Imagination, Playfulness, and Creativity in Children's Play with Different Toys

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Based on a four-month experimental study of preschool children's play with creative-construction and social-fantasy toys, the author examines the influence of both types of toys on the play of preschool children. Her comparative analysis considers the impact of transformative play on the development of imagination during play activities and explores ways to support children's playful initiatives. She argues that, by transgressing play scenarios, children often develop a more playful attitude. Toys, imagination, and the setting are important factors in the play children initiate, and transgressing the immediate play scenario affects each of these factors. **Key words**: creative construction; social fantasy; negotiation in play; transgression and childhood development

An Inquiry into Play

IT IS OFTEN SAID that only a fine line separates genius from madness, implying that a limit exists to how far we can transgress rules and norms. Today we understand this old saying as expressing the closeness of creativity to deviation. By adopting Lev S. Vygotsky's concept of creativity as combining in new ways, we might bracket the discussion of deviation and turn our attention to transgression, creativity, and the effects of toys on the development of the creative mind.

Many kinds of work require creative skills and innovation. However, one might argue that, for children, creativity produces a feeling that they can contribute to their surroundings and gives them a sense of control, of being the co-creators of their world. In this article, I discuss how the young develop creative skills during the various unstructured social situations of childhood. More broadly, I focus on the role—positive, negative, or neutral—that play with different types of materials has in producing transgressive acts. By *transgression*, I mean the novel acts children bring into a play, and I argue that children need

to transgress the limits of existing play scenarios. In other words, this study considers the way children use particular materials to explore their creative imaginations. I understand *creative imagination* in children's play to mean the production of rich combinations we observe when they are externalized.

In Scandinavian kindergartens, which in Denmark involves kids aged three to six and includes 97 percent of them (DST 2013), children commonly play with toys everyday. I designed this study to capture the development of children's play over time and to help analyze the way imagination is linked to the development of children's creativity. The research aims to provide a better understanding of the relationship between children's imagination and their creativity by studying their play with two types of play materials—social-fantasy objects and creative-construction toys. The study is both theoretical and experimental. To show how play externalizes imagination, I link the concept of imagination to the motives children have to play, and I establish the link as the basis for understanding the way children create motives during play. Imagination is related to playfulness, which this study defines as a child's attitude towards change during play. The study draws on the analytical distinction of children's focus during play that Ivy Schousboe (2013) introduced as part of her theory of the spheres of reality, which I integrate into a model of transformative play.

The experimental part this project involved children playing over two months with a specific type of toy, lending support to the notion that children both challenge and build on collective scenarios during play. I examined whether different types of toys encourage an increase in suggestions about play over time, and I considered the how toys influence the way children play.

This study looks at how children display their creative imaginations so that we might better understand their motives and activities in relation to specific types of toys. The study showed that children's tendency to develop play scenarios correlates with the growth of playful attitudes.

Play and Imagination

Vygotsky describes play as leading development during childhood, and he discusses how in imaginary situations, children derive the utmost pleasure from subordinating themselves to the rules. In other words, we can understand the essential attribute of play in such a way that play rules become the motive for action (Vygotsky 1978). Given Vygotsky's emphasis on imagination, play offers

an opportunity for a child to become a creator of rules and of imaginative play scenarios. During play, children also explore imaginative, creative scenarios they find interesting and meaningful. Children employ creative activities and imaginative playfulness (Schousboe 2013) to make everyday activities enjoyable and meaningful (Alcock 2007; Hedegaard 2012a) and, from a broader perspective, to experience situational involvement (Olwig 2011).

When children play, whether at home, in kindergarten, or elsewhere, we observe imagination externalized into action (Vygotsky 1967). During play, children establish play scenarios to perform their imagined and otherwise unrealizable desires: "Play is such that the explanation for it must always be that it is the imaginary, illusory realization of unrealizable desires" (7–8). In this study, I understand an individual's desires as an individual's motives. Leontiev (1978) talks about a distinction between primary (biological) needs and needs on a personal level. For the purposes of this study, I will use the term *needs* only in this latter sense. (For an in-depth discussion of needs and motives, see Davydov, Zinchenko, and Talyziana 1983; Leontiev 1978; Hedegaard 2012a). From this perspective, play is the externalization of imagination into action, and—following Vygotsky—in this study, imagination entails the fulfillment of needs, which are defined as motives for action (Vygotsky 1978; Hedegaard 2012a). Children, in their quotidian lives, inhabit social situations that remain constant, day in and day out. These recurrent social structures do not leave room for a child to act out all his or her desires. In this sense, play is directed by needs a child cannot meet immediately. Instead, these needs are figuratively addressed during play. Thus, a child's directedness is focused toward that which is outside the recurrent structures of everyday life and its practices and leads potentially to acts in response to these structures and practices.

On a phylogenetic level, Vygotsky (1997) notes that humankind actively adapts the environment to its needs. On an ontogenetic level, imagination develops as a psychological function throughout a lifespan and depends on experience. As a higher mental function, imagination involves consciously directed thought processes that are also developed in play when children negotiate and formulate play rules.

