call mental health, whereas the patient is isolated in his own context

¹² Going from particulars to universals gives associations to the English drama pedagog Dorothy Heathcote's terms and goals for meaning-making in drama processes.

of torment by demons. Through the structuring and restructuring of these contexts, the ritual dramaturgy moves the participants in and out of contexts and aesthetic experiences that transform the meanings of their experience. Do the players in play-drama move themselves in and out of differing contexts and aesthetic experiences?

For a conceptualization of how and where *cognitio sensitiva* emerges in play-drama, we can begin with Turner's distinction between van Gennep's concept of the *liminal* phase of ritual and what Turner has identified as *liminoid* experience. In regard to van Gennep's concept:

The liminal period is that time and space *betwixt and between one context of meaning and action and another*. It is *when* the initiand is neither what he has been nor what he will be. Characteristic of this liminal period is the appearance of marked ambiguity and inconsistency of meaning, and the emergence of liminal demonic and monstrous figures who represent within themselves ambiguities and inconsistencies. As ambiguous figures, they *mediate* between alternative or opposing contexts, and thus are important in bringing about their *transformation* (Turner 1982: 113, my emphases).

The liminal experience in religious ritual is culturally structured so that it furthers the meanings of the existing social order. In contrast to this, Turner posits a *liminoid* experience, which some forms of theatre and play promote. This form of theatre and play are the creation of individuals and allow a critique of the existing order. They allow undirected reflection and transformation. We can understand this point in relation to the dramaturgical discussion above about the differing epistemological values in the differing representational paradigms.

Because the ritual is aesthetically structured for *cultural* efficacy, the liminal experience affords reflection and transformation only of *cultural* meaning and experience; it fuses the subjective with the objective, cultural meaning. - In Kapferer's description of the exorcism ritual, the individual is aesthetically guided out of the experience of subjective isolation and is incorporated into the objective cultural experience. However, because of the experience of *flow*, the liminal phase of a proscribed cultural ritual does not afford critical transformation. It is therefore conserving of cultural values. Whereas, *liminoid* experience in theatre and play allow this critical freedom. Liminal experience occurs during obligatory, tribal participation. Liminoid experience can occur in artistic or religious forms *voluntarily* produced, and is often subversive in intention towards prevailing structure (Ibid.: 118).

Because *Wolf* is individually and voluntarily produced and structured, the transformational phases would, according to Turner, be characterized as liminoid rather than liminal. It is experience of disorder and imbalance - in a state of mind on the threshold between an old ordering and a new ordering of experience. How can an understanding of this state help us to see the reflexive and transformational value in dramatic playing, in *Wolf*? "Reflection over

form and meaning" does not mean the same thing as the "transformation of experience and meaning". The whole performance can be said to be transformational, but we can break it down into episodes in order to see the structuring and restructuring of context and kinds of aesthetic experience:

I would say that we find liminoid experience in the hopping sequences which *opens for* transformation of experience; it paves the way for the reflection that takes place in the dramatic monologue-form of the next sequences. - In the hopping sequences the players are completely seized, kinesthetically, by the form and physiological sensations of the movement and rhythm, as the participants in the drumming and dance sequences are in a ritual. Even though the hopping is a dramatic action within the role-figures' punishment of the wolf, and even though the actions express a structured perspective on the wolf, the action itself is not reflexive. There is a flow and momentum that, in itself, does not contain reflexivity. However, if we consider it *in relation to* what follows it (what comes between each hopping round), we find reflexive space. Once the hopping structure has been established, the experience of the hopping itself can be understood as relatively uncontrolled liminoid-dionysian experience; whereas in the structuring process of the dramatic episodes in the fairy tales, Tessa's choices show a high level of reflexivity.

The hopping puts the players in what resembles a sensory trance, after which Tessa structures her reflection on the wolf through her verbal narration and the rotation among role-figures. The flow phase of the hopping has prepared the players for a clearer perspective, for a transformation of experience. Tessa moves back and forth between the liminoid and the reflexive contexts.

The liminoid experience in play-drama is the result of dramaturgical freedom. It is voluntarily produced and affords individual, critical reflection and transformation of experience and meaning.

Turner maintains that in the experience of the subjunctive, "as if" mood, "the moods of feeling and desire", cultural reflexivity and transformation of experience and meaning are built in. - In liminal experience, these take place at a cultural level; in liminoid experience, these take place at an individual level. Whereas, in "cognitive attitudes which stress rational choice, acceptance of cause-and-effect..." (Ibid.: 115 - 121), reflection is *limited*. Let us now consider further how reflexive distance is created in the structuring of *Wolf*.

Reflexive distance

Kapferer enters into a deeper dramaturgical analysis than Turner. Interestingly, he theorizes that it is only in the phase of the ritual's (comic) drama that (cultural) reflexivity can take place, due to its aesthetically structured framing of context and dialogical points of view. According to Kapferer, as we have noted above, all drama is reflexive, *per se*, because the very role-positions structure perspectives.

He persuades us that it is only in this dramatically structured phase that the ritual participants *can* gain a reflexive distance to the struggle between the warring dieties and demons and the disorder this effects in the suffering member of the community. The dramatic form, coming after the earlier phases of symbolic isolation, finally affords a clear perspective on the spiritual protagonists and antagonists, frees the suffering patient from her fearful isolation from the community, and directs her back into the cultural sphere.

The reflection Kapferer describes is of a sensory nature. The patient senses *in* the performance media. But in the ritual, in contrast to the reflection in the play-drama, the subjective reflection is *directed* by the cultural intention and dramaturgical design to incorporate the isolated member into the mainstream of cultural values. Whereas, the children are structuring their own performance and expressing their own values.

Kapferer interprets the aesthetic experience afforded by the different performance modes in the ritual in terms of "shallow play" and "deep play" - terms found in the anthropologist Clifford Geertz's work (1973). Kapferer seems to understand the terms as follows: deep play is produced by non-reflexive structures such as music and dance, whereas shallow play is produced by reflexive structures such as the dramatic mode.

In Kapferer's description of the exorcism's ritual process, first comes the patient's immersion in what he interprets as the "deep play" of the performance mode of drumming and dancing. This is a liminal phase in which the patient experiences the disorder and imbalance of her isolation. This is followed by the comic drama where reflection takes place. As I understand Kapferer, he means that the disorder of deep play upholds the experience of isolation; whereas the subsequent shallow play of the comic drama creates distance to the conflicting forces that are at play in the patient. Spectation of the drama affords sensory reflection at a distance from one's own experience. However, we have seen that even though there is reflection, it leads to a transformation of experience in favour of cultural conservatism. (My pointing this out is by no means a critique of the practice, rather a clarification of how the dramaturgical structure can direct aesthetic experience and reflection.)

Kapferer's theory that all drama allows clear perspectives can only be applied to drama that is dramaturgically structured with this intent, i.e. Dramatic and Epic Forms. There are other dramaturgical models, as we have seen, in which perspectives are not made clear for the spectator. We have already pointed out the resemblance of play-drama to the devising/workshop phase of experimental theatre production. This is characterized by deconstruction and disordering of experience. As I understand it, both practices are characterized by deep play and liminoid experience.

The enactment of diverse role-figures' perspectives is only one of the many expressive modes of dramatic performance. Earlier, we have compared the hopping ritual to the musical component of ritual dance. During the whole process of *Wolf*, we can see how the state of mind of the players can often be characterized as being on the border between the structure of earlier experience and a new, invented structure that is "becoming". The punishment ritual is constituted by a movement back and forth between deep play and shallow play: between the hefty ritual hopping, and Tessa's narrative structuring/restructuring of the other fairy tale worlds. She moves back and forth between the abandon of the deep play of the hopping and the clearer perspectives of the fairy tale narrative and mimed enactment.

It would seem from my findings that the reflexive state is a *pre-requisite* for play-drama performing: it is a necessity vis à vis all the formal and thematic choices that are continually being made and executed. However, in the punishment ritual, once the deep play of the hopping punishment is set in motion, it winds itself up into an automatic spin - without distance for reflection. - Reflection is contained *within* the shallow play of the structured role-perspectives, but once the hopping is set in motion, its centrifugal spin is playing the players. In contrast to this, when Tessa moves into the narration and mime sequences, she is more actively structuring standpoints/perspectives. This is where the reflection over meaning is taking place. Unfortunately, the term "shallow play" seems to contain a value judgment that one state is better than the other - that deep is better than shallow; but each state has a purpose *in relation to* the other - reflexively.

We have examined what the concepts of liminal/liminoid, deep play/shallow play can tell us about *cognitio sensitiva* in play-drama. Another distinction one can make is that between *self-structured* and *other-structured* aesthetic play experience. When one is aesthetically structuring the exploration of one's own experience, one goes with one's own *flow*. One can move into one's own deep-play - which can create an anti-structure to adult-structured everyday reality - a dis-order to the order of everyday reality. - As an example: we have seen in *Wolf* that the players seem to reach a radical level of critique of the existing fairy tale (adult) ordering of

meanings. Whereas, if one is fitting into a process structured by others, one follows *that* flow, and one is not likely to have the reflective distance that is necessary for activating one's own radical critique. One will most probably arrive only at the level of (radical) critique that is proscribed by those structures. Whereas, especially in *Wolf*, and to some extent in *Locked In*, the children's performances are interrogating existing pre-texts (order) and are highly individual interventions in their experience.

I will now examine where in their experience the children's performances intervene - in terms of Turner's dramaturgical analysis.

Redressive drama

Turner maintains that theatre derives not from imitation but from the redressive phase of the social drama (of daily social living over time) - which is comprised of breach, crisis, *redress*, reintegration, or schism (Turner 1989: 41). We recognize here parts of the Aristotelian model for Dramatic Form. The redressive phase is the period of reflexivity: It asks how to repair the wrong that has caused the breach, and how to get over the crisis the breach has caused in the social order. The play-drama performances *Locked In* and *Wolf*, especially the latter, might also be said to derive from, and focus upon, the redressive phase in the experience the performers are interpreting. From Tessa's position, *Wolf* can to a large extent be understood as a redressive ritual - a remedy for a wrong sustained, a reformation. Her interest is not in imitating the fairy tale narratives, but in going directly for the guilty party's jugular vein - and, consequently, to the heart of the drama. How to redress the repeated transgressions presented in actions of the traditional past in experimentation with alternatives for the future? Here we can visualize the liminoid phase of the play-drama as lying between the structural past and the *imagined* structural future. In its "heightened vitality" (the philosopher John Dewey, in Turner 1986: 43), play-drama can transform experiences into meaningful Experience. "At its height, it signifies complete interpenetration of self and the world of objects and events" (Ibid.).

Ludus and paidia

As noted in the first chapter, Callois distinguishes between two types of play:

Ludus - conventional play (rule-bound), and *paidia* - spontaneous, anarchic play. From the findings in my study I would say that these interpenetrate in play-drama performance. The bound rules of *ludus* function as the contract that binds the players together in the cultural meeting place in order to keep the collective play movement in motion. The anarchy of *paidia* arises in the free choices of aesthetic representation, and in the reception of and response to the spontaneous and unpredictable impulses that stream inside the sensory, body-mind movement. *Ludus* can be understood to correspond with the proscribed structure of the cultural ritual,

whereas *paidia* can be understood to correspond with the freedom of form-and-meaning-seeking in the devising process of experimental theatre and in play-drama performance.

I now move to Schechner's second point of contact between theatre and anthropology.

Intensity of performance

The expressive intensity of performance, as experienced by the performer-spectators, can be related to several factors: the extent to which the players are seized by their own sensory representations; the extent to which their expression of the drama is felt to *complete* the experiences being explored and interpreted; and the success in the players' aesthetic choices for establishing *focus*. - Focus can be established, in the main, in three aspects: a condensation of actions in relation to the infinite possibilities that lie in an experience, the condensation of formal expression of the actions in relation to the infinite possibilities there, as well as the concentration that results from and in these aspects. Intensity has to do with keeping the ball excitingly in play in relation to all these aspects. If intensity does not develop, the performance fails to seize the players and it unravels. We have seen that *On a Boat* was interrupted after five minutes, much to the players' regret. *Locked In* and *Wolf*, after high levels of intensity, played themselves out.

In the use of repeated hopping from the chair onto the mattress as a symbolic representation for punishing the wolf, we have an excellent example of Schechner's "strips of behaviour (that) can be rearranged or reconstructed; they are independent of the causal systems...that brought them into existence...the strips of behaviour are not themselves process but things, items, "material" (1985: 34). The material, the repetitive hopping, is a strip of behaviour from pure physical play, which is reconstructed as a symbolic form that develops into an aesthetic structure of great intensity - due to minute focus and concentration, both thematically and formally.

In retrospect, the focus/intensity in all three drama could well be one of the main qualities that seized my attention initially, such that I selected them for the study. When such aesthetic intensity is reached in an ensemble, the cultural bonds can become cemented, ensuring future ensemble play.

Performance intensity is also related to performer-spectator interactions, which is Schechner's next point of contact.

Audience-performer interactions

This aspect has been discussed at length under "performer - spectator dyad" in the summary of the findings above. Making this aspect visible is central to understanding its force as an aesthetic constituent - and its relationship to the intensity of the performance. If all the players are not drawn into the performance at both performer and spectator levels, they lose interest and the cultural potential of the performance cannot be realized.

Now that we have established the pre-requisites for cultural transformation of experience and meaning, we can examine the parts that make up the cultural performance sequence.

The whole performance sequence

Schechner has divided the performance sequence into five parts which I will discuss individually - but, albeit, as a cultural *gestalt*. The "whole sequence" circumscribes the child culture of play.

- **Training:** In children's play-culture, we can say that each time a player plays s/he is training for the next cultural performance, for being a valued member of the play-culture (see Mouritsen 1996). The techniques and skills that are practiced and honed increase the potential for intensity of performance and transformation of meaning and experience in the next performance. The child who does not train does not become a sought after member of the play-culture. We have seen how Hilde has found younger members to play with (train with) when she has not succeeded at a satisfying level in the performances with the older members.
- **Workshop:** This point has been discussed at several points in the study. The cultural-aesthetic value of the play-drama performance resembles the value of the workshop rehearsals. These are the cultural sites for aesthetic deconstruction of experience - for the acts of exploring and interpreting its meanings. Paradoxically, in play-drama, the very acts of deconstructing are *also* a reconstructing and completing of experience.
- **Rehearsal:** In play-drama performance there is no eye to repeating and refining the performance text for the sake of communicating meaning outside the immediate cultural meeting place. The repetitions that occur are explorative and interpretive acts for the players themselves. However, each performance can be thought of as a rehearsal of techniques and skills that will contribute to the enjoyment and efficacy of the invention and actualization of the *next* drama performance (see "Training" above).
- **Warm-ups or preparations immediately before performing:** In the contextual information about *Locked In* and *Wolf* we have seen that the players have been playing prior to the

crystallization of the dramas. These periods of for-play can be understood as warm-ups that enable the drama to crystallize. They are launch-off pads into the space of the drama performance.

- The performance itself: This point has been thoroughly discussed above, where both aesthetic, reflexive and cultural constituents of the performances have been conceptualized. Of course, a successful drama performance is the *raison-d'être* of play-culture, but in order to get there, the children have to establish their skills and their ensemble relationships. All the parts of the sequence before and after the performance itself, are contributing factors.

- Cooling down: In *On a Boat at the Beach*, the performers are interrupted and must go directly to the group's morning gathering. There has been no natural cooling down period. It would have been of interest to have filmed Lene and Tessa at the gathering, to study their cooling down period.

In regard to *Locked In*, I did not witness how the performers cooled down when the playing stopped altogether. We have seen how Tessa's experience of extended waiting for Hilde/Witch-captor to return cools down her involvement in the performance; whereas Hilde may experience a kind of "coitus interruptus" at having Tessa cut off the excitement of the drama so abruptly. However, although Tessa withdraws from the drama, she immediately suggests a new theme - finding another position from which to keep the play in movement.

In *Wolf*, we see how there are several points within the performance where there are cooling down episodes, for instance the play with the mice. At the end of the drama, the cooling down episode with the mice releases them completely from the the drama involving the wolf. Unfortunately, there was no observation beyond this point.

