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ABSTRACT

The primary aim of this discussion is to demonstrate that social pretend play is a process of negotiation involving children's attempts to reach minimal agreements in order to maintain the play activity. The second purpose is to show that the quality of negotiation changes in content and form as social pretense evolves and that this process is reflected in different phases of play. To these ends, the paper provides a theoretical framework for the discussion of shared and personal foundations of negotiations. Additionally, current research findings are reviewed in terms of developmental patterns in the negotiations that transpire during four phases of social play: (1) becoming a member of a play group; (2) making a transition into the pretend mode; (3) planning and maintaining social pretend play; and (4) terminating pretend play. Concluding remarks point out that, while a complete cycle of social pretend play includes these four phases, not every instance of social pretense involves all four, the phases may not occur sequentially, and play can be terminated before the cycle is completed. Depending upon the degree of shared representation of events and forms of communication, children's play may take different forms. It is likely that play becomes more scripted with age, although it retains its personal qualities. Future research needs to identify developmental changes in the evoluation of play interaction. Extensive references are included. (RH)

TOWARD AN INTERACTIONAL MODEL OF DEVELOPMENTAL CHANGES IN SOCIAL PRETEND PLAY

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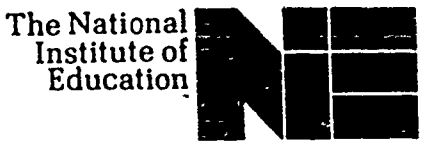

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The conceptualization of children's play is entering a new phase. During the last 50 years, pretend play has been investigated in terms of its social structure. Influenced by Parten (1932), much effort has been devoted to the identification of various categories of social participation. Such categories include parallel, associative, and organized play forms (Rubin, Fein, & Vanderberg, 1983). Studies based on such a categorical framework have revealed that social pretend play becomes increasingly organized and cooperative with age (e.g., McLoyd, Thomas, & Warren, 1984; Rubin, Maioni, & Hornung, 1976; Rubin, Watson, & Jambor, 1978).

However, the categorical approach has left open the investigation of ways in which children achieve cooperation in pretend play. Increasing emphasis is now being placed on how children develop mutually meaningful representation of objects, events, and identities (Göncü, 1984; Göncü & Kessel, 1984; Wolf, 1984). In this dynamic view, social pretend play is conceptualized as an unfolding process of seeking and reaching consensus among play partners (Kelly-Byrne, 1984). The dynamic analysis of play extends the categorical approach by claiming that social play may take one of many forms depending on the degree and kind of consensus among players. What appears to be parallel and associative play may be precipitated by a fully cooperative ongoing play relationship. Understanding the quality of a play interaction at a given point in play requires relating the interaction to its antecedents and possible consequences.

The present chapter describes the evolution of play interaction in terms of collaborative construction between play partners. The specific aims of the chapter are twofold: The primary purpose is to demonstrate that social pretend play is a process of negotiation involving children's attempts to reach minimal agreements in order to maintain the play

activity. That is, children actively, selectively, and flexibly negotiate play with their partners on the basis of shared knowledge of events and standards of behavior, as well as on the basis of unique personal experience. The second purpose is to show that the quality of negotiations changes in content and form as social pretense evolves and that this process is reflected in different phases of play. In what follows, I will first provide a theoretical framework for the discussion of shared and personal foundations of negotiations. Subsequently, I will review current research findings in terms of developmental patterns in the negotiations that transpire during four phases of social play: (a) becoming a member of a play group; (b) making a transition into the pretend mode; (c) planning and maintaining social pretend play; and (d) terminating pretend play.