When children play with toys, the meaning of an object can change, as can children's perceptions and use of objects (Wartofsky 1979). These perceptions and uses may violate the rules and norms outside or inside the play activity, thereby leading to novel uses of an object. The meaning of objects is a central point in Vygotsky's conceptualization of the relation between play and imagina-

tion (Vygotsky 1967, 1990, 2004). During play activity, a child might use one object as a substitute for another. Thus, play is "a novel form of behavior in which the child is liberated from situational constraints through his activity in an imaginary situation" (1967, 11).

Using Vygotsky's argument that a child changes the meaning of an object (a toy) during play, we can adopt Wartofsky's (1979) theory of perception to engage the concept of pivot (Vygotsky 1967) as the use of an object for production and communication in relation to rules outside the play activity. Elsewhere (Møller, in press), I argue that creation in children's play is the motive for establishing a play scenario. The development of the play scenario is transformed when the constraints of the play scenario, such as the perceived possible uses of an artifact or the rules, are transgressed and children's motives and imagination lead the activity.

In what follows, I present imagination as a key aspect of development within play. I understand imagination as being intertwined with creative activity, which I conceptualize in relation to spheres of reality and the development of playfulness. I address the development of children's imagination through the transgression of play scenarios (i.e., children's transformative play) and connect children's creativity to the development of their thinking (Vygotsky 1990).

Conceptualizing Imagination in Relation to the Spheres of Reality

We understand children's challenging and transgressional activities as conditions for the maintenance of a broader and more flexible spectrum of managing possible changes, "the result of which is not reproductions of what happened in experience but the creation of new forms or activity" (Vygotsky 1967, 5). This may be the case when children explore individual ideas within a social setting (such as play) as well as in adult settings. Consistent with this notion, scholars have argued that play is important in the development of children's planning skills and their coordination of plans with others (Barker-Sennett, Matusov, and Rogoff 1992, 2008; Göncü 1993).

To study children's imagination in fantasy play, Schousboe (2013) formed a theory based on the direction of children's focus during play. She draws an analytic distinction between three spheres—imagination, staging, and reality. These spheres exist in dynamic interchange and are always present simultane-

ously; that is, children are never caught up in only one of these spheres. Both adults and children know that play and reality differ. When Sørensen (2013) asks two children about their play on a climbing frame, the children answer, "We are not playing, we are practicing." However, both adults and children know that this is a fine line. The analytical concepts (i.e., imagination, staging, and reality) can be understood as modes of an individual's relations with the world. These do not cease to exist when children leave childhood; from a developmental perspective, the sphere of staging contains a creative, imaginative perspective consistent with an adult world based on agreed-upon rules and myths (Lyotard 1984). By embracing this perspective, we can understand children's play (in its different developmental periods) and adult play as mutually interdependent.

Furthermore, the perspective might rise from an individual level to a relational level that involves playing or developing a playful attitude. We might consider the conditions for children's acceptance of changes in play scenarios in relation to playfulness. Thus, playfulness relates to transgressions and the acceptance of changes in play scenarios.

The Development of Playfulness and Creativity through Transgressions

Novelty and playfulness, in combination with engagement, lead children to transgress and return to a play scenario repeatedly in such a way that the play changes character. This process facilitates the transformation of both the play scenario and the function of perceived objects, which feeds back into the play scenario, creatively developing the play (Wartofsky 1979; Vygotsky 1967). Transformative play entails a developmental condition in which children can imaginatively try out suggestions. When it is introduced, this condition may be transgressive from the perspective of the play scenario. Children can therefore work with their imaginations based on the rudiments of ideas before taking a position to act out these ideas. An example from the play group study involves the combination of a hairdressing salon with a veterinary practice. Using Wartofsky's theory (1979) of artifacts as mediating the relations between a person and objects, we can observe how children use artifacts in their imagination while externalizing their understanding of the world through communicative and productive acts. The play group can then evaluate these acts during play and reject or build on them. By acting out novel forms of play, these acts become

part of a child's repertoire, which might be expressed or acted out in real-life situations. Thus, these acts transgress the play scenario, which initially supports the child's work on the artifact and "constitute[s] a domain in which there is a free construction in the imagination of rules and operations different from those adopted for ordinary 'this-worldly' praxis" (209).