The lack of observation of either the establishing or cooling down periods would need to be corrected in the event of a new field study.

- Aftermath: There is no systematized data on this point. From the twenty-three dramas that are collected, a major consequence of the whole performance event seems to be that, when the players establish a successful (satisfying) ensemble interplay, it leads to further performances with the same players; and the converse. This is not unexpected! In the case of successful playing, the players do not necessarily have other social contact - outside of the play-drama context.

Transmission of performer knowledge

Transmission of performer knowledge takes place within the performer-spectator experience, as well as in pure spectating - when a player has a largely passive role in a performance. Such cases have not been analyzed above, but it has been of great interest to see the development of Hilde's skills and ensemble interplay during the field study. The staff informed me of her play inhibitions in general. At the beginning of the study, she exhibited great shyness in performances with players of the same age or older, in roles such as a mother to active babies. However, behind her glasses, her light blue eyes seemed to absorb all the tricks of the trade. After a couple of months, she began to perform with Tessa and Lene, alone or together, ensemble compositions which were efficacious for her aesthetic unfolding. We can compare her performances in *Wolf* and *Locked In*. In *Locked In*, which took place after *Wolf*, she has a far more active aesthetic function than in *Wolf*, in which Tessa has held the ball to a far greater extent. Hilde's experience as passive audience to the older children's performance and her performance experience in ensemble interplay with Tessa can both be understood as major sources for the transmission of performer knowledge within child-culture.

How performances are generated and evaluated

- How performances are generated is an aspect that is closely related to the cultural context surrounding the play-culture in the kindergarten. There have been continual aesthetic and artistic inspiration and models for the children's own cultural-aesthetic performances related to the pedagogical focus on creating an environment in which play can flower - in drama processes and theatre performances generated by the staff.

For the three dramas analyzed here, I have captured the *pre-play* phases for only two of them and this material is not extensive - as it is related only to for-play to the drama. However, in several instances of performance not analyzed here, I have done so. One example occurred during lunch with the oldest group of children (5 - 7 years of age) in a room that is designated as "the play-room". After lunch packs have been consumed, the children begin to discuss what they want to play. They agree on "house". A few of them say what roles they want to play. In the establishment of the performance, there is great leeway for finding one's own role-niche - and this continues throughout the whole performance where the five players negotiate, in "role-acts", for the development of the varying episodes that come to comprise the whole performance. Even though the atmosphere of a pleasant meal together and an agreement on the theme of "house" generate the performance, the associational impulses that emerge during the performance acts give direction to the drama. In *Locked In* and *Wolf*, on the other hand, the performance theme is generated by impulses from objects that are in the immediate vicinity, the crate and the book, respectively.

- In regard to the performers' evaluation of a performance, this can only be measured by its endurance. A performance is successful if the majority of the ensemble manages to find a focus and expression for the action so that it can cohere aesthetically for the whole ensemble. Performers in ensembles with more than two players (not analyzed here) can go in and out of the performance space, or take peripheral roles, without disturbing the direction of the play-movement that is in common focus for the moment. If a player cannot find a satisfying aesthetic function, s/he either leaves the main action or establishes her own dramatic universe alongside of the main action. There is great tolerance for simultaneous foci, as long as it does not interfere with the majority's immersion/enjoyment. The peripheral roles can also be understood as filling a spectator function. - A player can be part of the cultural group as spectator, without appearing to be a spectator. In such cases, this function seems socially satisfying for the peripheral player (i.e. Hilde's passive "mother"-roles). Seen in a participant-evaluation perspective, if it is not satisfying, the player leaves the meeting place. If an ensemble member is evaluated as disturbing the flow of the performance, s/he will have to negotiate, through positive contributions in the next performance, in order to be incorporated again into the cultural-aesthetic group.

Anthropology is the study of the development of culture. By focusing on the points of contact between play-drama and anthropology, we have summarized the whole chapter on cultural-aesthetic analysis in terms of the development of child culture in play-drama: how the aesthetic activity of the cultural performance becomes, how it is, and how it remains valuable as a collective transformational space.

Chapter Six

Results and Reflections:

Sensuous Moments of Discovery

Introduction

The research object of the study has been spontaneous, collective drama performance as it is actualized in children's play-culture. I have coined this as *play-drama*.

The goal of the research has been to make visible and to develop an understanding of the aesthetic-reflexive dimension in play-drama, in a cultural perspective. This goal has been threefold: to make visible children's collective play with dramatic form, to develop an understanding of the potential for reflection and knowing in the players' formal actualization of the drama, as well as to develop an understanding of the cultural significance of the players' collective aesthetic practice.

The problematics have been: What constitutes the aesthetic-reflexive dimension in play-drama performance?: - how do the children perform drama collectively in their play-culture?, and how are experience and meaning explored and interpreted in their collective play with dramatic form? What is the cultural significance of the aesthetic practice?

This chapter is devoted to articulating cohesive theory about *cognitio sensitiva* in the culture of play-drama and to summarizing how I have arrived at this theory. I begin with a summary of the methodological development which has structured the analytical process, and follow this with a summary of the theoretical findings - both in a child-cultural perspective and in a broader drama-culture perspective. In order to provide an overarching understanding of the nature of *cognitio sensitiva* in play-drama, the concluding essay unites the findings in a discussion of the place of reflexivity in the aesthetic concepts of representation, mimesis and transformation .

Methodological Development

In order to make the aesthetic-reflexive dimension in play-drama visible, a central task in the research process has been to develop a set of tools which could both create meaningful empirical material and qualify this material in aesthetic, reflexive and cultural terms. This study has set out to create theory about dramatic playing in a way that other studies have not. By identifying the research object as *drama performance in children's play-culture*, the focus is placed on the drama and its performance dramaturgies. "Playing" then becomes both the cultural context-in-which, and the "how"- by-which, the drama performance is actualized.

The first problematic has asked how the aesthetic dimension in play-drama is constituted - *how* the drama is performed. This question has aligned the research with performance analysis within theatre studies/dramaturgy. However, the paradigms for these disciplines are inadequate in regard to answering the cultural process aspects of the problematics. - how are experience and its meanings are explored in dramatic form - in the cultural meeting place of children's playing? - and: what is the cultural significance of the aesthetic practice? We have seen that research traditions for performance analysis have focussed on artistic product rather than on cultural-aesthetic process. Therefore we have turned to social anthropology and performance studies, in which cultural performance is the research object and the goal is to understand the meanings that are performed and emerge for the cultural group. In sum, the theories from these three disciplines have been combined to create an interdisciplinary foundation for this study.

On this foundation, a methodological approach and a set of analytical tools have been developed. The overriding idea has been to study play-drama performance *as if it were a* theatre or ritual performance, in continuity with daily-day life. In order to understand cultural performance and its aesthetic interpretation of experience and meanings, cultural-aesthetic analysis has been called for. Ethnographic methods have been employed in order to develop the empirical material for the analysis. - First, a six-month field study was conducted in a group of kindergarten children from 2 - 7 years of age. Play-drama was documented on videotape and field notes have registered contextual information. The videotaped data has allowed repeated review and transcription, from which to develop the empirical material for the analysis..

- Secondly, cultural comparison has been employed. In this method, the "other culture" is understood in terms of one's own culture. This strategy has involved using concepts, theory and praxis of adult, contemporary theatre and ritual performance as filters for seeing and conceptualizing the aesthetic, reflexive and cultural dimensions in play-drama, and for understanding the experiences and meanings being interpreted there.

This cultural-aesthetic approach belongs to the hermeneutic tradition for generating theory about a cultural phenomenon, rather than for testing theory.

A major task of the qualitative procedure has been the development of these analytical tools as micro-perspectives. In this procedure, there has been a continuous, indivisible, and fruitful interplay between the parallel processes of observation, theoretical reflection, the development of analytical tools, and analytical description of the material.

Three play-drama performances have been selected and transcribed into theatre manuscript-form. In conjunction with field note observations, the transcriptions of videotaped performances are the texts that have been analyzed. - Representativeness in regard to cultural phenomena is related to representing and creating theory about unique cases. Three indepth analyses represent three unique cases of play-drama. Some of the findings are common to all three performances, some are not.

Two perspectives have circumscribed the indepth analytical procedure: The first - a perspective on the performers' internal aesthetic process; the second - a perspective on the external structures that emerge in the internal process. Within these two perspectives, three analytical levels were pre-planned and have been further developed in the meeting with the actual performances:

Level 1 has consisted of the assignment of theatre and ritual performance positions to the players' performance actions in the play-drama. These have been inserted in the transcriptions of the video material. - This tool has provided a starting point for aesthetic description and meaning interpretation. Pinpointing which theatre positions the children perform in has been a methodological necessity. - By identifying the position or the ambiguity of the position that the player is in, we can interpret the meaning of the actions and dialog - what the players are reflecting about - both at the formal level and thematic level. We are able to understand how the complexity of the drama medium allows this reflection to take place. However, using terms from theatre and ritual performance to identify the players' positions, even though they are terms used in regard to aesthetic practice in other cultural contexts, does not in itself describe aesthetic *qualities* of the players' performance in these positions.

Level 2 has provided a *preliminary* analytical description and characterization of the *qualities* in the players' performance in the theatre positions, in general vocabulary. It has consisted of open analytical commentary and description of the players' internal form-making process, without the use of aesthetic comparison. From this, we derive a picture of how the players move among the positions, which positions are aesthetically weighted, and how they interrelate to facilitate the players' interpretation of experience and its meanings.

Level 3 has consisted of dramaturgical comparison with the theory and/or praxis of contemporary theatre and ritual. Specific analytical tools at this level were not designed before the meeting with the specific play-dramas in Analysis 2 and 3. In these meetings, certain complex aspects in the play-dramas called for tools that could gain entrance to their complexity and, thus, three sub-levels emerged :

- a. - Comparison with selected contemporary drama performances in other cultural contexts
- b. - Comparison with specific theatre conventions in contemporary theatre
- c. - Comparison with a set of theoretical, dramaturgical models

The first sub-level was applied in both Analyses 2 and 3. The second two were applied only in Analysis 3. These tools have provided established *aesthetic* vocabulary which can grasp external forms and structures, and has furthered our understanding of the meanings being expressed. Also, the overriding comparative tool has established play-drama performance as a member of the broader, cultural Drama Family.

In addition to these three levels, two new levels were designed in the meeting with the play-drama in Analysis 3. These levels consisted of theoretical analysis, rather than comparison with contemporary performances:

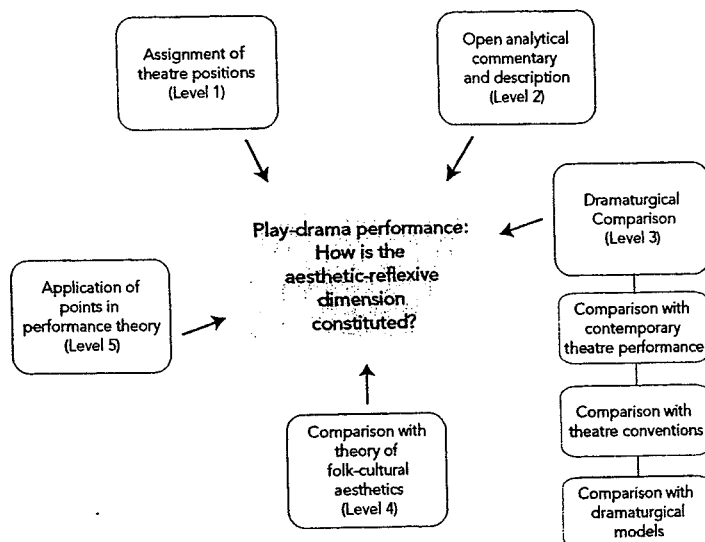
Level 4 has consisted of the application of the theory of folk-cultural aesthetics.

This theoretical tool has provided a perspective that sheds light on the aesthetic characteristics of an oral culture in play-drama. It has made possible an expansion upon the classical concept of aesthetics - a concept which has not been adequate for understanding the aesthetic dimension in play-drama.

Level 5 has consisted of the application of performance theory, in regard to points of contact between theatre and anthropology. - This tool has further enhanced the understanding of play-drama as cultural performance and how it functions in the ongoing cultural production in local child-culture.

In future research, depending on the nature of the play-dramas, all five levels could be applied in order to conceptualize their aesthetic, reflexive and cultural values. I summarize the analytical levels in Figure 18.

Figure 18: Methodological tools for analytical description



Although not all the tools have been applied to all the dramas, they have, nonetheless, been established as valid, potential tools for generating theory: Each of the five analytical levels has given valuable insight into a unique facet of the aesthetic-reflexive dimension of play-drama and its quality of being a cultural performance. In future research they can be applied to a broader sampling of the collected data - for instance, to examine other groupings of children (*ensembles*), and to include the male gender and a broader age-range. They can also be utilized by other researchers on other data and in other cultural contexts (i.e. in drama and theatre processes, and in spontaneous youth culture).

The development of a new paradigm for researching play-culture

The project has developed a new paradigm for systematic research into children's play-culture. The choice and design of the cultural-comparative, aesthetic tools - the comparison of the aesthetics of child and adult dramatic cultures - increases our understanding of children's aesthetic play-culture. The paradigm has both provided servicable aesthetic categories that have brought to light the reflexive value in the formal process, highlighted the cultural perspective on dramatic playing (play-drama), and placed it in a broader cultural-historical drama perspective in regard to representational paradigms.

Findings arrived at through viewing child-drama performance in the light of the theory and praxis of adult performance opens our eyes to play-drama's value as a cultural, aesthetic and reflexive practice. We conceive of it differently than before.

The importance of familiarity with cultural products for children

In regard to interpreting the meanings being explored in the aesthetic practice, there is a methodological advantage in having prior knowledge of the experience being performed. In this research, the play-drama (*Locked In*) that interprets the theatre performance was chosen because of this advantage. If I had not had intimate knowledge of its inner workings and recognized the connections to the play-drama, I may not have recognized the play-drama's complexity and aesthetic-reflexive value. Its meanings would have been largely inaccessible. In the case of the other two dramas, it was not difficult to locate the general experiential sources. However, I had not been familiar with one of the fairy tales in the third analysis (*Capture the Wolf, We Shall!*) before it was pointed out to me. It is a great advantage in child-cultural research of this nature to be familiar with the media products that the field group experiences.

Changes in the original design

The plan do an indepth comparison between the aesthetic-reflexive processes in *Wolf* and the exorcism ritual has been eliminated during the research process because it felt more pressing to follow the other, unforeseen dramaturgical tools to their full potential. However, ritual theory has provided a valuable theoretical model and concepts for the interpretive work about dramaturgical structuring and reflexive process. Future research could include this indepth tool, in order to more fully understand play-drama process in relation to ritual process.

In presenting the theoretical findings, I begin with two pivotal concepts, then move to the cultural performance aspects, and conclude with the aesthetic-reflexive constituents.

Theoretical Findings

Two concepts that have been pivotal points in the research can serve as a starting point for summarizing the findings. These were defined prior to the analyses and have been developed during the research process:

- *Aesthetics/Aesthetic practice*: The field of aesthetics has developed out of a philosophical concern with how we are seized sensorily by form such that it gains significance for us. I have

cobbled this concern to an examination of the form-maker's experience of being seized aesthetically from inside a collective formative process - rather than to the outside spectator's aesthetic experience of a work of art. In the internal aesthetic process the form-makers objectify their subjective experiences in dramatic form, for themselves and for their fellow form-makers. They play with and interpret experiences in an objective dramatic form, in a common cultural expression. The collective interpretation demands ongoing reflection.

This understanding of the concept is related to the reflexive value of the internal aesthetic process. *Aesthetics* in this study, then, has been cobbled to reflexivity and cultural communication in a processual aesthetic practice. In the findings the understanding of the concept has been developed in relation to theory of avant-garde and folk-cultural performance aesthetics, and will be summarized below in the section on "Aesthetic-reflexive constituents".