Cognitive and Affective Bases of Negotiations

Two theories provide a useful framework in understanding differential negotiation strategies in the course of play: Script theory (Nelson & Gruendel, '981) and affective theory (Fein, 1985, in press) have proferred explanations for how preschool children jointly construct and maintain their play. Script theory leads us to investigate the nature of play texts as an expression of children's developing notions of daily events. In its original conception (Schank & Abelson, 1977), a script is defined as a cognitive structure that represents a person's understanding of events in a familiar context. Stated differently, a script is a well-defined and predictable sequence of behaviors or actions embedded within the course of a routine activity. For example, a grocery-shopping script involves going to the store, picking up groceries, and paying for them, among other things.

Script theory has been applied to the analysis of children's play. Some researchers (e.g., Bretherton, 1984; Nelson & Seidman, 1984) note that children's play is based on scripted familiar events. In order to

sustain coherent social play, the play script must be shared by all participants. After children reach an agreement on a play script, that script generates action formats enabling children to engage in enactment of sequenced events (Garvey, 1977; Garvey & Berndt, 1975). Further, once scripts are determined, they allow players to transform familiar events in play. Thus, a scriptual analysis of play reveals the extent to which play is an expression of children's shared knowledge of objects, roles, and events.

Analysis of children's play from an affective viewpoint presents a different picture (Fein, 1985; in press). In this view, pretend play is a representation of the child's inner world in terms of the child's personal and idiosyncratic symbols. A playing child is not motivated to reveal anything about his or her knowledge or perception of events in play, but rather reinterprets and reconstructs experiences that have emotional meaning. According to the affective theory (Fein, 1985), play is an expression of how a child becomes aware of and regulates inner affective life in the presence of others (Piaget, 1962). As such, affective theory states that play is a free-flowing activity with invented themes, unpredictable structure, changing emotional tone, and transformed identities. Play is a symbol system with a personal and affective quality that is not always based on shared knowledge, daily experiences, or sequence of actions.

At first glance, script and affective theories may appear to present two contradictory conceputalizations of play. Script theory focuses on pretend play as an expression of shared knowledge and experience in culturally acceptable terms. Affective theory emphasizes personal and emotional antecedents of what children do in a collaborative fashion during play. However, both views are useful in explaining the unfolding of social pretend play at different levels. I argue that children come simultaneously

to play with both their script-based and personal knowledge. Children refer to script knowledge and strategies in becoming part of a play group. However, as play progresses, children discuss the course of their pretend interaction in both scriptual and personal terms. Children's shared knowledge allows them to establish a general framework for their play and provides grounds for the negotiation of play through individual contributions. Thus, script-based knowledge enables children to establish common standards of behavior, allowing for the more free-flowing expression of personal experiences.

Becoming a Part of Pretend Play

The first phase of play involves making an entry into the play group. There is a growing body of literature on how children become a part of peer groups (Hartup, 1983). The literature on group entry and play research (e.g., Rubin et al., 1983) have been considered separately with a few notable exceptions (e.g., Schwartzman, 1978) in discussions of peer interaction. However, in order to have a complete understanding of how children's play interaction evolves, communicative processes involved in group entry must be also included as a phase of play.

There is considerable evidence that entering into a play group is not an arbitrary matter. Indeed, anthropological and psychological studies suggest that gaining access to the play group requires a series of negotiations. Further, the entering child's negotiations lead to group admittance only if such negotiations are based on a set of scripted communication strategies.

Common and successful strategies that preschoolers follow in seeking admittance to the play group involve implicit and indirect expression of the

desire to participate. For example, Corsaro (1979) found that the preponderance of entry strategies in the spontaneous play of 3- and 4-year-olds were nonverbal approaches, verbal or nonverbal production of a variant of the group activity, and nonverbal occupation of the play area. Children who made explicit requests or disrupted the ongoing group activity were rejected by the play group with no further discussion. However, when children gave implicit and indirect messages of their wish to participate in group play, they were given further opportunities for negotiation even after the initial group rejection. Corsaro thus found that, when children use nonintrusive access strategies in sequence, the likelihood of gaining acceptance increases. For example, if children are first rejected after nonverbally approaching the group, they may subsequently be taken into the play group if they produce a variant of the group activity.