As shown in figure 1, we might understand transformative play as functioning in several dimensions. In a basic sense, it opens up the play scenario for new and creative acts as the prerequisite for transgressing its norms and rules. We can understand this as playfulness. On the group level (negotiation), playfulness functions as a prerequisite for transgressions transforming the play scenario. From this perspective, an individual child's initiation of novel acts
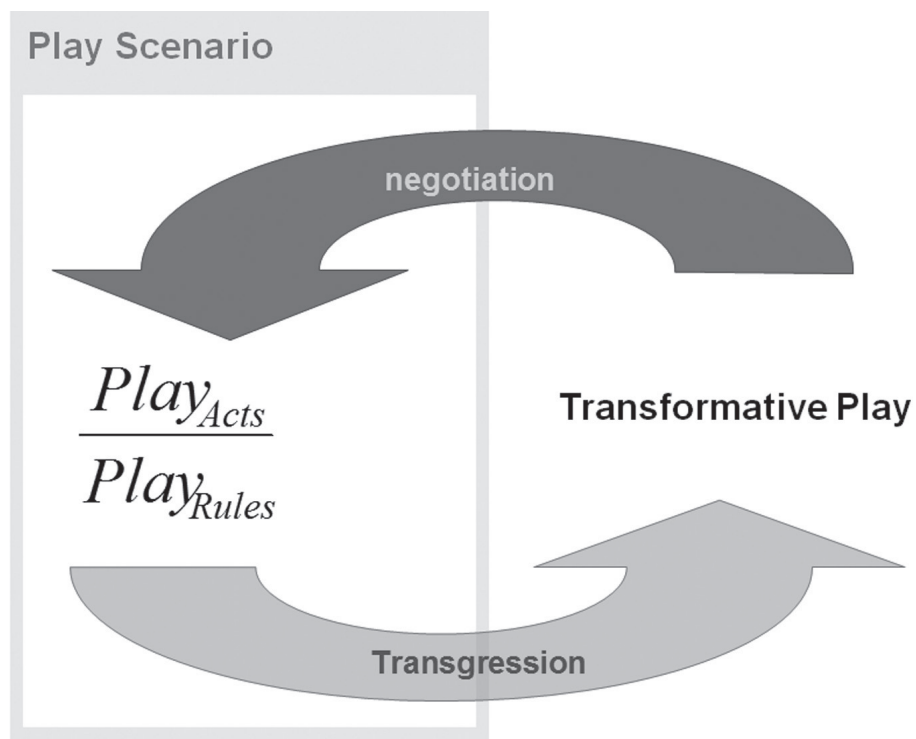

Figure 1. Model showing how children's transgressional acts transform play scenarios

meet the group's understanding of the play scenario and the collective understanding of the possibility of changing this scenario. We can observe this shared understanding in negotiations regarding the introduction of novel play acts, including both explicit negotiation through verbal communication and tacit acceptance or rejection of the novel acts. Playfulness is therefore understood as a willingness to affirm transgressive acts, thereby transforming the play scenario such that the transgression can be included in the play scenario to ensure the continuation of the play.

Rules can be determined negatively by observing acts. For example, when children act in such a way that other children reject that act (either verbally or simply by not repeating that act), we determine a negative limit of the play scenario and thus of the rules governing it. Likewise, when an act leads to a negotiation of that act, it is categorized as transgressive and negatively defines the rules of the scenario. While playing, children thereby establish, negotiate, re-create, and explain rules and roles observed in their everyday lives (Packer 1994; Sutton-Smith 1997).

On a larger scale, consider Pablo Picasso's display of creative imagination and the transgression of rules and norms. After painting within the established tradition, he introduced cubism, in which he creatively combined traditional styles (perspective) in new ways, deconstructing and reconstructing the surface perspective. At the same time, this was a transgression of the traditional rules of painting. He thereby negotiated new rules for painting by re-creating and expanding the domain of painting and our ways of looking at art.

I undertook a four-month experimental play group study that examined differences in the use of toys and the ways toys influence children's interactions during play. The toys were carefully selected to support either creative construction or social fantasy play.

Design and Data Collection

Initially, I conducted a one-month ethnographic prestudy in which I participated in the children's daily life in kindergartens. The study took place at typical Danish kindergartens. Children spend most of their waking life in kindergartens (Olwig 2011). Hence, the role of kindergarten, according to Gulløv and Højlund (2005), works as a socializing agent. Everyday kindergarten life is

structured around an organized timetable and individual physical spaces that facilitate discipline but also involve a tradition of "an adult-child relationship of interdependence that allows for—even necessitates—a great deal of give and take, as both parties negotiate their understanding of the civilizing process and the terms under which it can unfold" (Olwig 2011, 125). This give and take, this ongoing negotiation between children and adults, gives the children a sense of the kindergarten as a place of their own.