- *Reflexivity* in this study has been placed and understood in the context of a symbolic-aesthetic, representational and processual discourse - in contrast to the context of a rational, conceptual representational discourse. *Aesthetic* reflexivity in play-drama is set in motion in the process of sensorily interpreting experience and sensorily perceiving the representations. It is related both to formal content and meaning substance and to their interplay.

I begin with findings that define play-drama as cultural performance.

Cultural performance: Performing culture

Play-drama's characteristic as a cultural performance provides the contextual frame for understanding its aesthetic-reflexive constituents.

1 - In the study, we have established that children's playing is the cultural context for their spontaneous drama performance. The concept of *playing* has provided an active participle, a verbal form used as an adjective, - one that generally describes the process of play-drama performance: "the ongoing, underlying process of off-balancing, loosening, bending, twisting, reconfiguring, and transforming - the permeating, eruptive/disruptive energy and mood below, behind, and to the sides of focused attention...." (Schechner 1993: 43).

2 - We have found that the play-drama is a cultural performance for the cultural group of children that is performing it. The aesthetic forms and structures of the performance emerge as integral parts of the specific play-cultural context and, in turn, produce new cultural experience and meaning for the participants. The findings show how the collective performances function as cultural reflection and exchange. They show the way in which the players' imaginations and

their intersubjective, formal actualization of imagination are in constant interplay as a vital part of the children's social and cultural life. The shared performance experience produces culture, in a sphere apart from the hegemony of adult cultural values, intentions and aesthetic structures. Play-drama performances in their many aesthetic forms are expressions that grow out of, are about, and *are* culture. Play-drama performs culture. Play-drama is a performing culture.

3 - The aesthetic tension which arises in the cultural performance could not arise to the same extent in solitary playing: the collaborative performance aspect magnifies aesthetic tension and reflexive processes because of a desire to uphold the fictional contract among the ensemble.

4 - There exists a subjectivity - objectivity dyad in play-drama: The collective actualization of the individual players' subjective experiences objectifies (makes an object of) the subjective material, thereby pulling it out of the individual sphere and making it part of the cultural meeting place.

The individual developmental paradigm for understanding the significance of dramatic playing can be supplemented with an understanding of how the individual child's subjective psychology and experience enters into an intersubjective process of objectification (aesthetic representation) in the cultural meeting place between the children.

5 - Play-drama is performed as an integrated part of the experience of daily-day life. The performance text is a self-created extension of experience. It is part of a life-praxis and its meanings cannot be understood apart from the performers' cultural context. The performers' experience as children can be understood as fundamental parts of the cultural context for the aesthetic text of the performance. In this aspect it differs from a spectator's experience of a performance which is part of an institutionalized context which, more or less, separates it from continuity with the immediate context of the spectators' daily living. This is so even when a theatre performance speaks to their immediate concerns in a satisfying way. On the other hand, the artists involved in the performance may well experience this continuity - because their artistic work is a central part of their own life-praxis, especially in "group theatre".

6 - The spontaneous, collective aesthetic practice can be understood as a culturally reflexive practice. We have found that crucial factors for the possibility of cultural and aesthetic-reflexive efficacy of a performance are both the extent of its continuity with the experience of everyday life and the extent of the split between performing and spectating. There are no such splits in play-drama performance.

These findings about play-drama as cultural performance create the contextual frame for findings about the aesthetic-reflexive constituents of play-drama, and will be elaborated upon below.

Aesthetic-reflexive constituents: Performing the imagination

As an introductory image, we can describe the aesthetic dimension in play-drama as a membrane. On one of its sides lie the sensory images stored in the imagination, on the other side are the performance actions that actualize the images. On the thin surface between the two, a constant vibration of sensory reception and perception sends impulses back and forth between the imagination and the performance of the imagination.

We have seen that the aesthetic-reflexive practice is constituted in the continual interplay between:

- 1) the performers' ways of representing and expressing experience sensorily - the aesthetic means, modalities, forms and structures that constitute the performance; and
- 2) the sensory ways in which the representations and their meanings are received, perceived and reflected upon by the performers.

There is a clear aesthetic-reflexive dimension in children's play-drama performance. The children are playing continually with aesthetic means which keep them immersed in the performance of their imaginations: i.e. condensation, focus, rhythm, tempo, tension, contrast, and variation. What astounds us - when using analytical techniques to slow down the speed of the aesthetic process in order to grasp the components of the performance - is the complexity of the form-making process and the depth of the sensory reflection that can take place there, in regard to both form-making and meaning-making. At the conclusion of the study, the findings show a level of reflection in the aesthetic workings of the performances beyond my pre-understanding. In attempting to read the meanings of the aesthetic practice, what could first appear to the researcher to be disorder, or chaos, has gradually been understood, also, as an *associatively* ordered, form-seeking and meaning-seeking process.

Both the open analytical description of how the players perform in the theatre positions and the comparison with performance aesthetics in other cultural contexts has brought forth the findings below. However much the findings overlap, an attempt to state them separately is necessary for theoretical purposes:

1 - In play-drama performance the intention for a group of children is to play and to be played. The unstated contract among the ensemble is to collectively devise a drama performance.

2 - The players' experiences can be understood as raw materials for the performance. In the movement of the performance, they play with and develop the materials: themes, expressive components, forms and structures - in order to sustain the movement of play as long as possible. In other words, impulses to the development of the performance come both from experience in the world outside the play context and experience which emerges while performing - inside the play-context. A play-drama is both an open and closed performance: open for impulses among the players and closed to considerations of communication with persons outside the performance circle. However, during the field study, the researcher's presence, perhaps, has altered the private context of child-culture - such that expressive means may have been employed for the purpose of playing *for* the researcher-as-outside-spectator. Despite this contextual fact, the player in such cases has manifested the skill to perform dramatically in the way that is captured in the study.

3 - A mapping of the children's performance in the varying theatre positions and the interrelationship between the positions has made visible the step-by-step "making the drama happen" - in the symbolic-aesthetic expression for Role-figure, Dramatic Actions, Time, and Place. We have seen the *fabula* and the *sjuzet* emerge in the course of actualizing the imagination in these symbolic-aesthetic expressions.

4 - There are two performance levels in all play-drama: a dramatic action level and a production action level. They form a play-structure in which there is a continual interchange between them. The use of the term "performer" embraces performance of both dramatic actions and production actions. Although it is difficult to see the separation between these levels, and their differing performance positions, in the rapid stream of performance actions, their identification is necessary in order to understand the complexity of the aesthetic-reflexive process. This is elaborated upon in point 6.

In the play-structure of the (nearly) simultaneous dramatic action and production action, the mind is reflecting on the limen between producing and enacting. The players' aesthetic immersion is enhanced by the tight interplay between these levels. Reflexivity is apparent in the choice of expressive means in both sets of actions, and in relation to the meanings in these actions. The action-images seem to be perceived and then bounced back from the inner eye, to

reflect themselves forward onto the subsequent actions. The aesthetic choices are being made in this sensory-emotional, mind-body integration.

5 - Interaction in *performer-spectator* dyad has been identified as central to the sensory-reflexive process. The dyad is indivisible. In both production actions and dramatic actions, the performers, who represent their experiences in sensory form, are also receivers and perceivers of, and *spectators* to, their own symbolic-sensory representations. The mind is in a reflexive state on the limen betwixt and between performing and spectating.

Each player's *spectator* position relates both to her own and her fellow performer's dramatic actions and production actions.

6 - Several of the performance positions, although analyzed separately as categories, are, in actuality, intertwined: When the players enact role-figures, in so doing they are both *actors*, *dramatists and dramaturgs*, and *directors* - devising the actions, the dialogue and the dramatic situation, as well as making staging decisions - at the same time as they express the role-figure.

When production actions are necessary for the enactment of the dramatic action, the players also, momentarily, perform as *directors, scenographers, props persons* - giving explicit directions, creating symbolic space or props, etc.. Simultaneously, they are *spectators* to their own and to each other's performance, and comment upon it.

In the performance actions, reflexivity is activated in the movement back and forth between performer positions, in the spaces between mental and physical operations. For example, there is a back and forth reflexive movement between imagining the performance as *dramatist* or *director*; representing what lies in the imagination as *actor* or *scenographer*; and receiving and perceiving their own performance acts - through sensation and through spectating.

This complexity sustains the players' aesthetic immersion. If participation at the production level, dramatic level or spectator level does not engage a participant aesthetically, she either drops out or begins to play "solo".

7 - In the performance actions, we have found multiple levels of awareness: The players operate continually at a sensory level of reflexivity between body-action and mind-action, between the simultaneous action-levels at which the actions are being performed. From identifying these levels, we have been able to interpret what the actions can *mean* for the performers. We see the following (see Figure 19 below):

- A meta-fictional awareness as *spectator* to the performance, inside the Play-frame, but outside the Performance Frame. This takes place on the *Me*-level. This is a site of *explicitly expressed* reflection. - In addition to the reflexivity that we see in the heat of forming the dramatic and production actions, the players detach themselves to this slightly cooler position - to observe the action and to comment upon it and themselves. Even in this explicit reflexive mode, the players do not leave the play-frame.

- Inside the Performance Frame, a double awareness in the performer's mental movement back and forth between dramatic actions and production actions - between enacting the dramatic fiction and performing in the production actions which are, mentally, slightly outside the fiction.

- A triple awareness in the mental movement between: *Me* - the player in his own life, *Not-me* - the experience outside *Me* which is being explored, and *Not-not-me* - the formal and mental transformation of the *Not-me* and the *Me* in a symbolic-aesthetic form-making.

Even in identifying unclear performance positions, we have seen the complexity of the player's levels of awareness, on the borders between being inside the dramatic action, outside the dramatic action in production actions, or in a metafictional state of mind outside the performance frame.

8 - We find the interpenetration of form and meaning. Play-drama is both a meaning-seeking and a form-seeking practice, in which the players experiment with both thematic experience and formal experience. There is a continual interchange between formal impulses and thematic impulses which arise in the movement of the playing. In the aesthetic process, the *appearance* of form is the result of the *becoming* of meaning - rather than the intention of formulating meaning for an outside audience.

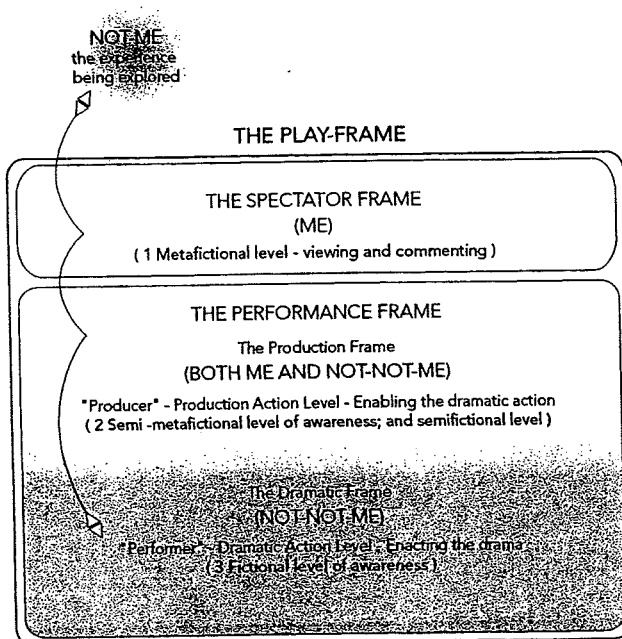
What the performance says has been understood by making visible *how* the players formulate themselves in production actions and dramatic actions and the way in which they sequence these in time.

9 - The players' immediate sensory experience of their own formal expressions - their *expressive experience* - is central in steering the direction of the performance. It is not only

earlier experience that is explored in play-drama performance. - In the experience of their own performance actions, the players receive impulses that seize them, creating the need to explore them further. Although the players may be directed onto one expressive or thematic course, this course can change character because of the player's expressive experience. - For instance, the very *sensation* of an expressive movement (i.e. hopping) or an expressive technique/convention (i.e. the rotation among role-positions), can result in either a thematic shift or a thematic dwelling.

We can summarize points 7, 8 and 9 by re-formulating Figure 13 (from Chapter Five, Analysis 3). We can place within it the idea of *Me, Not-me and Not-not-me*: We have noted that the *Not-me* can be both experience that has seized the player *prior* to the play-drama, and expressive experience that arises *in* the performance acts. (See Figure below)

Figure 19: Action levels and awareness levels in the Play-frame



Of course, the *Me* is present at all levels of the performance, but with varying degrees of distance to itself or self-forgetfulness. It is constantly mediating between the *Not-me* and the

Not-not-me, but it is most transformed in the *Not-not-me* of the dramatic actions. We can consider the *degree* of the *Me*'s detachment from the heat of the dramatic action: The Spectator Frame is at the furthest point of detachment and The Production Frame is at a point of detachment that is closer to the heat, somewhere in between The Spectator Frame and The Dramatic Frame. Even though the production action is part of The Performance Frame and is a necessity for the dramatic action, it is one mini-step removed from the dramatic action. Therefore, we could say that the production action has both a semi-metafictional aspect and a semi-fictional aspect - both these aspects being reflexive in relationship to the dramatic action.

Common to all the play-dramas analyzed in this study, the performers do not express reflexive distance to what they have performed from *outside* the play- frame.

10 - Aesthetic, dramaturgical structures emerge out of the step-by-step symbolization and reflection. Each formal component in the symbolic use of one's self - voice and body, space, objects and time - becomes interwoven with the other components into structures that interpret, express, and carry meaning. Dramaturgical structure is the consequence not only of the composition of the dramatic situations, but also involves how they are staged and expressed, their interrelationships, condensation, focus, time-sequencing, rhythm, tempo. If a satisfying structure emerges, it focuses the dramatic action, thus enhancing the players' aesthetic immersion. If a satisfying structure and focus does not emerge, the experience the players are exploring will fall by the wayside. Their immediate experience of the possibilities and significance of the dramaturgies can hold the players in the performance, inspiring them to explore further.

11 - Whatever formal models and conventions the players have internalized prior to a play-drama performance can be adopted or adapted as expressive tools for formal experimentation, meaning-seeking and meaning-building.

12 - In the eclectic assembly of aesthetic forms in play-drama, we can find parallels to the aesthetic forms of both the historical and contemporary avant-garde - which are disrespectful toward institutionalized conventions and aesthetic values in traditional theatre. Play-drama process and dramaturgies can resemble those that emerge in the *devising process* of postmodern theatre performance. In both cases, there are no pre-planned forms, structures, or meanings at the outset; the composition of the expressive elements evolves in relation to what the performer-spectators themselves experience as gripping form and/or gripping thematic substance. We can find parallels in both the combination of cultural texts and their subsequent, intertextual transformation; and in the combination, and subsequent transformation, of

traditional conventions - as in the enactment of production actions as part of the performance text. In both play-drama and devised theatre we find an aesthetic-reflexive force in such characteristics as the non-hierarchical use of expressive elements, fragmentation, discontinuity, metafictional layering and communication, and ambiguous role-positions. The aesthetic practice is constituted by perspectivistic dramaturgies.

13 - In the non-hierarchical use of expressive elements, we have not found that *acting* a role-figure expresses psychological characterization but, rather, interpretive characterization of a dramatic situation. The role-figures can express their motivation for the actions and an attitude to the situations, but this is not a mirroring of depth-psychological interpretation of the role-figures. It is difficult to distinguish between the player's own attitudes and the way in which a protagonist or antagonist behaves. The players perform the actions of a fictive role-figure and its identity as one who *acts* "this and that way" in a particular *situation*. They perform surfaces. When they respond with strong emotion, it is often in relation to their *own* conditions in regard to the role-figure's situation, rather than expressing the role-figure's innermost thoughts or feelings. We can find self-referentiality and behaviours that express ironic distance to the dramatic situation.

14 - We can also find parallels to folk-cultural aesthetics in a fusion with avant-garde aesthetics. In both ritual and Carnival, the structures can contain contradictory-ambiguous thematic contents, and their temporary meanings are mirrored in unresolved, ambiguous formal expressions - as we see in play-drama.

- In play-drama, as in Carnival rites, we can find aesthetic qualities of the grotesque: exaggerated, incomplete and ambiguous forms.