The need for negotiations in order to become a member of the play group becomes more pronounced at older age levels. In a series of studies, Forbes and his co-workers (Forbes, Katz, Paul, & Lubin, 1982; Forbes & Yablick, 1984; Lubin & Forbes, 1984) found that, when entering the play group, 5-year-olds tend more than 7-year-olds to ask disruptive questions or to ignore the responses of others. In contrast, 7 year-olds more frequently observe the play group, offer and receive information about themselves and the group, and make suggestions for the group activity.

Investigations of peer popularity provide further support for the idea that group entry is a sequential process with well-defined strategies. Popular kindergartners and first graders make group-oriented statements (e.g., "That looks like a fun game you're playing) when they express

their interest in the group, but rejected and neglected children make bids that are predominantly attention-getting (e.g., throwing a ball to the table at which the group is playing) and disruptive (e.g., taking away the play group's toys) (Dodge, Schlundt, Schocken, & Delugach, 1983). Group-oriented statements receive positive responses, while disruptive and attention-getting strategies receive negative responses from the group. The findings of Dodge et al. are consistent with those of other investigators (e.g., Dodge, 1983; Putallaz, 1983; Putallaz & Gottman, 1981), showing that popular first, second, and third graders make entry bids consistent with the play group's interest.

It appears that direct requests to enter a play group interrupt the ongoing activity of the group and are subject to rejection. However, nonintrusive approaches to the group open avenues for negotiations rather than demand a response from the play group. It seems that there is a developing and discernable relationship between seeking acceptance and becoming a part of the play group. With age, the entering child becomes increasingly verbal and relevant. However, one crucial aspect of seeking group entry seems to remain the same over the course of development. Regardless of age, to participate in ongoing group play a child must go through a scripted sequence of actions: approach the group without making demands, indirectly express interest in the group activity, and wait for the group response (see Asher, 1983; Garvey, 1984).

Initiation of Social Pretend Play

The second phase in the evolution of social pretense involves making a transition from the nonpretend mode into the pretend mode. Such a transition marks the achievement of agreement between play partners on at least at two levels. First of all, in order to engage in play, the potential participants must reach consensus on the changing states of their interac-

action from nonplay to play. In the terms of Bateson (1955), the children must be able to "exchange signals which would carry the message 'This is play'" (p. 3). Second and relatedly, the players must agree that actions in play should be interpreted at their representational value and not at their face value. As Bateson states, playing children are aware that "those actions in which we now engage do not denote what these actions for which they stand would denote" (p. 3). For example, when a 4-year-old girl says, "I'm getting married" as she swishes her hips, she is perhaps inviting her partner to play house rather than informing the partner about a serious marriage.

How do children make a transition to the pretend mode once a play group is established? Are there scripted ways of giving the message that the activity is play rather than nonplay? These questions have not been explored extensively in the play literature. However, the existing evidence suggests that preschoolers follow indentifiable strategies in moving into the pretend mode of interaction.

Children's initiation of social pretense is similar to their group entry process. In an observational study of 5-year-olds (Genishi, 1983), two strategies of initiating social pretense were identified. The first strategy, start-playing, involves immediate initiation of role-enactment (e.g., the child produces "Ding dong" sounds as she pretends to knock on an imaginary door). The second strategy, play-by-regulation, involves discussion of roles before enactment (e.g., the child claims, "I'm the doctor" then askes the partner, "How do you put the apron on?"). The children studied followed the start-playing strategy more than play-by-regulation. Also, start-playing was found to be a more successful means of

engaging in play than play-by-regulation. Thus, preschoolers are implicit in telling their partners that they are beginning to pretend (Giffin, 1984). These findings are entirely consistent with those of other researchers (e.g., Göncü & Kessel, 1984; McLoyd, Thomas, & Warren, 1984; Stockinger-Forys & McCune-Nicolich, 1984), who report that preschool children between 3 and 5 years of age initiate their play by pretending rather than by explicitly discussing how to play.