In the kindergartens, I tried to appear relaxed to let the professionals (e.g., the kindergarten teachers who assisted me in forming groups and confirming the children's consent) know I valued their knowledge and, at the same time, I attempted to make a positive impression on the children. I based my approach on ethnographic work about how to obtain access as the "children's researcher" (Emond 2006; Bang 2010; Hedegaard, pers. comm.). I introduced myself as an adult who was interested in play and who intended to join the children later in a play project. In Danish kindergartens, children are accustomed to the presence of teaching students who join them during their training period (e.g., to perform "play and learn" projects) and kindergarten teachers or assistants who lead various workshops in such activities as decorating Easter eggs or making Christmas gifts. In the prestudy, I used an interaction-based research method (Hedegaard and Fleer 2008; Hedegaard 2012b; Bang 2008, 2010) that focused on the relations between the children, objects, and settings. The method included written interaction-based observation with the subsequent application of video recordings instead of written notes and the use of photos and additional field notes to inform the play project. I did not use a tripod or unassisted camera to avoid imposing a feeling of intimidation or surveillance among the children (Ratcliff 2007). After I obtained parental consent, the study relied on interaction-based video recordings along with photos and supplementary protocol notes (Raitilla 2012; Emond 2006; Fleer 2012; Goldman 2007) until the experimental portion of the play project. Given my interaction as a researcher with the children, I always kept the camera within their reach, even when I turned it off and put it down. This allowed me, even as researcher, to remain an interested adult (Fleer and Peers 2012). In addition, I never covered my face or distanced myself. If the children asked me for the camera to initiate their own recordings at any time during the four-month period, I handed them the camera with a short introduction. Thus, sporadic child-directed recordings are present throughout the two-month period.

The duration of the experimental play group project (shown in figure 2)

encompassed eight weeks. The project included three groups of children (no more than five in a group) playing with creative-construction toys (e.g., LEGO sets, wooden blocks, and train tracks) and three groups playing with social-fantasy toys (e.g., costumes, fantasy figurines, and teddy bears) twice a week. Kindergarten teachers assembled the six groups by drawing on their knowledge of the children's relations to make the individuals in the groups comparable. When assembled, the groups remained fixed for the duration of the project. I instructed the kindergarten teachers not to compose groups of close friends because research has shown that there is a close connection between the degree of friendship, the quality of play, and children's immersion in play (Sawyer 2009). The two chosen kindergartens, like most Danish kindergartens, did not divide children by gender when planning daily activities. However, to ensure an equal distribution of boys and girls, I asked the kindergarten teachers to form groups of either three boys and two girls or three girls and two boys. In total, seven girls and eight boys played with the social-fantasy toys and seven boys and eight girls played with the creative-construction toys throughout the duration of the experimental play group project.

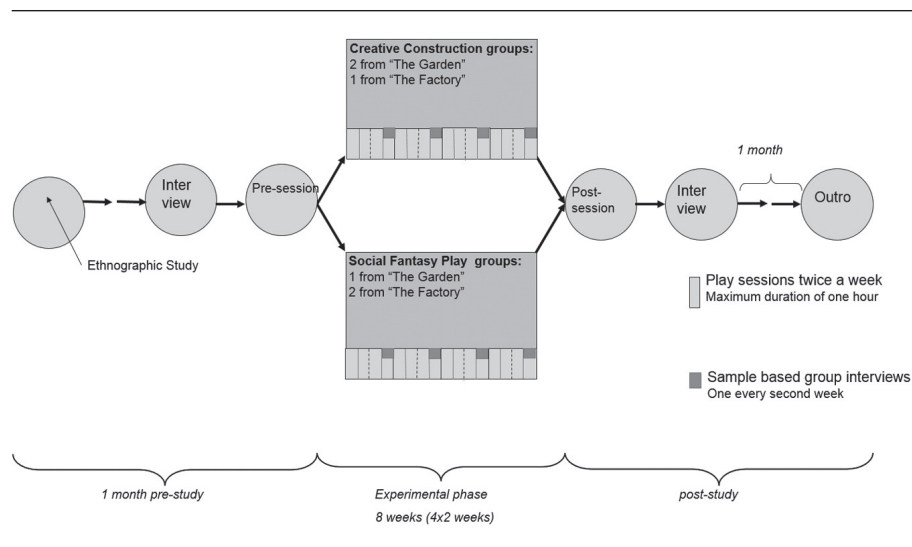I determined the group size of five children in collaboration with kinder-

Figure 2. Overview of experimental play group project

garten teachers. Because I, as the researcher, was responsible for the children, this produced a group size that allowed me to maintain the children's well-being during the sessions. The children were free to leave at their own discretion, and they could bring their own toys if they wished. However, this only happened on two occasions, once when two children each brought a toy, and once when a child brought a teddy bear that she kept by her side during the session. The sessions lasted approximately one hour. Every second week, the toys used (within the types) were changed. New features were added to the toys every week to maintain a more ecological environment (with the empty room resembling a laboratory setting) and to motivate the children and keep the play interesting for them (e.g., using music, movement, or colors).

To support the experience of challenging and building upon collective scenarios during play within the project, the children played twice a week in groups for approximately one hour for ten weeks. To explore the effect of different materials on play, the toys were categorized into social-fantasy and creative-construction toys. I performed a statistical analysis on video data retrieved when the children had been playing for eight weeks.

Analysis

The analysis investigated whether a difference existed in the children's display of creative imagination between the two different types of toys. I selected the data presented in this article from the entire collection of observations and interviews. These data demonstrate examples of creative initiatives and possibilities for increasing the duration and development of play scenarios.

Recoding and Retrieving Video Observations
The data collection of documents, field notes, still pictures, recorded interviews with edited sample collages from the group interviews, and the protocol were assembled concurrently. I recorded categories directly in the video strings in relation to various play styles (i.e., fantasy play, role play, creative-construction play, and game play). These categories became the basis for subsequent levels of analysis and led to the retranscription of the retrieved videos for comparative analysis.