- In play-drama and folk-cultural ritual performance, liminal disorder can emerge for the participants. However, although the liminal state of mind that can emerge in play-drama has parallels to participant-spectator experience in culturally pre-designed ritual, in the latter case the liminal phase guides the participants to a confirmation of cultural values; whereas, in the individually devised play performance, tabus are often treated and cultural values and norms of the adult hegemony are inverted. In this aspect play-drama resembles individually-structured Carnival rites.

- In one play-drama we find a structuring convention from popular theatre - the epic-dramatic monologue - which is polyphonic and dialogical and, in this context, expresses exaggeratedly clear perspectives. However, in the play-drama it is employed as a formal means for

actualizing the complexity of the meaning-seeking imagination - and expresses unclear perspectives and contradictions. Here we find a fusion of the aesthetics of avant-garde performance, of the ritual's liminal phase, and of popular theatre/epic monologue: in the play-drama the performer is in an ambiguous position between *being* and acting, but is simultaneously steering a clear structuring convention in the rotation from narrator to role-position to role-position.

In this play-drama the aesthetic practice is also comprised of a variation of performance modes that moves the performer-spectator back and forth between reflexive proximity and reflexive distance to the subject matter being interpreted.

- Popular culture's media aesthetics are present in both avant-garde and play-drama performance. In the third play-drama, we recognize the exaggerations of proportion, the repetitions, the violence and reversals of fate from the animated cartoon.

15 - A play-structure is a structure that emerges from abandoning oneself to the back and forth movement between the impulses that arise in the course of the creative process. An understanding of the abandonment to play-structure increases our understanding of the nature and the value of the dramaturgies in the play-drama: how they work for the players in the formal building of their interpretation and expression of experience. In play-drama we have found both linear, circular and spiral play-structures, as well as their combinations. If the subject matter is not complex, as in the reminiscence of a day at the beach, the aesthetic force comes from condensing the action through the expressive means of mime. In this case the structure is linear - the actions have a progressive logic. If the subject matter is something not fully understood - for instance, what really happens to *The Wolf?* - then the players are seeking meaning and the structure becomes circular or spiral: - The *actor-dramatist* makes several journeys from a point of departure to which she continually returns. The overarching dramatic situation is never resolved and the meanings of the experience are not clearly resolved. Whereas, in the drama about "locking in and escaping", we have found a circular play-structure surrounding the three linear variations on the theme.

As we see in the findings in points 12, 13, and 14, the cultural-comparative strategy has worked hermeneutically in relation to both sides of the comparative equation: not only does it provide aesthetic theory and vocabulary for characterizing and understanding the reflexive value inherent in the aesthetic modalities, forms and structures in play-drama performance; the comparison also develops vocabulary which can make visible the play-element and its reflexive value in performances in other cultural contexts than children's play-culture. Comparison has

rendered manifest the *play-structure* aspect of contemporary performance in popular-culture and the avant-garde.

16 - Transformation of experience and meaning at an individual level can take place in play-drama because of individual dramaturgical freedom. The free, dramaturgical choices made by the performers can set them in a liminal state of mind betwixt and between the structural past and the structural future and, thereby, can have a transformational effect - in regard to the individual's sensory grasp of the meanings of the experience.

17 - The reflection that takes place in the performance process can, to a certain extent, be understood to clarify and generalize the players' experience. If we consider that the experiences are being (temporarily) completed in performance, by "adding to them what is wanted" and by communicating them in intersubjective exchange in the group, then we arrive at the term "Experience" - a gaining of more insight into their experience.

18 - In play-drama the players are training their aesthetic vocabulary, their dramatic and expressive skills: In each cultural performance, the players learn from each other, hone their skills and continue to build upon them in subsequent performances. In this sense, the aesthetic practice in each performance is also a training of skills and techniques for the enhancement of aesthetic play-culture.

19 - Individual play-styles and aesthetics evolve in the cultural arena. One could ask if play-style is age-related, a question which was raised in Analysis 1 and remained below the surface of the two subsequent analyses. We have found in one child's (five years of age) aesthetic development a metamorphosis within a five-month period - from a player with a limited expressive vocabulary to one who performs with increasing expressiveness in a wide range of performance positions. The evidence suggests that children can change play styles, given aesthetic and artistic enrichment. Aesthetic experiences with other children in the play-cultural arena, adult-led collective drama processes, as well as spectating theatre, give children formal models and conventions which often come into play in their play-drama. This experience is of incomparable value for the child in child-cultural, aesthetic communication.

By describing the aesthetic practice of the same girl in three performances in two different ensembles, we derive a rich picture of how she adapts her practice to meet the practice of her co-performer and of how she, then, contributes to cultural production. She shows aesthetic sensitivity and flexibility when the ensemble member, the form and the theme engage her aesthetically.

An object of study for future research could be: the development of children's play-styles in aesthetic practice over time.

The aesthetic distinctiveness of play-drama performance

In the aesthetic practice of play-drama, we have found resemblances to performance process, conventions, dramaturgical models in both élitist-radical avant-garde and folk-cultural performances, including religious ritual. What then are the distinctions?

What is "distinctive" about the aesthetic practice in play-drama is not related solely to what is different from all other practices but, rather, how -in *sum* - its characteristics both differ and resemble those in other practices. The aesthetic distinctions are the outcome of the differences in *cultural* context, intention and function in the specific practice - including its epistemological ideals and values, or lack of the same. - The strong resemblance to the whole play mood and strategy of avant-garde devising process exists because these productions, also, are expressive outcomes of form-seeking-and-meaning-seeking - and are in opposition to the formal constrictions and epistemological intentions of the more directive dramaturgical models of their "forefathers". The resemblances to folk-cultural aesthetics exist because it also is part of an oral culture which is creating an alternative, a second reality, to the ruling culture.

However, even though play-drama has resemblances to the meaning-seeking-and-form-seeking aesthetic process of avant-garde devising, as well as to the exaggerations of folk-cultural grotesque realism, it is a performance that never goes beyond the creative process; it exists solely for the community of players and is not artistically honed to communicate outside of the process. The internal aesthetic process for the performer-spectators is both the *raison-d'être* and the end result. It is solely a process, performed within the closed cultural group that devises and performs it.

Within the collective effort in play-drama there is, potentially, complete individual freedom for all the participants to interpret their own experiences, seek their own meanings and devise their own forms. This potential is limited only by the player's experience and formal skills.

What is most distinctive culturally about play-drama performances is their continuity with and integration in everyday life. Their themes and forms are *immediate* for the players, "hot off the press". Performances emerge and melt away in the course of a day. All the play-drama performances "express a total social relationship, because they are part of an exchange which is the factual reality" (Østergård Andersen 1993: 12, my translation from the Danish). The

performance theatre analyzed in this study is not an expression of a total social relationship in the factual reality; but in this aspect, play-drama resembles ritual performances in that they, too, are aesthetic expressions of a total social relationship, and part of an aesthetic exchange which is the factual reality. *However*, in ritual, all the participant positions, aesthetic means and structures are pre-designed by cultural authorities for their cultural efficacy. In play-drama, on the other hand, the performers are free to fill all the performance positions spontaneously as the need arises in the immediacy of a chain of impulses. There is no thought to its efficacy, either in relation to possible outcomes of appearance or in relation to possible insight.

After the summary of these findings, there is a need to unite them in a theoretical breadth of outlook that can consolidate our understanding of the aesthetic-reflexive dimension. In the discussions throughout the dissertation the concepts of representation, mimesis, and transformation of experience and meaning have raised their heads repeatedly. It seems apt now to conclude with a theoretical discussion of the place of reflexivity in these three aesthetic concepts. I will consider how the concept of *mimesis* can unite into a meaningful whole this complex web of concepts, in regard to understanding the nature of *cognitio sensitiva* in play-drama performance. Through a consideration of the possible meanings of mimesis, the significance of the children's aesthetic practice becomes more clearly profiled.

The Place of Aesthetic Reflexivity in the Concepts of Representation, Mimesis, and Transformation of Experience and Meaning

In Elin Diamond's critical feminist inquiry into the concept of mimesis in *Unmaking Mimesis* (1997), she summarizes the denotations and connotations of the concept from Greek antiquity in the writings of Plato and Aristotle, to postmodernity's French culture in the writings of Jacques Derrida and Luce Irigaray. Diamond wishes to unmake the understanding of the concept and to reveal how it can be unmade in feminist performance. She admits to her initial disregard for the term *mimesis* because of its denotation, in the classical mimesis of Plato and Aristotle, of representation in art as the *resemblance* to what is real in the external world - the idea of direct imitation and its subsequent links with artistic realism. Plato banned mimesis from the Republic, positing that it holds up false images that cannot substitute for invisible, *ideal* Form. - He meant that mimesis cannot bring forth Truth. Aristotle softens this critique with his belief that through "selection of particulars", mimesis *can* present "ethical universals of types and values" (p. ii - iii).

In the middle of this century, Bertolt Brecht and Walter Benjamin contribute to a modernization of the discourse, in their understanding of mimesis as a reading that *transforms* an object into a "gestus" (a *dialectical* image). Both Benjamin and Theodor Adorno divorce mimesis from the truth-model complex altogether, positing that Plato and Aristotle "*subordinated* artistic play to philosophical truth, sensuousness to rationality" (p. ix, my emphasis). My research joins the attempts to counter Plato and Aristotle by analyzing the reflexive value in sensuous play in play-drama performance.

In setting Brecht's, Benjamin's and Adorno's thinking in a critical position to Plato's and Aristotle's, we see the conceptual distance between considering mimesis as "upholding a model" and considering it as "improvising a variation - representing" (p. vii). Derrida, agreeing with Friedrich Nietzsche's idea, posits that *play* is primordial mimesis, not derivative of an original model (p. iv, my emphasis). - There is "no *simple* reference" (p. 183, my emphasis), no model. Play, in its back and forth movement, may be primordial mimesis without a *simple* reference, but dramatic playing may also be something else. Derrida also reflects over the "doublings and unravellings of models" (Ibid.) and this may provide an apt characterization of formally and thematically complex play-drama.

Mimesis is a derivative of the Greek *mimesthai*. According to Diamond it denotes both the *activity of* [the process of?] *representing* as well as the result, both a doing and the thing done; both the generative, embodied activity of representing and a [true?] representation [of a model?]. In other words, its meanings are "impossibly double" (p. iv - v). I have placed the words "true?" and "of a model?" in brackets above because Diamond does not make these points clearly. According to Diamond, mimicry can be defined either as imitation or mimesis. The former implies copy, the latter implies a *transformation* of impressions from life experience to interpretative form: or "improvised variation" on life situations (models).

This thinking corresponds to my pre-understanding, in Chapter One, that representation does not necessarily denote copy. Diamond comes to the conclusion that each understanding of the concept of mimesis is "as much an historical-ideological flashpoint as an aesthetic concept" (p. viii). In this light, mimesis, as an aesthetic category, can certainly be understood in relation to the evolution of representational paradigms. Because I am writing in a post-structuralist historical period, I wish to consider the concept in this ideological vein, and to problematize it. I employ Diamond's thinking as a catalyst for my own thinking about the aesthetic practice and reflexivity in play-drama because the research findings raise many questions about the nature of "representation" in play-drama other than those I had at the outset of the study. To what extent

do my original questions contain, implicitly, a fusion of the (historical-) ideological aspect as well as the aesthetic aspect of mimesis?

Its meaning, as in "a representation of a model", can certainly be understood broadly. To exemplify: in *Wolf* we can see that Tessa and Hilde, in the punishment ritual and in the stomach operation, *are* representing their experiences of the fairy tales, which can be said to be *models* for their drama. In this sense, their performance is mimetic in its earliest historical meaning. However, Tessa "doubles and unravels" the fairy tale models, both in the ways she intertextualizes and the way she performs and structures the action, such that all the models become symbolically twisted and *mis*represented. This is so because it is not the fairy tales' linear narrative that Tessa is concerned with. Her play- drive seems to come from the need to explore and interpret The Wolf as a mythical presence, as her senses and imagination have captured it.

We can describe this as an improvised variation on the original models, which creates an alternative to the models, an alternative reality. - Not a presentation of a model, but a re-presenting of experience filtered through her own sensibility.

In *fusing* the two understandings of *mimesis*, Diamond's theatre-related problematics and feminist critique center around: Who is speaking and who is listening? Whose body is in view and whose is not? What is being represented, how, and with what effects? Who or what is in control (p. ii)? In the drama and theatre education context, we could ask "Whose drama is it?" - Whose experience is being interpreted, whose meanings are being sought, and for whom is the drama being played? Children and children's activities are largely seen as of less value than adults' - or valuable only to the extent that they rehearse for society-valued aspects in their later lives. There is a parallel here to how women's activities are devalued in relation to men's. In feminist theatre, the artists take back their own power of definition. In children's play-culture, we would assume that the children experience greater liberty to take control - to speak, to represent themselves, to choose and to reach the aesthetic effect that satisfies their own complex needs, than they would in a cultural interplay with adults. The performances are not meant to be read by anyone or as a communication with anyone outside the culture. The players are safe from adult judgment.

Based on the findings, and connected to Diamond's fusing of the two extant meanings of the concept, I apply mimesis to mean: the generative, embodied activity of representing - and as, in Diamond's words, a "powerful instantiation of `the role of *subjectivity* (and *cultural specificity*) of artist, viewer, speaker and reader´" (Ibid.: iv, my emphasis) - in contrast to the role of

objectivity, cultural generalization and normative modelling. In play-drama, mimesis - the activity of representing subjectively and culturally specifically - cannot be cobbled to the idea of theatrical realism and the attempt to reproduce reality in a true model. This is the definition of mimesis that Richard Schechner's writing suggests. Schechner sets up the original concept of mimesis as a conceptual pole to *poesis* - by which he means "recreating behaviour from within" (Turner 1982: 93).¹ This can be understood as an acting principle, as well as a contribution to the discourse on representational paradigms. His characterization of *poesis* corresponds with Diamond's characterization of mimesis as a subjective and culturally specific "sensual critical receptivity to, and transformation of, the object" (Diamond: ix - my emphasis). Perhaps we could coin the concept of *poesis-mimesis* to connote a *mimesis* that is a subjective, critical, transformational re-creation of an experience and its meanings.

Tessa's performance is *mimesis* in the sense of deriving from a model, and *poesis* in the sense of being a critical, transformational reception of it and variation on it. It is *poesis-mimesis*. However, because I have adopted mimesis to incorporate *poesis*, the double concept is redundant.

The word "critical" in Diamond's characterization can be examined in relation to the epistemological connotations of the entire discourse above. Diamond posits that since Plato, "mimesis has been a political practice, inseparable from interpretation and contestation" (Ibid.: viii). Here, we can bring in the concept of "resemblance", which points to the truth-model matrix endorsed by Plato and Aristotle: the rational demand for "congruence of representation to represented" (p. ix). This is an understanding of mimesis as rational realism rather than as "sensual critical receptivity to, and transformation of, the object" (Ibid.). This would *not* be synonymous with "reproduction" of a referent. - Mimesis, and *representing*, connotes flexibility; and it implies "*a sensuous moment of discovery*" rather than a rational reproduction of an original. In this meaning, the acts of mimesis are acts of subjective discovery, a critical movement away from accepted ideals and norms.

The discovery, or recognition, takes place *not prior to* but *in the acts* of representing, in the transformational embodiment.

Critical practice in mimesis implies more than reflection - "the mode, operation or faculty by which the mind deals with ideas received by sensations and perception" (Oxford 1954).

¹ The Greek *poesis* means "creation" as well as "poetry, poem". The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology 1996.

Although representing experience in dramatic, symbolic form demands reflection, not all play-drama is a critical reflection over experience - a transformation of its meanings. If we return again to the empiri, we find that in *On a Boat at the Beach* the reflection taking place does not appear to be transformational of the meaning of the experience, even though the experience is significant. The performance seems, rather, to be a recollection or remembrance of an experience, without the need and drive to critically reflect over it. The players are representing a fairly constrictive experiential script and they *have* transformed the remembered actions symbolically. We could rather say that their use of mime is *presenting* the scripted actions. However, these actions appear to be a *re-experiencing* of earlier actions and sensations rather than a discovery of an alternative model in a transformation of its meanings. Even in the re-experiencing, however, there is the possibility of turning an experience into Experience. The acts "add what is needed" to the experience, thus clarifying and generalizing it - sealing its significance.