A previous study of dyadic play (Göncü, 1983) illustrates how children make the transition to the pretend mode. The following exchange between two 5-year-old boys clearly illustrates that initiation of pretense in preschool play is accomplished without directly commenting on the changing state of interaction. M and E first explore the toys in a playroom. Then M picks up a helmet as E examines a kimono that he finds on the clothes rack.

M- (Puts helmet on and walks toward E, extends arms to the sides, smiles and exclaims) [I'm] Superman! Who are you?

E- (As he puts a kimono on, he declares) Superboy.

M- You change into Superman when you grow-up Superboy.

As evidenced in this example, pretend play begins after one of the players announces his pretend identity. Clearly, E's message [I'm] "Superman! Who are you?" is not a direct invitation to pretense, such as the message "Let's pretend to be superheroes." However, the context and the way in which E declares to be Superman is taken as an invitation to play. In fact, in the ensuing play session the boys engage in an extensive dramatization of superheroes.

Children follow similar procedures in making transitions to the pretend mode after play is interrupted by an unexpected event. According to Schwartzman (1978) and others (e.g., Wolf & Pusch, 1983) children create new themes to incorporate the interrupting event into the ongoing activity. In one example, Schwartzman found that, when one of the children fell on the ground unexpectedly, the other children immediately changed the play theme by making what Schwartzman calls maintenance statements (e.g., "Daddy hurt himself; quick, Mary, bring the bandages" p. 239). In this way, children give the message that they are back in the pretend mode after the interruption.

These findings suggest that initiating social pretense is one type of adjustment to the overtures of a play partner and changing circumstances. Children accomplish this adjustment without openly talking about the incongruencies between their scripts and without disrupting the activity when there are unexpected events. Instead, by giving predominantly nonverbal messages that they want to play, or by talking indirectly about the unexpected events, children express their desire to engage in pretend play. For example, I have observed boys raise their eyebrows, open their eyes widely, stare at a certain point, and breathe deeply as they prepare to "fly" (Göncü, 1983). Those who pretend to be mothers usually talk to their "babies" with a low and soft voice and bend towards the babies in showing their affection (Miller & Garvey, 1984). Finally, girls who get ready for a pretend marriage make sure that they walk graciously in their high heel shoes as they practice the marriage numerous times in front of the mirror. In sum, the unspoken convention seems to involve giving the message "This is play" through facial expressions, changing intonation patterns, and exaggerated movements (Giffin, 1984; Sutton-Smith, 1983).

Planning and Expanding Social Pretend Play

The processes of initiating and planning social pretend play are inextricably connected. Indeed, children may initiate social pretense by expressing their plans. Regardless of the sequence of initiation and planning, however, the planning of social pretense is based on direct and explicit forms of communication. Increasing evidence suggests that preschool children devote a great deal of talk to the joint construction and maintenance of their play (Field, DeStefano, & Koewler, 1982; Göncü & Kessel, 1985; McLoyd, 1980), as evidenced in the following example.

J an A are in the kitchen corner of the preschool playroom. A initiates the play interaction by proposing a plan for a pretend party.

A- Hey, J, pretend we're gonna have a party tonight. (Rolls rolling pin on the table.)

J- I know, this, this is the food we're having for the party. (Puts a piece of playdough in the teapot and places the pot on the stove.)

A- Yeah, yeah, this is the food that we're having for the party tonight. We gotta clean up the room. Or, or nobody or the kids won't want to play. So, clean it up.

J- These go here. (Starts moving toys around.)

A- And this goes here, this goes here, this goes there. (Stacks blocks up.)

A- (Looks around to make sure that the room is clean, then turns to J.) Come on J, let's go cook. (Pats J on the back).

J- Okay.