I selected the third play session in each two-week period for further analysis because that was when I added new toys. At that point, the children had been

playing with the toys from the two previous sessions. Each time the toys were changed in the first two play sessions, the change was modeled on a typical controlled study with only one type of toy present. In the third session, something new but similar was added to form a more ecological sample. These four play sessions (a third session out of four sessions with the same category of toys) were condensed into video collages for each of the six groups. I retrieved and transcribed the third play periods in every four sessions in detail to create a comparable collage to follow the development over time. I retrieved the four play periods for each of the six groups at the same session in the time span of the project, concentrating on twenty-minute segments taken from each session after fifteen minutes of play. These samples were retrieved and edited to form a combined collage. The collages were examined group by group, focusing on crisis and play episodes. The results were discussed based on theoretical and empirical considerations regarding the categories of play.

The analysis merged overview protocols, including the selection of the play categories, using previous elements of analysis to describe the similarities to the overall observations. We discussed these protocols and created a data sheet that included the protocol and highlights from the analytical focus of the research protocol and the transcriptions.

Statistical Analysis

For the statistical analysis, I and an independent researcher in philosophy of education separately analyzed and categorized the collected data. We separately viewed the condensed video collages and marked the play categories of each play scenario on a worksheet that included all the categories. The two of us discussed the usefulness of the categories and the coding process. Disagreements in coding led to discussion. The foundation for further analysis of the observations consisted of theoretically suggested categories, categories that arose out of the analysis, and important observations that were treated in previous levels of the analysis. The two of us explored and investigated occurrences of essential categories to identify differences with regard to creativity, playfulness, and the development of the play scenario.

I retrieved types of frequently occurring acts for detailed analysis and used them to represent differences within the data of the two groups. These differences represent the major findings of the experimental portion of the project.

Strategy of the Analysis

In this section, I investigate the categories that emerged from my study of new play acts and transformative play. In observing the children's play, I found the concepts of communication and the production of the object-meaning relation essential to fostering the development of imagination and creative activities in children's play. I highlighted these primary categories in the transcribed video material and analyzed them statistically. Table 1 presents significant categories. The analysis included each of the six groups of children and their play activities within the four detailed transcribed video collages. Other categories include: external and internal group invitations, assistance, conflict, sorting, deorganization, groupings and single play, exclusion, singing, and chatting. Given my

The spheres	**Imagination:** When children focus on the sphere of imagination. Children construct a play scenario and continue to refer to artifacts constructed in the play scenario. **Negotiation:** When children focus on negotiating. These negotiations can refer to both real-world negotiations and constructions and to the play scenario or a future play scenario such as, rules, the meaning of artifacts, acts, and themes. **Reality:** When children refer to real-life chatting or discuss facts with no relation within the other play spheres.
Pivot	**Production:** When an understanding of an artifact is presented through a nonverbal act or a series of acts. **Communication:** When an understanding of an artifact is presented through a verbal act or a series of acts.
Transformative play	**Rejection:** When something offered is rejected such as, something new, an invitation, or an interpretation of the play rules. **Acceptance:** When something offered is accepted, such as something new, an invitation, or an interpretation of the play rules. This can also refer to nonplay activities.
New play acts	**Novelty:** When something not previously introduced in the play session is presented in relation to a play scenario. **Transgression:** When something that transgresses the play rules of a current play scenario is introduced.

Table 1. Categories used for the analysis of children's play with toys

limited the scope in this article, I do not present these latter categories here.

With the help of another researcher, I marked and noted separately novel play acts, transgressive play acts, and acts implying a focus on one of Schousboe's three spheres of imagination, staging, and reality. We recorded these acts in a data worksheet and subsequently conducted T-tests for each of the values to reveal significant differences in the children's play. We found significant differences between the two variations (construction-play toys and social-fantasy play toys).

This analysis defined the child's and play group's focus in accordance with the analytical categories I took from Schousboe. By definition, children are never exclusively directed toward just one sphere; elements of the spheres of imagination, staging, and reality are always present simultaneously. For this reason, I did not consider in the analysis a child's focus in terms of a specific sphere. Instead, I look at a child's predominant focus in relation to these spheres.

The concept of pivot was employed using Wartofsky's theory of perception. Likewise the notion of new play acts was used, through the concepts of novelty and transgression, to refer to the way children build upon each other's suggestions.

In relation to the category of transgression, the rules were determined negatively by identifying (1) responses leading to a transformation of the play scenario, for which the rules were determined retrospectively by the researcher; (2) acts leading to negotiations; and (3) acts leading to an explicit verbal rejection or the children implicitly ignoring the act.