In contrast to *On a Boat*, in *Locked In*, both players seem to have a need and drive for questioning their theatre experiences rather than for recollection alone. In the transformational process, their reflection has a critical outcome: experimentation with alternative formal and structural models. They invent a non-constrictive performance text - a freewheeling transformation of experience and its meanings.

Representation and "non-representational" thought

To problematize the term *representation* even further, according to the French post-structuralist philosopher Gilles Deleuze:

...in the contemporary era, the play of repetition and difference has supplanted that of the Same and representation. Difference and repetition are, in effect, indices of a move towards *non-representational, and radically horizontal, thought*. (Lechte 1994: 102, my emphasis)

As I understand him, Deleuze places non-representation and radically horizontal thought in opposition to representation and vertical hierarchies of thought. Here, unlike Diamond, Deleuze cobbles "representation" to Plato's understanding of mimesis as a copy of life, ergo "Sameness". Despite this conceptual disagreement with Deleuze, it is fruitful to use his term "non-representational". We find in children's drama performance forms of aesthetic "representation" that are both "representational" in the sense of sameness (*On a Boat*) and "non-representational" (*Locked In* and *Wolf*) - in the sense of exploring difference. The non-representational dramas are derivative of original models, but transform them in alternative realities and, hence, *create* originals. The aesthetic practice in the last two dramas, especially *Wolf*, shows a tendency toward radically horizontal thought, what Deleuze calls non-representational *thought*. Neither of the dramas seeks Sameness, both seek the Other.

Mimesis and the representational paradigms

In a succinct summary, Patrice Pavis grapples with the difficulty in understanding the representational paradigms in relation to the concept of *represented reality*:

As soon as we examine the link between represented reality and dramaturgical or stage form, we assume that there is a dialectical relationship between them: the nature and analysis of reality influence the dramatic form selected, and inversely, the dramatic form used clarifies and influences the knowledge of the reality. But the relationship between reality and the aesthetic universe is far from being obvious. It was long thought that it could only be direct and *mimetic*, that is that the work of art was a reflection (however unfaithful) of the external world. If this is true, it is possible to observe the processes of representation and stylization, even distortion, of the represented world. (Pavis 1998: 309, my emphasis)

Up to this point in Pavis' discourse, we see the ideological frame for the Dramatic and Epic Forms of dramaturgy. Vis à vis Diamond's expansion upon the classical understanding of the concept of mimesis, it seems that Pavis is using the term "mimetic" - in the sense of "a reflection (however unfaithful) of the external world" - to imply a transformation of the external world. However, "mimetic" here is still within the paradigm for a model of "one-reality truth".

In the continuation of Pavis' paragraph, we find the paradigms for the "reality bits" model, and the frame for Simultaneous and Metafictional Forms:

If, however, we believe that dramaturgical and stage writing is not directly and *mimetically* subject to reality, that it *models reality in its own way*, it is much more difficult to determine its relationship with reality. To do so requires a grasp of the processes of fictionalization and ideologization that mark the transition from the dramatic or performance text and its intertext. (Ibid., my emphasis)

Although Pavis faithfully traces the evolution of the representational paradigms here, he again uses the term "mimetically" to mean something other than a performance which models reality in its own way, whereas this is precisely the radical meaning Diamond, and this research, have assigned to it.

What the analyses of play-drama attempt to do is, in Pavis' words, to grasp "the processes of fictionalization" that mark the transition from the children's performance text to its intertext. Two of the play-drama performances model reality in their own way, they *remodel reality*; but this does not make it difficult to determine its relationship with reality (the children's experiences) - not if we agree that the objectification of experience can only be arrived at through a subjective process.

In play-drama, one does not grasp reality before one subjectively represents it. One's own reality *becomes* in the process of representing it.

Two uses of the term "transformation"

In the discourse, there have been two different uses of the term transformation:

- 1) The symbolic transformation of person, object, place and time. This takes place in the fictionalization process of all play-drama performance.
- 2) The transformation of experience and its meanings. This takes place to varying degrees in all play-drama.

When transformation is used the second sense, we are referring to the *degree* of transformation in the first sense. In a symbolically transformed "copy" of the actions of an experience, we do not find a radical transformation of meanings. This is exemplified in *On a Boat*, even when we find such an aesthetic sharpness in the condensation and focus of its mimed representations. We could say that the first usage refers to a confirmation of experience, and the second usage refers to a questioning of experience. When the latter occurs, the aesthetic experience in the play-drama can transform the experience and its meanings. It is *transformational*.

Interventions in experience and temporary truth claims

The players circle in on magnetic moments that, in their experiential reception, have *demand*ed intervention, either because of a pleasurable experience or because of an incompleteness in their understanding, or both.

In transformational play-drama, we can think of children's forms of representation as radical interventions in what they have experienced. "An intervention requires a subject position, however provisional, and making truth claims, however flexible, concerning one's own representations" (Diamond 1997: xiv). According to Diamond, truth claims can exist as *temporary* truths, flexible truths that can be bent - in a move from one provisional subject position to another. We see here how Diamond fuses the two understandings of mimesis. To exemplify her point in regard to play-drama, we see Tessa - in *Wolf* - moving, in dramatic form, from one provisional subject position to another, and from one temporary truth (knowing) to another. Her moves between various positions and knowings, together, are radical interventions in - and critical questionings of - the inherited material, which has been the "model" for her transformations. This is transformational reflection.

Summary

The concept of mimesis can tie together the concepts of aesthetic reflection, representation, and the transformation of experience and meanings in a way that helps us to understand the nature of *cognitio sensitiva* in play-drama.

There are two major interpretations of mimesis in art between which other interpretations can be placed. The first is classical: "upholding a model", and the second is modern and postmodern: "improvising a variation - representing " (Diamond 1997: vii). The first holds the view that by a "selection of particulars", mimesis can present "ethical universals of types and values" (p. ii - iii). The second holds the view that mimesis is a subjective and culturally specific and non-universal "sensual, *critical* receptivity to, and transformation of, the object" (Ibid.: ix - my emphasis), as well as a "powerful instantiation of `the role of *subjectivity* and *cultural specificity* of artist, viewer, speaker and reader´ " (Ibid.: iv, my emphasis) - in contrast to the role of objectivity, cultural generalization and normative modelling. Historically, "mimesis has been a political practice, inseparable from interpretation and contestation" (Ibid.: viii).

In the second view, mimesis and *representing* connote flexibility, and imply "a sensuous moment of discovery", rather than a rational reproduction of an original denoted in the first view. In the second view, the acts of mimesis are a critical movement away from accepted ideals and norms. The discovery, recognition, or creation of meaning takes place *not prior to* but *in the acts* of representing, in the transformational embodiment.

In the meaning of upholding a model, mimesis can be understood as a striving to be the Same. In the meaning of improvising a variation, the representation in acts of mimesis can be understood as a filtering of one's experience of the Other through one's own difference. The research has attempted to grasp the processes of fictionalization in play-drama performance that mark the transition from the intertext (the experiences being explored) to the performance text. The aesthetic practice in some play-drama shows a tendency to uphold a model (dominantly social-realistic play), and in other performances, a tendency toward radically horizontal, or non-representational, *thought* (dominantly fantasy play). Mimesis in the latter case is not seeking sameness, but is seeking the Other. We can characterize this as an improvised variation on the original models, which creates an alternative to the models, an alternative reality. - Not a presentation of a model, but a re-presenting of experience filtered through one's own sensibility. The performers model experience in their own way, they *remodel* experience.

Therefore, in all play-drama *representing* we find reflection and reflexive processes.

What I find in the research is, that although there is symbolic transformation of person, object, place and time in all play-drama, we do not find the transformation of experience and its meanings in all play-drama. The meanings of an experience are confirmed if the forms and structures reproduce the experience. The extent to which we find a transformation of meanings is related to how radically the performers distort the forms and restructure the original experience. "Transformational play-drama" questions the meanings of experience. We can call the reflection that takes place in the latter case "critical and transformational reflection". We see the performer's movement between various positions and truths in a radical intervention, a critical questioning of the model.

Here, Callois' delineation of play as *paidia* comes to mind: as freedom and spontaneous anarchy that can produce *ilinx* (vertigo). *Ilinx* is the destabilization of one's perception. It can be considered as a central feature in the fictionalization of others' perspectives, in the exploration of meaning generally, in reaching *recognition* or insight, and in all significant learning.

Cognitio sensitiva, sensory knowing, in play-drama performance is the outcome of aesthetic reflection in the aesthetic play with representing experience and its meanings. Even in the cases of upholding a model and re-experiencing the model, there is the possibility of turning the original experience into Experience. The acts "add what is needed" to the experience, thus clarifying and generalizing it. One does not grasp experience as fully before one subjectively represents and communicates it to others, as one does after the experience. In their play-drama, the children's grasp of reality *becomes* in the process of representing and communicating it.

The discussion of mimesis theoretically sums up what the aesthetic dimension in play-drama *does*. Whether we call it *mimesis* or *mimesis-poeisis*, in the sensory world of play-drama, a reality can be brought forth that has not previously existed for the players.

Aesthetic Practice as the *Modus-vivendi* of Play-drama Culture

Drama is performed in varying cultural contexts with varying cultural force and significance. In children's oral play-culture, spontaneous drama performance is the aesthetic *modus vivendi* for cultural sharing among the group's members. The intersubjective practice has a cultural

force and significance in its own right, aside from all considerations of its contributions to emotional, cognitive and social development of the individual performers.

In the play-culture context it is the players' abandonment to playing and being played that determines the aesthetics of the drama performance - how they form the drama, and how the drama is formed, in the expression and composition of symbolic languages. The meanings that emerge, emerge in sensuous moments of discovery. In each play-drama the performer-spectators' distinctive ways of creating, perceiving and receiving formal, sensual experience contributes to their non-conceptual *cognitio sensitiva* - sensory knowing. With echoes from Friedrich Schiller, we can say that play-drama performance is a mediation between the players' sensuous and rational impulses. There is no split between sensory and intellectual perception. The aesthetic, form-making and meaning-seeking dimension bridges the gap between "pure" sensing and "pure" rational understanding.

Epilogue:

Implications for Drama and Theatre Education

Playing is: "the ongoing, underlying process of off-balancing, loosening, bending, twisting, reconfiguring, and transforming - the permeating, eruptive/disruptive energy and mood below, behind, and to the sides of focused attention....How, when, and why is playing invited and sustained? How, when and why is playing denied or repressed? (Schechner 1993: 43)

This study is categorized as "basic research" and, therefore, there has been no mandate to apply the findings. Of my own free will, I come out after the final curtain on the (hermeneutic) play - to comment on some possible educational uses of the findings.

During the research, I have have been continually amazed by the complexity of the aesthetic practice of such young children, and by its cultural force in their child-culture. In considering the implications of the findings for drama and theatre education with children and young people, I have wondered if our work with them can have as great a significance; if it can create as much Life. If not, what can it do? In this Epilogue, I wish to make the simple point that from insight into the findings, we have an increased possibility to frame our drama and theatre work so that it makes room for *ilinx*, in our collaborative form-seeking-and-meaning-seeking production with pupils and students. The intention for my artistic work would be that pupils and students learn about the possibilities and significance of form for expressing the ineffable.

Teacher's drama or pupils' drama?

In his book on the history and theory of drama in education, Nils Braanaas has drawn up a demarcation line between what are viewed as the teacher's drama and the pupils' drama (Braanaas 1985 and 1999). I shall enter into a short dialogue with his discussion.

In a concern with learning and reflection, the international discourse within drama and theatre education throws out questions such as: "what kind of learning?", "reflection over what?", and "how and where do learning and meaning-construction take place?" In process drama, and often in theatre work, we - as teachers - construct meaning-bearing aesthetic structures that can give life to a dramatic situation for the pupils. But it is the pupils who live through the dramatic experience - in which reflection and meaning *can* emerge, according to each player's life experience. To this end, the drama pedagogue and theorist Gavin Bolton, building on his

mentor Dorothy Heathcote's work, points to the significance of the teacher's conscious use of four *aesthetic* elements in teacher-structured dramatic process: tension, contrast, symbolization and ritual (Bolton 1988: 41)¹. Bolton's intention is that in the teacher-structured and teacher-led processes, the aesthetic structures will carry the action [and meaning?], while the students "absorb form" (Ibid.: 88). In contrast to this, the arts educationalist Malcolm Ross and the arts sociologist Robert Witkin, believe in orienting arts education around the pupils' own creative process and form production. - In drama education, this orientation would also allow the pupils to steer the dramatic action and meaning-production. The teacher's function here is to help to develop pupils' expressive skills for their own form-production and meaning production.

The findings in my study are based on analyses of children's own form-production and meaning production. In their many cultural interactions with adult drama and theatre, the children have "absorbed form" and, left to their own devices, they take this aesthetic inspiration into their own creative process and form-production. In this process, they reflect over form, experience and its meanings. In play-drama, we have seen the inseparability of "form and content": the formal elements can often emerge out of the urge to play with/explore a certain experience and the content can emerge out of the urge to play with certain formal elements. The child's *own* choice of formal-expressive elements - and the aesthetic structures that emerge from them - are the carriers of the action and its meanings and their significance. *This* leads to sensory discovery and knowing.

Bolton has expressed the view that drama education should have a meaning-significance for pupils similar to that which they gain through their own dramatic playing. He also says that even though the dramatic forms of spontaneous dramatic playing cannot readily be observed, he believes that their playing creates meaning for the players. My findings support his hypothesis beyond a doubt, but they show also that *the forms in which* reflection and meaning arise in playing would be almost impossible to achieve through pre-designed, adult-led process. The children are simply not goal-oriented: the play plays the players - even though they choose the experiences/forms that are the raw materials for the playing.

If we wish to use drama and theatre education as methods for teaching attitudes or information, then we should do so without believing that we are creating significance and meaning in the same ways as children do for themselves in their play-drama. At best, we can hope to give the children *other* kinds of significant experience than their own play-drama provides. However,

¹ One can ask if symbolization is an aesthetic element. I would define it as the overriding aesthetic characteristic of drama performance, whereas tension, contrast and elements of ritual (its rhythmic repetitions and dramaturgical sequencing) are the sensory ways by which experience is symbolized - the "how".

in the dramatic forms and techniques we use, we can inspire their play-drama. As we have seen, children adopt and adapt our aesthetic models to mould their own meanings.

Sensory knowing and/or learning?

For theoretical purposes, I draw a demarcation line between the concepts of "sensory knowing" and "learning", as they are traditionally understood. We can define sensory knowing as being constituted through intuitive *apprehension* in interpretive aesthetic play, inside the fictionalization process (*mythos*). We can define learning as a *comprehension* in logical-rational discourse (*logos*) outside the fictionalization process. Ideally, these two processes will interpenetrate in our drama/theatre work. The ideal is that learning is a consequence of the destabilization of perceptions, sensory discovery and knowing - inside the fictionalization/production process. The findings in my study are not evidence of cognitive learning related to rational discourse and abstract concepts. Rather, they are evidence of self-impelled, representational discourse and its accompanying sensory reflection and sensory knowing - perhaps paving the road for conceptual cementation.

Devising process - with the force of child- and youth culture

It is reasonable to assume that the play-drama performers in this study have such a remarkable repertoire of dramatic forms at their disposal due to the drama and theatre educational environment in which they have spent their earliest years. They have "absorbed form" which has inspired them to formulate themselves dramatically. Although this statement cannot be supported by scientific proof, Sutton-Smith's study of children's narrative forms provides a parallel:

After thousands of repetitions by the parent and thousands of imitations and transformations of pieces of the activity by the child, she finally was capable of staging her own storytelling event/...there is nothing innate about this/... /It was not a story ever read to her by her parents, but was a projection of her own deep emotions onto the stage that they had so carefully scaffolded for her.../.../ Having acquired the (narrative) forms, they become only one part of the way in which children make their own lives meaningful, their *play being a more central expressive genre* for them. (Sutton-Smith 1983: 129, my emphasis)

As a consequence of the aesthetification of the commercial market place, we find in youth culture that the aesthetic practices of the historical and contemporary avant-garde have been adopted in their everyday lives. However, in the market place, what was originally a critical aesthetic has been lobotomized; the body remains, but without a full brain. More optimistically, we see that it is a playful aesthetic - with the potential for generating critical reflection in alternative forms. Perhaps we can contribute to this rejuvenation in our artistic work with youth.