A- Wait!...I'm gonna put this over here. (Puts up a toy.)

J- (Starts singing.) Cooking's gonna be good tonight. Put this to cover it. (Puts a cup on the teapot.) Okay. All done.

After having prepared the room for the party, the boys engage in extensive planning of cooking for the party. They make "hot dogs" first.

A- (Rolls playdough on the table.)

J- Yeah, that needs to be rolled. When you get it all the way rolled take it out and put it in the teapot. This is rolled down hot dogs. (Shows a piece of playdough to A and then puts it in a pan.)

A- Here's,here's, a hot dog. (Gives J a piece of playdough.)

Then the children make "cupcakes."

J- We're gonna make some cupcakes too.

A- I know--that's what I'm making right now.

J- Okay.

Finally, they make "chocolate pudding."

J- (Beats playdough with a mixer). Schchch [Mixing sounds]. Now we need... (Puts mixer on the table). This is going to be chocolate pudding.

A- Okay.

Initial planning of the party is now completed.

J- A, all these things, we're getting ready to go the party,ain't we? We're gonna have a fun time, ain't we? We're gonna have a party at a disco place?

A- We're gonna have a party at our house.

J- It'll be fun dancing, won't it?

The party starts at A's signal.

A- I'm already through cooking.
Somebody's already here. "Come in."
(Pretends to open the door and invites
the imaginary guest ins

Consonant with an interpretation that draws from both script and affective theories, planning in play can be seen as a process of explicit negotiations on the basis of both scripted and personal knowledge. Detailed examinations indicate that the planning process is prefixed by general statements that evoke script-like structures for children's current and ensuing activities. However, once the general content of the play interaction is determined, children make reference to their own personal experiences in determining how play should evolve. For example, a statement such as "Hey, J, pretend that we're goin' to a party tonight" cues the children to determine the general course of action in play as similar to the action in a real party. Simultaneously, the same statement allows each player to talk about personal experiences and concerns (such as cooking, cleaning, and dancing) in the course of such play. In the view presented here, the unfolding of play is dependent upon the degree of consensus reached between play partners regarding possible discrepancies in their understanding of events.

Evidence exists that determination of general play content by evoking scripts is developmentally determined. Children younger than 3 years of age do not make explicit statements in expressing play content (Fein, Moorin, & Enslein, 1982). Instead, they adopt roles and use speech registers in planning their pretend interaction, as evidenced in doll play (Miller & Garvey, 1984). After 3 years of age, however, children express explicitly their desire to engage in particular play episodes. Several researchers have found that, between 3 and 5 years, children's plan

statements establish general scripts for social pretense (Field et al., 1982; Gearhart, 1979; Göncü & Kessel, 1984; Sachs, Goldman, & Chaille, 1984). This finding is in keeping with the theoretical views (e.g., Nicolich, 1977; Piaget, 1962) that pretend play themes become increasingly collective after 3 years of age.

The second step in the planning of social pretend play involves negotiating the course of action. The fact that children agree on a common play script does not mean that the ensuing play interaction is smooth. Each child's understanding and personal experience regarding the agreed-upon play theme may be different on many grounds. Therefore, it is plausible that, in the most ideal form of play planning, each player expresses his or her own plan, finds out about the partner's plan, and then negotiates a shared plan. In this sense, planning negotiations can be based on personal rather than common knowledge.

Gearhart (1979) provided an empirical evaluation of how children at 3, 5, and 6 years of age plan dyadic role play in the context of a pretend grocery store. She identified two general steps in children's planning. The first step, prearrangements, involves public announcements of what partners want to play (e.g., "I'm buying the food. Now you take it."). The second step involves negotiation of shared plans. While all the age groups studied consistently announced their play plans, 3-year-olds and most of the 5-year-olds did not seem to consider the possibility that their partners might have their own agenda for play. In contrast, these children informed their partners about procedures for role play. Only 6-year-old children negotiated shared plans by expressing their own play plans first and then compromising such plans according to the experiences and intentions of their play partners.