Results

Imagination
In accordance with the quantification of the observations, the social-fantasy

N		Mean	Standard deviation	P
3	Social fantasy	173	47.17	0.029
3	Creative construction	74	20	

Table 2. Mean of acts performed by children with a focus on imagination

	Time	Name	Utterance	Description	Analytical category
57	03.05	Irene	And then... I will fly with summer-wings if anything goes awry and my summer clothes, because I have to. But just remember to bring the clothes back home again.	Is sitting with a pair of fairy wings, which she throws on the floor; she then starts to investigate the pile of toys she has gathered	Imagination, new, communication
58	03.15	Victoria	Yes, If I crash when I am going home, then, then you will call the fire department, right?		Imagination, acceptance, new
59	03.22	Irene	Yes and...		Imagination, acceptance
60	03.23	Victoria	...when I call.		
61	03.24	Irene	Yes then, then quickly, then I say that they must come and get you before you drown with your wings.		Imagination
62	03.32	Victoria	Yes, and my wings...		
63	03.33	Johan	Or I will axe the crocodiles to pieces.	Looks at Victoria, then at Irene	Imagination
64	03.36	Victoria	I already have an axe. Then, I also just need to...		Imagination
65	03.40	Johan	Then, conjure it into a girl Victoria. Conjure it into a girl, the crocodile.		Imagination, new
66	03.46	Victoria	But I have to get the axe. I would rather have my axe instead and hit....		Imagination
67	03.53	Irene	Well, for you it is now sleepy-time.	Looks at Johan	Imagination

Table 3. Play scenario, factory group 1, social-fantasy toys, costume session 3, 12/07/2011

group primarily focused on the sphere of imagination, as shown in the statistical analysis presented in table 2.

Regarding the category referred to as imagination (a primary focus on the sphere of imagination), the social-fantasy groups presented a significantly higher mean score (173, SD 47, with a range of 94) than the creative-construction groups (74, SD 20, with a range of 40) ($t(4)$ = -3.34, p = 0.029).

A qualitative example follows to elaborate on the statistical finding. In fantasy-play example 1, the use of negotiation is less predominant within the sphere of imagination. The social-fantasy group scenarios included negotiations, but the children's focus did not change from the sphere of imagination.

Example 1—Participants: Victoria, Irene, and Johan. The group began a role-playing game that became fantasy play. Victoria, the big-sister fairy, went to a disco in a clock tower while her mother (Irene) and baby

Figure 3. Factory group 1, social-fantasy play

brother (Johan) remained at home on a mobile connection, ready to assist her if she crashed into a crocodile pit on her way (see table 3).

In the example of imagination within social-fantasy play presented here, many new aspects are introduced. However, the negotiation of these aspects is brief, and the children retain their focus on the sphere of imagination while negotiating. The scenario develops with the aim of continuing the play. Although the children negotiate (lines 57, 58, and 59), this negotiation is conducted using a simple "yes," building directly on the novel or transgressive suggestions of the other children.

Playful initiatives are often initially accepted and supported within the group; however, they are often not developed further, and the children sometimes even neglect them within the continued play activity. Nevertheless, children's suggestions become more frequent, and the likelihood of rejection is low unless the sphere of staging undergoes a change of focus. While playing, children introduce what they find pertinent, such as wishes, ideas, or, according to Vygotsky (1967), needs they would like to fulfill but cannot. It is clear that a playful attitude is analytically linked to the categories of novelty and transgression, enabling children to introduce wishes, ideas, and unfulfilled needs. The focus on the sphere of imagination within the development of play leads to an increase in the introduction and negotiation of new rules.

Communication and Production

Within each session, I categorized as novelty any acts that were presented through the use of objects and used to build on the other children's imaginative scenarios without challenging the established play rules. I categorized acts that

N		Mean	Standard deviation	P
3	Social fantasy	68	17.06	0.026
3	Creative construction	28	10.21	

Table 4. Mean of acts performed by children with a focus on communication and production

violate rules within the play activity or norms as transgression. The results of the reported observations are presented below.

The expression of an object's function, referred to as pivot (categorized as communication and production), has a significantly higher mean (68, SD 17.06, with a range of 33) in the social-fantasy group than in the creative-construction group (28, SD 10.21, with a range of 19) (t[4] = -3.46, p = 0.026). This difference correlates to a significantly higher mean with regard to the focus on the sphere of imagination in comparison with the social-fantasy and creative-construction groups (see table 4).

Production and communication were used to describe how an object's meaning was presented to the group by referring to the way in which children's acts were analyzed in each session. The role that the child fulfills and his or her relation to an object (if the object has changed its meaning) always stems from a relation to the rules. An example of this is presented in table 5.