When we have knowledge and insight about the aesthetic practices in child and youth cultures, we have a greater chance to work with the possibilities and significance of form - *in such a way* that it becomes - even more - *their* drama, their aesthetic experience, their sensory knowing and eventual cognitive learning. We can think of both our drama and theatre work as *devising processes*. In so doing, we will transform our traditional director-dramaturg-actor-teacher function. The artistic goal is to create form-and-meaning-seeking communication, rather than to place "completed forms" and directive meanings over their heads and bodies.

It is difficult to imagine a "process drama" or a theatre production for children and young people that is as complexly expressed and unlinearly structured as *Wolf*, but I suggest that this could be a model for experimentation. This suggestion places great demands on the director-actor-teacher's creativity and abandonment to play-structure. However, in the devising process we retain our artistic value: - our director, dramaturg, etc. and technical skills are as necessary as they always have been, but they would be offered as contributions along the collaborative way.

Many teachers already work in the spirit of devising processes. With this as a centerpiece, we can consider the optimal point of *balance* between the three forms below, and their interplay over time, from early childhood to late youth:

- The first form is theatre *for* children - in which we play with experience that is meaningful for the children's lives - in forms that are recognizable from their own culture - forms that both carry meaning and are meaning-seeking. Here the audience absorbs the forms and their meanings.
- The second form is a devising process *with* the pupils - to work with aesthetic forms that are part of their cultural aesthetics, but in a way that puts them into service for critical variations on experience. Here we can also work *in relation with* dramatic texts.
- In the third form, for older children, the devising process can be completed in a theatre performance.

The cultural and aesthetic interaction across these forms implies an aesthetic and artistic *meeting place* between our culture and theirs, being models and giving models; but it also implies letting go and respecting that, in their own cultural corner, sensory discovery, knowing and learning with value for the players' immediate living can take place. The intention is to set in motion the hand-in-hand process of experimentation with, and exploration of, form and meaning-content, in which new form and new meanings can emerge. And more life.

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Note:

Regarding literature published after 1997:

The project has had funding for three years from 1994 until the end of 1997. The major theoretical reading and research writing were completed within 1997. However, because of illnesses the dissertation has not been completed until summer 2000. After the interruption, it was deemed unwise to embark upon an updating of theoretical literature published in 1998-1999. Therefore, relevant literature published in this period is not referred to here.

Publications based on preliminary results of the research:

Articles from both the pilot project and main project published between 1994 and 2000 include:

- In Norwegian:
 - 1993. The Great-grandmother of Theatre Arts? - On the aesthetic dimension in children's playing, in: *Children* nr. 3. The Norwegian Centre for Child Research, Trondheim.
 - 1994. The Great-grandmother of Theatre Arts? - An aesthetic approach to playing, in: *The Journal on Child - & Youth Culture* nr. 33. Odense University
 - 1995. Drama in Playing: One approach to research in drama, in: *Drama* nr. 1, Oslo. (Nordic journal on drama education)
 - 1996. Cultural Interaction between Theatre for Children and Children's Dramatic Play-culture, in: Åse Enerstvedt (ed.) *With Roots in Classical Humanistic Culture*. Network for Nordic Research in Children's Culture/Nordic Council, Oslo. (BIN/DMMH, Trondheim)
(And a reworking of this article):
 - 1998. Cultural Interaction between Theatre for Children and Children's Dramatic Play-culture in: *The Journal on Child - & Youth Culture* nr. 39. Odense University.
 - 1998. Play in a Theatre Perspective, in: Ole Fredrik Lillemyr (ed.): *Children and Aesthetics. Art and Play - Between Rule and Transcendence*. DMMH Publication Series nr. 4, Trondheim.
 - 2000. Drama Performance in Children's Play-culture - in Light of Folk-cultural Aesthetics, in: F. Mouritsen og T. Marker (red.) *Plads til leg*, Tidsskrift for Børne- & Ungdomskultur, nr. 41. Odense Universitet.
- In English:
 - 1997. The Aesthetic Practice of Drama in the Cultural Context of Children's Playing: Making the invisible visible, in: *DramaBoreale*. Keynote Lectures, Nordic Drama Conference. University of Jyväskylä, Finland.
 - 2000. Devised Theatre and Play-drama Performance: Aesthetic Play-structures, in: *Drama* nr.2. Nordisk dramapedagogisk tidsskrift, Oslo.
- In Swedish:
 - 2000. Lekens dramaturgi (The Dramaturgy of Play), in: Ulf Palmenfelt (ed.) *Barn. Aspekter på narrativitet. (Children: Narrative aspects)* *Kulturforskning i Norden* 2. Åbo, Finland.

Appendices

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Appendix 1

On a Boat at the Beach

Tessa: 3 years and 10 months
 Lene: 5 years and 1 month
 Allan: 6 years and 7 months

kl. 10.49

When I enter the large common room Tessa and Lene are playing in lively manner. They have already built an enclosed (set-apart) rectangular play-space, approximately 1 1/2 x 1 yards. At the back of the space are two mattresses lying under a large window, at the front of the space is a "Tripp-trapp" chair¹ and a square pillow beside it. Between the front and back borders lie four square foam-rubber pillows which reach up to the girls' waists when they stand on end. - The pillows are formed as chairs with two blue ones lying flat and two red pillows leaning against the mattresses. A long wooden bench closes the space at one end and a Tripp-trapp chair closes it at the other end. When the girls face the camera, Lene has taken the place stage right and Tessa, stage left.

Tessa is dressed in a white t-shirt and bright pink tights. Lene is dressed in a long-sleeved white shirt and black and white striped slacks.

Tessa: Is standing outside the space. She speaks in a sing-song manner: *Crab, crab, crab.*

Lene: Is seated in the space.

Tessa: Climbs into it.

Lene: *Uaaaaaahh*, a contented sigh. She pulls Tessa's sweater, which is lying on the floor outside the space, into the space. In a sing-song voice: *Here's your sweater.*

Tessa: *Our sweaters.* She takes her red sweatshirt and picks up Lene's bright yellow sweatshirt. *There.* She lays Lene's down beside Lene. *And there.* She places her own on the chair to the left of her pillows.

Lene: Sits down on her pillow, looks up and says, *We're in the ocean.* She continues to arrange the pillows.

Tessa: Sits down on her blue pillow, with the red pillow leaning against the mattresses. She leans back and lays her feet on the chair-step in front of her.

Lene: Turns and runs her hand along the rim of the pillow behind her. *I have both oars under my behind.* (Difficult to hear what she says)

10.50:

Tessa: *Uaaaaa.* (loudly, frustratedly) She stands up and arranges the pillows she was sitting on. *This chair is like that.* She sounds determined. *Do you understand, crab? No, he doesn't understand. Yes, you understand!* She sits down again, lays her arm on the lowest step of the chair to her left and stares contently ahead of her.

¹ Wooden chairs, constructed for young children, that have two sitting levels - in a ladder-type construction. The child can climb up onto the lower level and sit on the upper level.

Lene: Climbs up on the bench to her right. *I sit up on my ---- (unclear) first.* She lies on her stomach on the bench and arranges a pillow so that it lies straight in relation to the chair in front of it. *And I make it. - Good.*

Tessa: Is watching Lene. When Lene is finished, Tessa lays her head back against the pillow and sings quickly and rhythmically: *Here's my bed - I'm lying here and getting sun.*

Lene: Sits down again beside Tessa and sighs as if content with the sun: *Ahhhh.*

Tessa: In a loud sing-song voice: *I have to go out and swim!* She stands up and climbs out of the space between the chair in front and the one to her left. (Is this a boat?)

Lene: Rises, *And I have to swim too.*

Tessa: Goes out on the floor outside the boat and sings again: *I have to go out and swim!* She leans forward as if she's diving into the water, slides onto the floor for one split second. *Oh, - a crab, a crab, a crab!* She hurries up on her feet, waving her arms in panic, and climbs into the space beside the bench.

Lene: Is standing up on the bench and hops into the water. She lies down on her stomach and moves forward on her elbows in an eel-like motion, while she breathes heavily. She looks pleased.

Tessa: Has climbed up on the bench.

Lene: Rises from the water, goes toward Tessa. *No, - why did you come up on my... -* (Cannot hear what she says, but she has defined the bench as something special.)

Tessa: Goes back to her "chaise lounge", sits down, lays her feet between the chair-steps in front of her, and lays her head back on the pillow.

Lene: Goes to her chair. *You have to come up there, -* she points to the space between the chairs, *And I have to come up there, -* she points to the stool. She sits down.

10.51

Tessa: Lies back quite low on the pillow and sighs, *Ahhhh.* She mumbles, closes her eyes, turns her head toward Lene, *We can sleep on the beach, we can.*

Lene: Takes her sweater, *I have to get some sunscreen from my backpack.* She lays the "backpack" in her lap, turns it upsidedown so that the bottom is up, sticks her hand into the hole, takes it up again and begins to pat the invisible sunscreen onto her arms, on her neck, and behind her back at waist-level. She hums, *Lo-lo-lo-la.*

Tessa: Watches Lene, sits up and looks around. *Where is my backpack?* She sees her sweater - her sack - on the chair to her left and takes it down. She also turns the sweater upside-down, puts her hand into the opening at the bottom, takes out an imaginary object, then mimes that she is putting on sunscreen.

Lene: Stops her humming. *There!* She is temporarily satisfied with her creaming.

Tessa: Continues to rub in sunscreen. She sings, *Sola, sola, sola, sol.* (The sun, the sun, the sun, sun.) She takes the invisible tube of cream with both hands and squirts cream in her face. *Ssssss* (the long sound of the squirting cream). She lays down the tube and rubs the cream heartily onto her face with both hands.

Lene: *Sola, sola, sola, sol.* She rubs her face with an invisible creamstick and rubs the imagined cream in a circular motion twice, with one hand but without touching her face. *Now I think that I put on suncream. Now I've put the suncream....in my sack.* She folds her sack and lays it down on her left right beside her.

Tessa: Continues to rub in cream.

Allan: Comes over to them and sits on the bench on Lene's right. Both girls look at him.

Lene: *Oh, oh.* She looks startled and alert.

Tessa: Moves her right arm in front of Lene and points toward the water where they have been swimming. *There are crabs in the water.*

Lene: Looks at Allan. She looks very frightened and points her arm in the same direction, with her pointing finger directed down over the far side of the bench. *There are the crabs!* For a split second both girls' arms are pointing in the same direction at the same angle.

Allan: Goes over to the mattresses and lies calmly behind the boat. He sings: *Crabs, crabs, crabs - in the water.*

(Another girl has sat down on the mattress but does not get involved.)

Both girls turn around to face Allan behind them.

Tessa: *We're pretending that there are crabs in the water.* She continues to rub cream into her body.

Lene: *We're pretending that out there is the ocean, and that there are crabs out there.*

Allan: *Oh boy!* (He says it in English) - *pretend!*

Tessa: Has sat down and is rubbing more cream on her legs and her feet. *I have to put cream on my legs.*

10.52

Lene: She has sat down again. *What is "Oh boy", dummy?*

Tessa: *And I put a little cream on my legs, me too.* She crosses her arms over her chest and looks at Lene. *And a little on my forehead too.* She mimes this.

Lene: *And my forehead too.* She pats her forehead. *I took cream everywhere.* She crosses her arms over her chest and looks at Tessa.

Tessa: Has been creaming herself and now she looks startled. She holds her hands out in front of her as if they were full of suncream. *Now I have to - Where is my towel? - There.* She pretends to dry her hands on an invisible towel which is lying between her legs. She grabs her backpack. *My sack shouldn't lie here, it should lie there.* She tosses her sweater onto the chair to her left, but holds onto it. *Now I have to take out my bread.* She takes the sack down again and pulls it right up to her face as if looking deep down into a dark space. She mimes that she pulls out the food and arranges the pieces of bread on her lap. It looks as if she is buttering them with her right hand while she holds the bread in her left hand. Then she moves her right hand up to her mouth daintily, takes a small bite and chews. Her cheeks bulge as if her mouth is full of food.

Lene: Has sat up on her knees and turns away from the camera. *I have to find my bread now.* When she turns back, she has her sweater on her lap. *There are my cakes. I'm only going to eat my cakes.* She mimes rapidly that she takes something out, lifts her hand to her mouth and chews once, then she lifts the whole sweater to her face as if it were the cake.

Tessa: Turns toward Lene and looks concerned while Lene gobbles her cakes. Tessa holds her slice of bread carefully in her right hand. *It's smart to eat a little.* She nods her head slightly, as if giving dietary advice.

Lene: Places the sweater beside her. *I've eaten up everything.* She pats her sweater. *And I have more candies in my sack.*

10.53

Lene: Continues to pat her sack. She says to herself, *This is the sweater.*

Tessa: Is looking at Lene while she continues to eat carefully. She takes the last bite and takes her sack down from the chair. She looks into the sack and puts her arm deep into the empty space: *Now I have to take the candies.*

Lene: *You can't have my candies.*

Tessa: *I have eaten up all my cakes.* She smacks her lips.

Lene: *I have eaten all my cakes and now I'll drink my cocoa.* She takes her sack onto her lap and sticks her hand into it. When she pulls out her hand she has made a fist. She moves her fist to her mouth, leans her head backwards a little and drinks from an invisible cup. She smacks her lips slightly and stares contently into the air. She moves her arms up and down repeatedly and rhythmically as if tossing something into her mouth. *And now I have to eat up all my candies.*

Tessa: Takes something carefully from her sack and lays it in her lap. She lays the sack on the sidetable. She seems to move an invisible implement rhythmically up and down, between an invisible plate and her mouth. *M-m-m.* She stops the movement. *Chomp, chomp, chomp* (in a raw voice). She rushes the rest of the food undaintily into her mouth with both hands, lies back and groans. She sits up for a second. *Chubby and fat in the stomach.* She lies back again.

Lene: Makes a facial and body movement that says she's very full. *Me too.*

Tessa: Turns and sits up on her knees in order to rearrange her pillows.

Allan: Comes and lies down over the bench to the left of Lene.

Lene: *Ooohhhh.* She waves her arms around. *You scared me.* She turns and sits up on her knees and engages Allan. *Are there crabs, or...?*

Tessa: She tries to place her pillow, which stands straight up and down, on a slant like Lene's, but doesn't manage. Instead, she begins to rearrange her space. She leans one pillow against the chair in front of her. She shoves the chair forward, takes a pillow from the mattress in back of her and places it where the chair was. This now resembles the space in front of Lene. She straightens up the sidetable.

Allan: Has been lying peacably on the mattress. He is gently trying to take pillows from Lene.

Lene: Stands and tries to hang onto the pillows. She takes her sack and throws it over the crab.

Allan: *What?* Laughs and throws her sack out into the water: *Out in crab corner!* He slaps Lene gently on the back.

Lene: *What?* She squats down again. *It's Allan who's done it.* (She says this to someone outside the picture, a teacher.)

Allan: Someone outside the picture hands him the sack. (An adult)

Lene: Stretches out her hand: *Thanks so much* (in Swedish). *My sack. That's my sack.* She has the sack and lays it on the pillow behind her head, lays her head against it lovingly and leaves it there. She laughs contently.

Allan: Throws himself down on the mattress/in the water behind her, lying on his side. He pushes a little with one leg on her head pillow.

Lene: Hops up and gently hits his leg with the sack. *You are a dumb crab.* She tries to straighten up the pillow.

Tessa: Has finished rearranging her space. Now both girls' back-pillows lie perfectly on a slant.

Allan: Continues to kick Lene's back-pillow and tries to take it.

Lene: Stands up and holds onto her pillow but gives up. She throws her sack at the crab again.