These findings suggest that there are identifiable developmental patterns in the planning of social pretend play. Before 3 years of age, children begin to play without establishing a shared context for their interactions. Between 3 and 5 years, children's efforts to reach a mutually acceptable play niche are evidenced in their general plan statements and developing negotiations. During the preschool years, children begin to talk about their personal experiences in terms that are relevant to their play partners. At 6 years of age, children openly discuss idiosyncrasies deriving from their personal backgrounds and resolve conflicts in their attempt to develop shared play plans.

One set of questions still remains, however. Why do children choose certain scripts rather than others for their play? How do they determine mutually agreed-upon ways of conducting their play? What criteria do children use in determining the appropriateness of their actions for the ongoing play script? What, in summary terms, are the bases of their negotiations?

These questions are now being explored by researchers espousing the affective theory of play (Fein, 1985; Piaget, 1962). The answer to the question concerning children's choice of scripts comes from Piaget: The novel experiences that are emotionally meaningful to children constitute the background of children's play scripts. According to Piaget (1962), one function of imaginative play is to assimilate to reality. In other words, Piaget regards play as an activity in which the child imposes on the immediate environment and actual experience a structure that is totally under his or her control (Fein, in press). Because of this nature of play, some researchers (e.g., Fein, 1975) have called play a transformational activity. In transforming the environment and actual experience, the child

tests his or her mastery over past events and affect associated with it. For example, Fein(in press)claims that play is an arena for the child to use the immediate environment in the way he or she wants to recreate and reconstruct what has happened in the past. In turn, this process of reconstruction helps the child to understand and regulate inner affective life. Such an affective function of play has been explored recently by Field and Reite (1984) in a study of 22- to 60-month-old firstborn children's reactions to the arrival of a new sibling. In comparing parent-child play during the mothers' prehospitalization, hospitalization, and post hospitalization, the researchers found that children's aggression and anxiety deriving from the arrival of a sibling were expressed in their play. Following the sibling's birth, decreases took place in the frequency of cooperative play, visual orientation, and suggestions for play themes occurring between the parents and the older child. Also, qualitative analyses revealed that firstborn children pretended that their mothers and siblings were in accidents, thus possibly expressing their frustration at having to share parental affection with a new sibling. This evidence is consistent with theoretical claims that play serves an emotional release function (Piaget, 1962; Vygotsky, 1978) and that play scripts are based on previous personal experience.

How can such a personal experience be a criterion in determining the course of action in social pretense? Corsaro (1983) explored this question in an ethnographic examination of the play of preschool girls. In this study, one of the 3-year-old girls constantly attempted to incorporate a brother theme into an ongoing script dealing with television. This attempt did not receive any response from the other players. In fact, although the given child insisted on pretending to see her brother on the television, the other girls constantly ignored her overtures.

In an interview with the mother, Corsaro found out that the birth of a new baby brother had taken place before the play session was conducted. Indeed, the mother also reported that the girl saw her new sibling on a television monitor at the hospital. Leaving the interpretation of why the older child wanted to pretend that her baby brother was on television, Corsaro concluded that, in order to share an experience with other children in play, a script about which all children are knowledgeable must be found. To Corsaro's conclusion I will also add the point that, once a mutually agreeable play script is established, the players must also find appropriate ways of talking about the affect associated with such a script.

Consider the following exchange between two 5-year-old girls as an example of how, once a play script is evoked, children negotiate their play through the expression of appropriate information and related affect.

M and R are in the kitchen corner of the preschool playroom. As R makes pretend eggs at the table, the following conversation takes place:

M- Somebody is listening at the door.
(Looks at the door.)

R- Ahh. (Whispers in M's ear as she pretends to be afraid.)

M- (Goes over to the door, braces her back against it.) Want me to call the police?

R- Yeah. (Very quietly.)