	Time	Name	Utterance	Description	Analytical category
141	08.35	Irene	It is also that you did not have a midday nap today. That is why you can't sleep... then you can't sleep now. Do you want to watch some more telly, do you? Do you want to watch some Spiderman?	Johan is lying down making baby noises while Irene speaks to him. Victoria goes back to the lower right corner of the room and sits down.	Imagination, production, communication
142	09.00	Johan	Yes.	Irene and Johan crawl out from under the desk.	Imagination, production
143	09.01	Irene	Yes, then we will just flick over to Spiderman (making channel-shifting sound).	Irene picks up the mobile phone and points it straight out while she pushes buttons on it.	Imagination, new, production
144	09.14	Johan		Talks baby talk and points to where Victoria is playing but also in the direction of the imagined TV at the same time.	Imagination, acceptance, production, communication

Table 5. Play scenario, factory group 1, social-fantasy toys, costume session 3, 12/07/2011

Example 2—Participants: Victoria, Irene, and Johan. The three are engaging in fantasy play, with the older fairy sister (Victoria) attending a ball in the clock tower. Meanwhile, her mother (Irene) is tucking the baby (Johan) in at home.

In the example, Irene is talking about turning on a TV while pointing a mobile phone in the direction of the imagined TV and verbalizing a clicking sound. Through her act, she makes the mobile phone into a remote control for the TV, thereby changing the use of the object. She would have been using communication if she had said, "This is the remote control for the TV" because this speech act would indicate how she was using the mobile phone.

Negotiating Transgression

Another group of the categories involve negotiation. It was not as pronounced in the statistical analysis but still varied to a noteworthy degree in the two play groups.

For the categories called negotiation, the social fantasy groups presented a considerably higher mean (68, SD 22.07, with a range of 26) than the creative construction groups (42, SD 13.45, with a range of 44) ($t(4)$ = 1.74, p = 0.156; see table 6).

Novelty is an instance in which a child introduces a new element to the play scenario that complies with the rules of that scenario, whereas transgressions are instances in which a child introduces an element to the scenario that challenges that play scenario by transgressing the implicit or explicit play rules. Transgression is always followed by negotiation, which does not necessarily imply a shift of focus to the sphere of staging. The child's knowledge or sense of the rules

N		Mean	Standard deviation	P
3	Social fantasy	42	13.45	0.156
3	Creative construction	68	22.07	

Table 6. Mean of acts performed by children with a focus on negotiation

	Time	Name	Utterance	Description	Analytical category
20	01.28	Georg	Okay, and then there should also...Can we use a blue inside then?	Georg places a blue block and takes away the lighter block, which he placed earlier.	Negotiation, acceptance, new, production
21	01.36	Albert	No, NO, no, NOOOO, Georg, you are always doing the wrong thing!	Albert removes the blue block Georg just placed. Georg then carefully tries placing the lighter block. After the exclamation, Georg pulls back and just sits and stares at Albert, who continues the construction, while he holds a handful of black blocks in his hand and a single light blue block.	Rejection

Table 7. Play scenario, garden group 2, creative-construction toys, wooden blocks session 3, 11/28/2011

governing the play may be such that he or she does not know that a performed act is actually transgressive for the group; that is, a child might believe that the act complies with the rules.

Notice that new transgressive acts are not always reflected in and easily integrated into a play session because they change significant aspects of the play scenario. Example 4, in which the children are playing with creative-construction toys, clearly demonstrates this difficulty. It is not clear whether Georg himself sees the act as transgressive or if he is attempting to produce his understanding of the current play rules (at the point in line 20 in table 7 when he places a blue block in the foundation of the house that he and Albert are building).

Example 4. Participants: Albert, Georg, Marie, Kim, and Zig-gem.   Albert and Georg have decided to build a house. In this situation, Georg likely thinks he is producing a meaningful act within the play activity without regarding his suggestion as transgressive to the play scenario. It is clear that for Albert, however, Georg's suggestion is a transgressive act. This interpretation becomes very clear in the way Albert reacts by rejecting Georg's productions (line 21). Having to accept this act as meaningful in the activity would mean that

Albert would have to change his plan for the project. This interchange implies that the children do not understand that the material for construction play is open ended, as might otherwise be assumed (e.g., by the way in which building blocks and LEGO sets are marketed). In accordance with the quantitative analysis, the social-fantasy play groups focused on the sphere of imagination, whereas the creative-construction toy groups focused on negotiating the terms of the construction or the play scenario rather than on the sphere of imagination.

When children played with the creative-construction toys, I frequently observed a specific cycle. For example, when Albert and Georg focused on the sphere of imagination, they returned shortly after to focus on the sphere of reality or staging. By contrast, in the example of the fantasy-play group, a clear focus on the sphere of imagination aided the creation of an elaborate, constantly evolving storyline. The degree of engagement I observed, reflected in the multiplicity of categorical acts during the play activity, left almost no room for the children to be distracted or to shift focus to the sphere of staging. Instead, the most novel and even transgressive suggestions were negotiated by being repeated by others and were thus tacitly accepted into the play scenario.