Allan: Throws the sack into the ocean again.

Lene: *I have to save my sack. I have to save my sack.* She climbs out into the water and fetches her sack which she puts in her mouth as she climbs back onto the boat.

10.55

Allen: *What are you going to do - bite your sack?*

(A teacher: Now it's time for the morning gathering her.)

Tessa: Looks up. *Oh, darn it!*

(Another teacher: Yes, it's too bad.)

(The teacher and the children start to move the mattresses out onto the floor for the morning gathering.)

THE END

Appendix 2

The Circle

A selection of scenes from a theatre performance by Arken Teater, for children from three to seven years old. The children's comments during the performance are included.

The opening scene:

(In this scene Bruna establishes the fictive world and the conventions they shall use. She guides the children into seeing the invisible garden wall and garden, and into helping her to form her witch figure. Much of this process is aided by mimed sequences with, of course, invisible objects.)

Bruna enters and moves toward the children.

Bruna: *Do you know what they said?*

Children (quietly): *No*

Bruna: *No? Do you know what they said?*

Children: *No.* (Still quietly)

Bruna: *They said I wasn't allowed. Think about that. I wasn't allowed. She walks a little back and forth in front of the children and seems resigned. Not allowed to go with them. Ahhhh. What should I do? What should I do then? She throws up her arms in frustration.*

Children: A child says something.

Bruna: Yes?

Children: *Call the witch!* (An adult must have told him that there was a witch in the story??)

Bruna looks at the child who spoke.

Bruna: *The witch?*

She calls carefully while she looks around to see if someone is there.

Witch! Witch.....!

She is surprised to find something directly behind her back. She mimes such that we see a wall behind her. She is standing with her back to the children, and with surprise in her voice: *A brick wall. Ahhh.*

She follows the invisible wall with her hands toward stage left, around an imaginary corner toward upstage. She stops.

AHH. The gate! She mimes that she peeks through the rungs of the gate.

OOOO. What a lovely garden, kids. I'm going in.

She mimes that she opens the gate. We hear a creaking sound (which she makes). As she enters the garden we hear a peaceful jazz melody on tenor saxophone. B. looks around in wonderment, moving slowly and gracefully while she takes in all the details. She moves backwards and bumps into the crate, falling backwards onto it. She looks down at it in surprise. *OOOOh.....*

(CUT)

(Now I will move to the last scene in which the final battle over Dino is fought, and in which being locked in and liberated are thematized.)

Last scene:

(Torgeir has transformed himself to King, and Bruna has become his Queen. She wants to dance a minuet, but he wants to ride out to save the dinosaurs. Below, the last scene is at the halfway mark. Here the theme of being locked in is repeated, this time with two meanings:)

Torgeir: Torgeir kneels down, holding the imaginary roll of parchment which has just been handed to him by an imaginary "servant", disturbing the minuet- to his great relief. He reads: *We have received a letter.*

Bruna: *A letter- what does it say, what does it say?* She kneels down beside him.

Torgeir: *It says: HELP, we are in incomprehensible danger.*

Bruna: Gasps, holding her hands over her mouth.

Torgeir: *Greetings from all the other dinosaurs.*

Bruna: *Ohhhh...*

Torgeir: *Ohhhh...* He rises and runs across the stage *My dear Queen, I must take leave...* He throws himself over the back of his "Horse" (mime).

Bruna: *I have to pack first...* She turns quickly to leave.

Torgeir: *Oh, no, my dear Queen. This journey is dangerous. The King was obliged to a solitary journey, and the Queen, obliged to the castle.*

Bruna: *No, I want to come.* - Clearly irritated.

Torgeir: *No, the Queen was in the castle.*

Bruna: *No, the Queen was with you.*

Torgeir: *No, the Queen was in the castle.*

Bruna: *No, the Queen was with you.*

Children: *No.*

Children: *Yes.*

Torgeir: *My Queen, Dino is your protector and friend. Now the King will take his horse and ride away.* He rides away.

Children to Bruna: *Just take Dino! Take him!!!!* (He is sitting on the crate)

Bruna: *But I want to go too. I want to go!* She is angry and casts her Queen's robe and head-dress on the floor, scratches her head. *He just left me behind. What should I do now?*

Children: in choir: *Take Dino, take Dino!!*

One child: *Be the Witch!*

Bruna: Picks up the hat, puts it on and shrinks into the witch's stance.

Children: *Take Dino under you hat, under your hat, under the hat goes Dino...*

Bruna: Takes Dino. She turns the crate so it stands upright. *Now I know....*

Children: Their voices drown each other out with all their comments.

Bruna: Points at them with Dino in her hand, *Yes, I...I can be the incomprehensible danger, and I can cook Dino, I can. Hee, hee, hee.* (Witch laughter)

Children: *Cook him quickly!* (Laughter from the rest of the audience.)

Bruna: Climbs up on top of her cottage, *Now I shall see if it's cooking in my cauldron.* She mimes the cauldron's edge and peeks into it. *It's bubbling and cooking in my cauldron. It's hot and good. I have to have the recipe.* She looks for a book in the "bookcase" in front of her. Takes it out from a high shelf and skims the imaginary pages rapidly.

Children: *The king is coming.* (Torgeir is standing completely still upstage right, with his back to the audience.)

Bruna: Moves her finger down the page of her imagined cookbook, *Dinosaur soup, yes, yes. One takes a pinch of mmmm, sand, yes.* Grasps the air and throws the sand into the soup, quickly.

Children: *He's coming.* (Torgeir stands completely still.)

Bruna:... *and a handful of camel hair...* Grabs, throws it into the pot, and continues to read.

Children. *He's coming...* (They say much that can't be heard) (Torgeir hasn't moved.)

Bruna: Reads from her cookbook, *Let the soup cook from fifty to seventy hours before putting in the meat.* She flaps her palms together, the cookbook closes, and she places it up in the shelf.

Children: *Look, he's coming...*(Torgeir hasn't moved.)

Bruna: Stirs in her cauldron.

Torgeir: Comes riding in and places himself downstage center facing the children, and with his back to the witch.

Children: They shout to him excitedly so he can't hear what they are saying.

Torgeir: *The Queen is going to come with me this time. That's more fun...*

Children: *She's taken Dino. She's taken Dino. Behind you!*

Torgeir: *Who has Dino?*

Children: Shout and point at Brunna: *She is the incomprehensible danger.*

Torgeir: Is very confused, looks from side to side - then turns and looks at Brunna.

Is it she who is the incomprehensible danger? He falls to his knees and looks very worriedly at Bruna.

Bruna: *Now, Dino, you will take your last hop in this lifetime. One, two.....three....* She stands and almost hypnotizes Dino whom she has placed on the edge of the cottage roof, facing the cauldron.

Torgeir: In a panic: *Dino. Dino. Dino. Don't do a thing she tells you!*

Bruna: *Once more, one ... two... three....* She bends down and grasps Dino hurriedly, and with her raspy witch-voice, *Now I have you, my friend, now.* She holds him by his tail over the cauldron.

Torgeir: Nervously: *Now, now, now, I have to save you Dino!* With great haste he takes off his King's robe, takes a rope from his pocket, turns his cap/crown with the outside in so that it is back in its Captain position - (which we have understood helps him to take control over situations.)

Bruna: Is still holding Dino and moves him in a circle over the mouth of the pot. *Ten, nine, eight....is there enough salt?* She is taking her time. She sticks her finger into the soup and tastes it. *Yes! Seven, six, five, four, three, two, one.....*

Torgeir: As Captain he has sneaked around behind the cottage and climbed stealthily up behind the witch. (He has forgotten his previous fear of heights.) With great speed, he throws the rope over her and tightens it around her arms.

Bruna: Auuuuuu.

Children: Laugh and shout loudly.

Torgeir: *....Down with you! And now you shall be put into the darkest prisoner's dungeon!*

Bruna: *No!*

Torgeir: *Yes, you shall!*

Bruna: *No, I won't!*

Torgeir: *Yes, you shall! Out into the sea with you.*

They fall forward and land such that T. is crouching with his torso bent over, and Bruna is lying on her stomach under him, locked in by his arms. (It appears threatening.)

Bruna: Throws Dino in front of her. *Let me go now.*

Torgeir: *No. Now you shall remain locked in in the darkest prisoner's cave.* They wrestle slightly, but Torgeir has the overhand.

Children: *There's Dino! There's Dino!*

Bruna: *Tell me something. Would you like to be locked in like this, maybe?*

Torgeir: *Nooo... He lets go.*

Bruna: *No, that's right...*

When Torgeir has let go, she slips quickly behind him and holds him tightly from behind, locking his arms to his body, just as he had done with her. *And now you're locked in!*

Children: *Dino's lying there...*

Torgeir: *Now we're both locked in....Sadly.*

Bruna: Lets him go free. *Both?*

Torgeir: *Yes.*

Bruna: *Ohhh.... yeah.* She looks up at the high wall, and follows it with her eyes around the edge of the entire garden. Goes in front of Torgeir and sits down.

They both look very sad. Suddenly, they see something on top of the wall stageright. They follow it with their eyes, in wonderment.

Bruna: *Ohhh.*

Torgeir: His body jerks when his eyes reach the gate.

Bruna: *The gate!*
They run over to the gate.

Torgeir: *Completely open...*

They look at each other in awe, and take each other's hands.

Bruna: *Then we can....*
They go out through the "gate".

Children: *Dino, you have to take Dino!*

Bruna: *Yes, Dino!*
They turn and Brunna points at Dino.
*Yes, Dino,- yes, and the garden,...yes....*She looks around longingly.

They go in again and Brunna picks up Dino with affection, holding him tightly.

Children: *The rope!*

Torgeir: Picks up the rope and puts it in his side-pocket, pleased.

(The saxophone melody is heard again....)

Bruna: Gives Dino to Torgeir who places him tenderly in his breast pocket.

Torgeir: Takes Brunna's hand again.

They go out through the gate while they look around wistfully. Brunna waves goodbye to the garden. Torgeir pokes her on the shoulder and she turns to him. He takes off his cap and places it on her head. She likes it. They continue holding hands, going out along the wall and out to "Brunna's side."
When they have disappeared, the chimes on the back wall of the garden chime.

THE END

Appendix 3

Locked In

Tessa - 3 years and 9 months

Hilde - 5 years and 2 months

The girls have been playing at one end of the large common room of their unit for over twenty minutes. For a minute they have been running around on the mattresses that lie under the windows. They laugh alot. The large wooden crate (from *The Circle*) lies on the floor and a few large rectangular foam rubber pillows in different colours stand on end in the same area. The players stop running.

Tessa and Hilde: Raise the crate up into an upright position.

Tessa: Stands in front of the crate and pushes away pillows that are in her way.

Hilde: *Take away the rope!*

Tessa: Takes away the rope that is lying under the crate.

Hilde: Begins to climb up the rungs on the side of the crate. *I can be up here and you can be down there.*

Tessa: *Yes, this is my witch's cottage.* Tessa goes inside the crate which has its opening on the side turned away from the camera. (As it stands now it is almost as tall as the girls.)

Hilde: Sits with crossed legs on top of the crate, *Hallo!*

Tessa: She stands inside the crate. *My witch's cottage.* She comes out of the cottage. With a witch-like voice: *Ha, ha, ha, ha.* She looks up at Hilde.

Hilde: Leans slightly toward Tessa. *Hee, hee, hee* - with playful mimicry and a witch-like vocal quality.

Tessa: *You are my witch-child.*

Hilde: *No I'm not.* She turns on her axis in the sitting position - in a full circle.

Tessa: *Come down.* She stands with a knee on the lowest rung of the crate.

Hilde : *But how should I get down? Here - okay.* She looks down at the ladder.

Tessa: Goes back to the cottage entrance. *Now you built me locked in.*

Hilde: *Yes, but then....*She gets ready to climb down.

Tessa: *But then I tip it over.*

Hilde: *Don't tip it over now!*

Tessa: *No.*

Hilde: *Now I'm standing on top. She turns and climbs down.*

Tessa: *She is inside the cottage:because then mama came. I.... eat...(She has a monologue which is difficult to hear, but she is in a pretend world talking to an imagined child.)*

Hilde: *Stands in front of the opening to the cottage. She takes a large pillow and places it with its long side up in front of the entrance. Now I locked you in.*
(NB - The Nordic use of the past tense in pretend play)

Tessa: *It doesn't matter - because I can just tip it over.*

Hilde: *Takes a pillow and sets it on top of the first one. No, you couldn't tip it over. This was a pretend wall which I put there. She presses the second pillow down hard and both pillows fall over. I locked you in because I.....She builds up the pillows once more.*

Tessa: *I'm going to come out afterwards.*

Hilde: *Now, you slept - in pretend; now you slept - in pretend. She goes around to the other side of the crate.*

Tessa: *I'm sleeping.*

Hilde: *Finds one more pillow which she sets on top of the others. The wall is now higher than the cottage. And now you woke up when I had run away. She runs away from the cottage.*

Tessa: *Pushes away the wall so that it tumbles over. She comes out carefully, purrs a little and looks for Hilde.*

Hilde: *Comes back and is very close to Tessa before she runs away again. Then you wanted to capture me, but you didn't manage.*

Tessa: *Runs in front of Hilde - toward the entrance to the adjacent play room, stopping at the threshold.*

Hilde: *When you captured me, I managed to escape again. She is running, and continues into the other room, where there is a playhouse built up behind the wall of a puppet theatre.*

Tessa: *Waits at the threshold until Hilde has gone into the other room. Enters the room where the Hilde has run. Standing behind Hilde, she takes her around the waist.*

Hilde: *Laughs.*

Tessa: *We're only playing, Hilde. She drags Hilde backwards into the house, and places her in a sitting position on the floor. We're playing. She smiles while she looks at the camera.*

Hilde: *Now it's night-time, so you went back to sleep.*

Tessa: *Closes the door to the "prison", and returns to her own cottage.*

Hilde: *Escapes from capture through the window of the house (puppet stage) and runs lightly over to the Tessa's cottage. And you were sleeping and I built you locked in again. She takes a pillow and places it in front of the opening. And I built you in with an invisible*

brick wall. She takes away the pillow again, and shoves away all the other pillows lying in front of the opening.

Hilde: *And then....* (She is interrupted by Tessa)

Tessa: *Then you built here and here and here.* She points all around in front of the cottage.

Hilde: *And everywhere, and you never came out.* She gets up and swings her arms around to illustrate where she is going to build.

Tessa: *Yeah, that was smart.*

Hilde: Runs once around the cottage during the next sentence, which she finishes in front of the opening. *And it is invisible, and you thought I hadn't done it, because it was invisible.* She runs away again, comes back, tiptoes behind the cottage, to the front of the entrance, but then disappears again.

Tessa: Sits very quietly inside the cottage, and through the ladder-rungs we can see a sprig of red hair sticking up as she rises. Now she turns slowly and steals out the entrance, peeks out around the side in the direction where her captor has run, turns and steals in again. She sits down and puts her face in her hands.

Hilde: Returns to Tessa's cottage. *You didn't come out yet.* She circles around the cottage once.

Tessa: *You had to build.*

Hilde: *Because I had to build. Because I had glued...*She is standing in front of the entrance.

Tessa: *Okay, then you have to build with all the pillows.*

Hilde: *And then the wall was invisible, and then you could never come out.* She sits down and begins to build the pillows up in front of the entrance. *You never escaped from there.*

Tessa: *Of course I did, I could just tip it over.*

Hilde: *No!*

Tessa: *Of course I could.*

Hilde: *You slept. You slept...you slept, in pretend.* She has now closed up the entrance. As she leaves, the visible invisible wall tumbles down. She circles the cottage once.

Tessa: Kicks the bricks/pillows, rises and swats them away with a hand. She escapes, stands at the side of the cottage and looks around with an angry expression.

Hilde: Comes back laughing, then runs away, across the room,

Tessa: Runs after her.

They stop in front of a large cupboard, turn around and stop up beside a table. They look toward the cottage.

Tessa: *We 'll be foxes who live in that cottage over there.*

THE END

Appendix 4

Capture the Wolf, We Shall!