M- Lock the door and call the police.
(Makes sure that the door is locked.)

R- (Intensely watches M.)

M- (Comes to the table and picks up the telephone receiver.) Hello, oh it's, will you get the police? (She is out of breath.) Please come and get him because we live on Southwest Freeway. Will you hurry up and get him? (Pauses.) That's all right, okay bye-bye. That's the police. (To R.) They live at Southwest by our house. Know what! Remember that one!...

R- They live up there, right?

M- Yeah, remember we went there. (Acts scared.)

R- Yeah, and there was a widdy fight.

M- Yeah, remember, so remember.

R- Because that's when we come there they put somebody in jail.

The episode begins when M evokes a threat script by announcing that somebody is listening at the door. Then both children decide that they should call the police in order to avoid the source of threat, an imaginary person. The episode ends when R mentions that somebody was put in jail. The children's negotiations in this brief exchange reveal information about their script-like knowledge in defending themselves against a potential threat. Also, such negotiations may express these children's concerns regarding the possibility that their homes may be broken into. Further, it seems that as M cues R by saying, "Remember...so remember" she is both probing R to contribute to the developing script and also providing grounds for the expression of fright, an affect embedded within the context of their pretend interaction. The consensus between these children regarding the unfolding of the play event and the feelings

associated with it allows them to engage in a sustained sequence of pretend interactions. This example suggests that social pretense requires affective as well as cognitive synchrony between players. It seems that in social pretense the suitability of the individual player's affect to the ongoing pretend theme of the group is a criterion in determing whether such affect should be incorporated into play (Fein, 1985). In order to engage in social pretense, players must reach a consensus not only on how they should represent an event but also on how they feel about it.

In analyzing children's play negotiations, much emphasis has been given to the analysis of scripted event representations (e.g., Bretherton, 1984). Recent examinations consistently show that with increasing age the coherence and communicability of play scripts increase significantly. This is evidenced in the increasing degree of sophistication in children's pretend phone conversations (Garvey & Berndt, 1975), cooking and baking (Nelson & Seidman, 1984), doctor-patient role play (Sachs et al., 1984), and mother-baby role play (Bretherton, 1984; Dunn & Dale, 1984; Miller & Garvey, 1984). These findings collectively indicate that children jointly represent events in their play with an increasing degree of complexity between 3 and 5 years of age. However, it remains to be explored what kind of personal experience and affect are expressed and shared in play. It is not yet known how each player learns to express private and personal matters in ways that are meaningful to other players. In future research, it will be especially informative to specifically focus on the processes by which children express, discuss with others, and change the way they feel about people, events, and objects.

Termination of Social Pretend Play

Termination of pretend play is perhaps the least understood phase of social pretense. Studies examining the termination of completed sequences of pretend play report that children terminate play in ways similar to their initiation of pretense. Goncu and Kessel(in preparation)report that, in the play of 3- and 5-year olds, less than 1% of the players' total utterances are termination statements (e.g., "I'm not playing in the kitchen anymore"). Termination of pretend play due to disagreements between players has not yet been explored. Although the study of negotiations has gained recent currency in the study of play, it is not known how negotiations may lead to termination. It is, however, plausible to hypothesize that lack of minimal shared knowledge and affect may lead to termination of pretense (Fein, 1985; Garvey & Berndt, 1975; Schwartzman, 1978). The following exchange between two 5-year-old girls illustrates how a play episode can be terminated before it develops.

R- You're the mother and I'm the mother and we don't have no children (Holds a ballet tutu.)

A- Yes we do, we're going to get some. (Putting a hat on.) 'Cause we're going to have a baby soon. Only I am because my mommy is going to have a baby soon. (Very loudly.)

R- Yeah. (Quietly.)

A- Did you know that? (Angrily asks the researcher.)

Researcher-Not really.

A- Well, she is. (In a low voice.)