Discussion

Accepting Transgressions of the Play Scenario
For the creative-construction toy groups, it is noticeable that the negotiation of the rules was, to a high degree, settled early during the play session (e.g., when it was decided that Albert and Georg would build a house). This was also apparent in the example of Albert and Georg, in which few new suggestions were accepted. In creative-construction play, children often play alone or in smaller groups. In these smaller groups, the same children usually reject initiatives proposed by others, indicating that they have a plan for the construction that they attempt to put into effect. This pattern establishes a play activity that does not encourage other children to add suggestions, which might encourage children to divide into smaller groups. The children involved may even discourage other children from being playful in a transgressional sense within the group, thereby limiting the scope of possible new acts. Suggestions from children who do not lead the activity appear to transgress the play rules, inadvertently leading to rejection and negatively constituting the play rules. Further, this pattern builds on the indication that a plan of construction is

present and is negotiated early in the session by one or two of the children. It can be argued that the majority of the children's playful suggestions are not actual transgressions but are merely novel in the sense that they elaborate on and explicate the given rules. By not having a clear goal and making things up as they go along, children playing with social-fantasy toys appear to have a broader scope for accepting novelty and transgression in the play scenario. These groups prove to be more playful in a transgressive sense. Supported by the material and the typical type of play suggested within this play style, the focus on relations allows each child to express what he or she finds pertinent even though, as argued earlier, these suggestions are not always adopted by the group. In accordance with Vygotsky, what children find pertinent is given more room to unfold in these groups. In cases in which the group no longer finds these suggestions interesting in relation to the play scenario, they are not repeated.

Transgression

For the social-fantasy group, a superfluous focus on the imaginative sphere keeps the play going. The acceptance of transgressions maintains the focus on the sphere of imagination, leading the play scenario to change throughout the session as it develops (in example 1) from a simple role-playing game about mothers and children to include fantasy stories. For example, Victoria suddenly introduces an alligator pit into the play, thereby changing the possibilities for the content of the entire play scenario. Although this change does not lead to an entirely new theme, it does lead to a set of new play rules that are used in conjunction with the old play rules. These new play rules are integrated with the old rules, creating a much broader space for meaningful acts within the play scenario. Here, the play scenario becomes a mixture of mother and child roles and a fairy tale involving a fairy princess flying to a ball in a tower, which leads to a radical change in the role of the mother. The mother must also be able to fly; therefore, the girl playing the mother finds fairy wings to rescue the daughter if the daughter calls her on her mobile phone. In relation to negotiation, this concrete transgressive act was conjured by communication. Irene exhibits only a very brief pause before she reacts by building on the newly changed play scenario. Instead of shifting her focus to the sphere of staging, Irene almost instantly reestablishes the play scenario as meaningful, and the transgressive act now makes sense within the transformed play scenario.

Conclusion: The Development of Playfulness and the Importance of Setting

I have argued that the concepts of transgression and novelty are intertwined with playfulness. In this study, when children suggested something new within the play scenario without questioning the rules of the play but instead attempting to avoid challenging their own rules or rules set by others, they did not develop the play scenario; at most, they elaborated on the existing play scenario. The elaboration deepened the scenario and made the rules explicit and more defined but rarely added new aspects. Such an approach was typical for the creative-construction groups.

The situation in which one child or a few children lead or plan the play indicates a change in the dynamic with respect to the ways in which other children's transgressions function to confirm play rules through rejection in the creative-construction groups. Here, transgressions function by clarifying the rules and play criteria, leading to a more well-defined play scenario that includes more explicit rules (although these rules are defined negatively). In accordance with the significant measures found in the quantitative data analysis, groups that played with social-fantasy toys employed more object-meaning acts and imaginative suggestions within the play scenarios. This finding contrasts with the findings for the children who played with creative-construction toys. The latter group of children used a large part of their play sessions to focus on the sphere of staging and explicating the rules and goals of the play scenario. The creative-construction groups were more engaged in negotiations and remained focused on the sphere of staging during play. In this case, the coordination of plans with others was not part of a shared imaginative scenario but was directed by only a few children. The findings presented here demonstrate that the children remained focused on different spheres depending on the type of toy with which they played. The children who engaged in creative-construction play referred to the goals, rules, and regulations of the play during negotiation, whereas the children who played with social-fantasy toys developed the rules of the play scenario rather than referring to the existing rules. Activities such as social-fantasy play call attention to the negotiation of creative initiatives while retaining a focus on the shared scenario. Compared with play activities that are not focused on children's initiatives, social-fantasy play activities support creative imagination.

Drawing on the results, I propose that playful transgressions in transformative play can be related to creating a sense of a situation as one's own. This

finding emphasizes the importance of the experience of making transgressions and negations within kindergarten as well as in a broader perspective, suggesting the possibility exists to transgress the limits of traditions. The notion of creative transgressions that emerge through children's play while negotiating and introducing novel or transgressive acts is important for a child's sense of belonging, of being part of a setting. This finding may warrant further study, especially considering children's engagement or lack thereof in a school setting. Linking this observation to the findings, the difference in the types of negotiations and transgressions experienced in the play scenarios seems to be that playing with creative-construction toys leads to a sense that rules are static and are to be explored and revealed through negotiations. In this context, transgressions function as a negative determination of rules. In contrast, play with social-fantasy toys leads to a more playful attitude towards transgressive acts that entails a sense of rules as something dynamically created—they are something of one's own shared by others.

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