(In one end of the large common room there are two foam rubber mattresses covered in dark, warm colors. They lie under large windows which dominate two adjacent walls. The girls are running on and off the mattresses. There is activity on the other side of the room which does not interfere with their immersion in playing as it develops into a drama.)

9:26 a.m.

Tessa: Rocks a doll which lies in a cradle hanging from the ceiling, and sings gently. She goes over to a display bookcase on the wall beside the cradle and takes out a book. *Now I shall give something to our baby.* She lays the book in the cradle.

9.27

Hilde: Builds a wall which separates the playing space from the rest of the room. She first uses two Tripp-Trapp-chairs at each end of the space. *Now we have to use some pillows.* Between the chairs, she sets six large square pillows that stand on end.

9.28

Tessa: Runs back to the bookcase, takes out "Little Red Riding Hood", goes over to Hilde and pretend-reads for her. On the cover of the book there is a grotesque picture of the wolf with an oversized head and a very large, gaping jaw. *We have to go out.* She points at the cover. *Capture Red Riding Hood and the wolf, we shall!* She lays the book in the cradle and goes to the mattress where she fetches an L-formed block. She aims and fires into the open space: *Bang, bang, bang.* The block is the same size as a small revolver and she holds it with both hands as police do on crime-series on television. *Ahhhhhh. Ouuuuuuuuu.* She walks toward the cradle. She lays the gun in the cradle. She wanders aimlessly around the space, seemingly punch-drunk.

Hilde: Takes the book out of the cradle and lays it on the floor.

Tessa: Takes two wooden eggs out of the cradle, cuddles them lovingly, lays them on the mattress. *Poor little chicken and poor little baby egg!*

9.29

She takes the eggs from the mattress and lays them on the table beside the wall Hilde has built. She returns to the baby in the cradle and rocks it. *Poor little baby.* She looks at the camera, but goes immediately back to her playing. The eggs roll off the table onto the floor. She runs toward them: *Now I'm going crazy!*

Hilde: Walks over to the eggs. *Let's hope they cracked, the eggs.* She picks them up. *They cracked. Crrraaack. Chicken.*

Tessa: *Hallo. Hallo. Now we've got alot of babies here.* She picks up the eggs, draws them to her mouth as if they were small birds: *Poor things.* She lays them in the cradle.

Hilde: Picks up the baby (doll) from the cradle.

9.30

Tessa: *Now we'll have a party! Now we'll have a party! Now we'll have a party! Now we'll have a party!* She goes to the book which is lying on the floor beside the cradle and places it back in the bookcase. She looks at the picture of the wolf on the cover: *Why do you come back the whole time, Wolf?*

Hilde: *Take your gun, Tessa.* She is walking around with the baby under her arm. *It's there.* She points at the cradle.

Tessa: Takes the gun from the cradle, goes over to the bookcase and shoots at the picture of the wolf.

Hilde: *I'll take the gun here.* She takes a rectangular block from a large bookcase which partially divides the room. She aims at the bookcover: *Bang, bang.* She lays the block back on the shelf.

Tessa: She sways around in the space. *Ehhhh. Ehhhh.* Her tongue is hanging out of her mouth. She falls onto the mattress. She gets up from the mattress, walks around and sings: *Lovely baby, you shall slumber now.*

Hilde: She walks around holding the baby, takes a scarf around it and follows after Tessa.
9.31

Tessa: *Ha, ha, ha.* (The melody from the film or cassette of Disney's *Three Little Pigs*) She climbs up on the Tripp-trapp chair closest to the mattress. *Hello, you dumb old wolf. Hello, you dumb old wolf.* She directs the song, with its skipping rhythm, to her right - down behind the wall of pillows that Hilde has built. *Hello! Auuu.* She fans her left hand toward the wolf. She turns on the chair, lifts her head and pants heavily, dog-like. She climbs down from the chair: *I'll throw some food to you, I will.* She fetches a block from the bookshelf and throws it into the cage made of pillows. *Hello, wolf! Here's some food. Hee, hee, hee. I fooled the wolf because it was only fish!* She crosses her arms and sneers knowingly.

Hilde: She sits and takes care of the baby in the corner beside the large bookcase. She has a scarf which she lays on her lap and wraps the baby in it. She is following Tessa's enactment.

Tessa is continually in motion, rhythmic and dynamic.

Tessa: She climbs up on the chair again, stands there and pipes a high tone: *Heeeeeeeee.* *Poor little baby rabbit. I must go out and see.* She climbs down from the chair. *No, no, no* - in an angry voice. *Now I see the wolves' tracks. I'm going.* She goes determinedly out into the other part of the common room, outside the play-space that Hilde has established with the pillows. She run-hops over to the bench by the table there, leans over the bench and mimes that she is scooping together something into her hands. *Picking, picking.* She walks back to the play-area, while she hums *Jingle Bells*, and ends the phrase with, *Now you shall get food.* She goes to the cradle, leans over and pours the food from her hands carefully. She turns away from the cradle and brushes the palms of her hands against each other, as if brushing off crumbs. She goes to the mattress and lies down on her stomach. *At last it's okay that...she stops. All right, then* (I cannot hear what she says)... *to help.* She thunders: *All right, you can't fool me!* She rises and goes over to the wolf-cage. *Knock, knock.* She knocks on a pillow. *AUUUUUU.* She pulls her hand away from the cage quickly. She sticks out her tongue and blows out. She goes over to the mattress and lies down. She rises and goes over to the Tripp-trapp chair which is a meter from the mattress. She climbs up. *Now then, the hopping shall begin.*

9.33 a.m.

She hops from the second step of the chair onto the mattress, then returns to the chair. *The wolf is frightened.* She hops again and returns to the chair.

Hilde: Lays the baby in the cradle and makes it comfortable. She is standing with her back to Tessa. *The wolf was frightened, that wolf, yes indeed.* She turns and walks over to the hopping-chair, determinedly - with her hands on her hips.

9.34

Tessa: *So - we hop, one, two, three.* Hops again.

Hilde: *Upon the wolf I shall hop!* She hops.

Tessa: To the camera: *We're playing wolves.* She goes up on the chair, and rolls out an imaginary parchment scroll, in the manner of a herald in days of old. *The wolf has stolen gold from our kids - gold we have bought.* Makes a face and hops down upon him.

Hilde: Climbs up on the chair. *Oh no and hop and hop.* She hops on the wolf.

Tessa: *Wolf, watch out now. One, two, three, ha ha ha.* She hops upon him and comes immediately around to the chair again. *And so the wolf comes, I see the wolf with eyes and noses. One two three. He's not watching out. Here I come.* She hops upon him.

Hilde: Climbs up. *Here I come. He's not watching out.* She hops upon him.

Tessa: *He can't get away.* She climbs up on the chair. *Ha ha ha. Who's afraid of the big bad wolf - ha ha ha ha ha!* She hops upon him. On the way back to the chair: *And then a poor person came...She climbs onto the chair...Eyes, nose, mouth...*

Hilde: *Who's afraid of the big bad wolf, tra la la la la.* She hops upon him.

9.35

Tessa: She is standing in the middle of the space. *Then someone knocks.* She knocks on the floor. *And it was the poor wolf. And so he dressed in a disguise and they ask who it is and then the wolf hopped on them, but then it was only a person. So then the wolf became very frightened. And then the person became very frightened. Capture the wolf! Capture the wolf!* She walks over to the chair. *Then they became terribly scared, frightened, when he saw. And then the three pigs came, but they were not scared, you know. But the wolf was scared.* She climbs onto the chair. She hops onto the wolf. *"Help me!", said the wolf. "Crocodiles, crocodiles!"*

9.37

Hilde: Eagerly returns to the chair, climbs up: *The wolf got angry.*

Tessa: *Come on now, just jump on the wolf. He'll be sorry.*

Hilde: Hops on the wolf.

Tessa: *Now the wolf was dead. Now he's sorry.* Climbs up on the chair. *And I became so angry that I hopped onto the wolf.* She hops on the wolf and lies down on the mattress. *And then it got killed. And the three pigs were so happy. Then the wolf woke up, and the wolf was so angry.*

Hilde: *Then he died.*

Tessa: *And the wolf was so angry that he really died.* She rises from the mattress and wanders around in the space.

9.38

He's really dead, to be sure. And then the three pigs were so happy, so happy that they shrieked. And the wolf didn't wake up. And then they cut off its head and its arms... She walks around as she narrates, goes to the window stageright, shakes her arms when she tells about cutting off the arms...and its legs. Now the fairy tale is finished. She turns away from the window. *And the three pigs were so glad, so glad, so glad. Ha, ha ha, said the wolf.* She hops around while she says this.

Hilde: Hops on the wolf.

Tessa: Climbs up on the chair. *Now we'll take them! The wolf was sorry and then the wolf really died.* Hops on the wolf, lands facing down, turns on her back. Lying on her back - AAAAAAAA. *At last, at last....* She rises from lying position, dries her perspiring forehead, goes over to the window above the mattress, and returns to the chair. *The wolf is a person.*

Hilde: She speaks impatiently to Tessa who is standing in front of the chair: *Move over.* Tessa moves. She climbs up and hops down on the wolf.

Tessa: She climbs onto the chair. *Oh my goodness, Wolf. Soon I can't take anymore, Wolf. I'm going to hop on you.* Hops. *Auuuu.* She rises and goes over to the book with the wolf's picture on the cover, which is lying on the floor. She hops on the cover of the book, on the wolf's picture, a huge head with a gaping jaw. *Now I'm hopping on you, Wolf! She sings: Who's afraid of the big bad wolf? - ha ha ha ha ha. Now, isn't this going to be our evening meal?*

Hilde: Lifts her sweater up to her neck, and then pulls it down again. She is warm.

Tessa: *It's gone, to be sure. I think it's disappeared.* She climbs up on the chair and hops.

9.39

She stands up beside the mattress. *Then they cut up the wolf's stomach, and they hopped out and said: "Stones, worms, in the stomach of the wolf".* She throws a large pillow on the mattress/on the wolf. *And the wolf was so angry and said "Ha, ha ha". Huff, I can't take anymore.*

(They are both perspiring and red in the face, showing obvious signs of physical tiredness.)

9.40

She is standing beside the mattress. *Aha! It was the wolf. You don't give up!* She makes a knocking-sound on the floor. *What is it that is knocking?* She mimes that she is shoving a door open and makes the creaking sound of a doorhinge that needs oil. *Is it the wolf? Just go away at once!* She shoves the imaginary door shut with much force. *Dong! Wolves are so dumb, Hilde. I hate wolves! Uff. What a wolf.* She pushes the chair forward about a meter, so that it is touching the edge of the mattress. She climbs up to the chair. *Now I'm going to hop on you, then you'll get ugly ugly.* She hops.

Hilde: Climbs up on the chair. *I'm sweating.* She hops.

Tessa: *I'm really sweating.*

They take off their sweaters. They laugh.

Tessa: She brushes back her hair which stands a little on end because of perspiration. *Now the wolf will get spiky hair.* She hops.

9.41

Hilde: *Now the wolf will get spiky hair.* They giggle. Hilde hops and does a somersault.

Both: Each hops and makes a somersault, without warnings to the wolf. They laugh alot. Tessa returns to the chair.

Tessa: *...And a spiky tongue.* She hops and lands: *Dá da - da dá da* (teasing tone), *the wolf got a spiky tongue!*

9.42

She turns on her back with her tongue sticking out, hands grabbing her head. AAAAAA.

They both laugh.

Tessa: Climbs up on the chair, hops and does a sommersault. She perfects the sommersault, by bending over in the position to roll over before she takes off from the chair. She lies on the mattress, with knees up, looking at the chair.

Now the wolf is doing a sommersault. Lies straight out on her back. AAAAA.

Stands up and says to the wolf: *That's not how to do a sommersault.* She sits on the chair.

Why don't you hop soon, wolf? The wolf is a fart-turd. She smiles slightly as she says this, but says it matter-of-factly.

9.50

She is up on the chair and hops down. She lies on the mattress on her back with her feet against the chair. She pulls the chair down on the mattress so that it is lying over her. She stands up and walks away, then returns. *Now we'll pretend that the chair is going to be the wolf....*

(Part II)

Hilde: She comes and sits on the edge of the chair.

Tessa: *What is the wolf doing now? Just go away, Hilde, and I'll order things.*

Hilde: Goes and sits on a small baby carriage in the middle of the floor

Tessa: *Wolf, don't do that. Now I can't take anymore of this playing.*

Hilde: Goes back to the chair and climbs in between the back slats and seat slats.

Tessa: *Our eggs, our eggs.* She goes and fetches the eggs that are in the fire place. *We lay the eggs here, and this is the wolf's stomach. And you saw them and you took them out. The eggs are lying here.* She places the eggs on the other side of the prone chair from where Hilde is sitting. She takes the eggs up again, carefully, and cuddles them. *At last we've captured the wolf.*

Hilde: *How shall we get them out? You can't take them out just like that. We have to have a knife.*

Tessa: *Have already taken them out.* She sighs in frustration. *Okay....* She rolls her eyes. Takes the eggs with her into the playroom next door.

Hilde follows her after thirty seconds.

9.53

They return with each their small green plastic knife.

Hilde: *You have to lay them in there* - she points between the slats of the chair.

Tessa: Lays the eggs there.

Both: They carve with the knives, scraping the eggs.

Hilde: *Now there's more in here.* She continues to carve.

9.54

Tessa: *And then we both died.* She lies down on her back on the mattress behind the wolf, with her arms spread out over her head.

Hilde: She lies on the mattress exactly like Tessa.

Tessa: *And then we woke up when we heard someone scream. Eeeeeeeee. Eeeeeeee. Eeeeeeeee. Oh, no. Oh, no. Oh, no.* She rises and stands over the wolf, staring down. She picks up the eggs. *And they are dead. And we died too.* She lies down on her stomach with the eggs in front of her.

Hilde: *And then we began to carve.*

Tessa: *It was only pretend. We were only sleeping. But the wolf thought we were dead. We lay completely still. Hilde, Hilde. You have to sleep.*

Hilde: Is lying completely still.

Tessa: *You have to wake up.* The eggs roll from the mattress onto the floor. *Oh, no!*

Hilde: *We have to carve up the stomach.*

Tessa: Climbs in the chair between the slats.

Hilde: Stands beside the wolf, leans over and begins to carve.

Tessa: Watches.

Hilde: *We found them!*

9.57

Tessa: *Hurrah! Now we'll have a party. Now we've captured the wolf! Now we really died.*

Hilde: Goes back to the wolf.

Both: They begin to sing. *Ha, ha, ha...* They dance and sing around in the room. *Now we've captured the wolf!*

Tessa: Lies down on the mattress.

Hilde: Sits down and packs the eggs in a scarf on her lap.

Tessa: Rises and goes to the large bookcase dividing the room. She sits down with her back to the wall and with her left hand she mimes that she takes something from the shelf and places it in the folded rim of her t-shirt with her right hand. She hums rhythmically as she repeats the miming movement. *One, two, three, four.* She rolls up her t-shirt and rises. *There are even more mice.* She sets up the large pillows again, in a square form.

9.59

Hilde: Stands beside the bookcase and also takes imaginary mice into her shirt.

Both: They sit together beside the mouse house that is constructed with the pillows. They lay the imaginary mice down in the house. They fetch many small objects from the bookcase and throw them into the the mouse house.

10.00

Hilde: Goes over to the wolf. *You dumb wolf, you're still lying here.*

Tessa: Goes over to the wolf.

Both: They lift the wolf from each their end, carry him two meters into the open space, and lay him down with great seriousness.

Tessa: *It's completely dead.*

Hilde: *At last, at last.*

Tessa: *Au, au, au.*

Hilde: Sits on the wolf. *Now you're dead. We died because we touched the wolf.* She goes to the mattress and lies down.

Tessa: Goes to the mattress and lies down. *But I woke up.* She casts herself back and forth on the mattress. *AAAAAAAAAAAA.*

Both: They go back to the mice and play there without speaking for six minutes.

10.07

Tessa: *I can't take any more.* She leaves the play space.

Hilde: Follows after.

THE END