This script of mother play was immediately aborted after A declared, "I'm going to play with this [a purse]" following her brief exchange with

the researcher. R's desire to play mothers with no children and A's revealing statement that "they are going to have baby" created a conflict. Indeed, A's loud and angry tone seemed to convey the message that, regardless of whether they would have children or not, she was not going to play "mothers." The fact that A's mother was pregnant at the time may reinforce the interpretation that R's suggestion triggered angry emotions from A. The incongruence between girls in the way they felt about playing mothers brought this conservation to an end.

Conclusions

A complete cycle of social pretend play unfolds in terms of four phases: formation of play groups, transition to the pretend mode, planning and maintaining play, and, finally, terminating play. Children also negotiate with one another in moving from one phase of play to another in the course of pretend interaction.

Although social pretense unfolds in terms of four phases, it is essential to note that not every example of social pretense involves all four phases. Indeed, it is often the case that preschool playgroups attempt to maintain themselves without allowing newcomers, thus skipping the first phase (Corsaro, 1979). Furthermore, I do not mean to suggest that the four phases of play occur in a sequential fashion. Not so surprisingly, some of these phases may coincide. For example, preschoolers sometimes make the transition into the pretend mode by expressing their plans or symbolic representations (Göncü & Kessel, 1984). Finally, play can be terminated before it completes its due course. In the event that potential players cannot define a shared pretend theme or disagree regarding the course of action, play may come to an end before it begins.

Regardless of whether the four phases are present or not within a play relationship, each phase requires negotiations of a different sort. In the beginning of play, negotiations are based on determining potential players. These negotiations are conducted implicitly, and they lead to a predictable result. If the entering child expresses his or her interest in participating in the group activity in terms of a script common to the preschool peer group, that child will be accepted. Otherwise, he or she will be rejected.

The content and communicative form of negotiations change as play evolves (Kelly-Byrne, 1984). Survival in the play group and maintenance of play depends on the degree of relevance to other players. Unless a minimal degree of shared understanding is assured regarding the choice of events, knowledge about the chosen event, the affect associated with it, and an appropriate way of talking about it, play comes to an end.

Depending upon the degree of shared representation of events (Nelson & Gruendel, 1981), affect (Fein, 1985; in press) and forms of communication (Göncü & Kessel, 1984), children's play interaction may take different forms. For example, if play is based on explicitly communicated familiar events and is devoid of deeply felt personal variations, play interaction may be based on a sequence of actions, as the script theory predicts. However, with an increasing degree of personal involvement and discrepancy regarding the play script and affect, children may seek to develop a mutually acceptable play text. In such an attempt, the proposed scripts may be changed, expanded, transformed, or completely given up. It is at this point that play will be a free-flowing activity, as the affective theory predicts.

Existing findings suggest that the nature of play interaction presents developmental patterns. During infancy, symbolic representations are based on unique personal experiences (See Fein, 1981). However, during the preschool years, children find shared ways of talking about daily events (Nelson & Seidman, 1984) and also use invented themes (Genishi, 1983). Additionally, there is evidence that children's symbolic representations (Watson & Fischer, 1977) and play conversations (Göncü & Kessel, 1984) become increasingly sequential and continuous with age. Thus, it is likely that play becomes more scripted with age, although it retains its personal qualities.

Future research needs to identify developmental changes in the evolution of play interaction. Currently, there is little information available on how children reach agreements with one another as play progresses. The processes by which preschool children initiate, maintain, and terminate play and the cognitive and affective foundations of shared scripts need further investigation. If social pretense is an expression of shared meanings, future studies must determine how children collectively think, feel, and talk about their experiences in play. We need to examine what knowledge and related affect children bring to play, how they talk about such knowledge and affect in play, and, finally, how they change as a result of their play interactions. It stands to reason that dynamic analysis of pretend play will illuminate not only the phenomenon itself, but will also yield information on how much children know about their culture.

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